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These Are Your Sons

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TIMOTHY J. MULVEY, O.M.I.

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THESE ARE YOUR SONS

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[P R E F A C E]

• *These Are Your Sons*

I would like you to come with me for a brief while into this scarred corner of the earth. I would like very much for all of you to see some of the things I have seen, and to hear some of the things I have heard.

It will not be an easy story to tell. War is such a violent and lethal action, and it is nearly always complex. It is waged here in the Far East in sporadic bursts of platoons, in cautious probings by companies, in lunges by whole regiments and divisions. It is a shifting and elusive action, too broad to be viewed from the perspective of a single hill.

A deep sense of inadequacy settles over you as you stand, now, notebook in your pocket, on a ridge line overlooking a valley. A machine gunner, two feet away from you, is hunched over his weapon. It is a clear, crisp day. It is rather an unusual

day. It is the first time in your life you have actually planted your foot on what the journals of war describe as the "front line." All your life you have heard and read about war and front lines. A quick blur of pictures flashes through your mind. You remember scenes of other wars—the documentary films—the gray desolation of terrain, barbed wire, and the ugly belching of guns.

But this front line in North Korea seems different. This ridge line, wrapped in clear sunlight, commanding a view of mountains tumbling northward, is quiet and unlike any front line you have ever imagined. These are the thoughts you think as you stand there with your notebook in your pocket. But you are suddenly shocked to attention. A cluster of yellow flames, like the sudden blossoming of marigolds, blinds you from the thick underbrush on the opposite hill. Could that possibly be the enemy? Are those actually the flashes of enemy guns? Before you can answer the question, the air is shattered by the machine gun near you, and you can see the tracer bullets, brighter than the daylight, sweeping in flat, fast, murderous passage to the place you were curious about. The man beside you is firing to kill. It is the enemy. And suddenly you feel very exposed. You are conscious, now, that you are on top of the hill, visible, vulnerable, and aimed at. You have the sudden urge to step behind the tree next to you. You look quickly around you and notice that the men of this outfit appear to be fairly calm. They are used to it. "Seasoned" is the word. Even while you are thinking about these things, the hill on which you are standing begins to shake. Mortar, you are told, is coming in. You see the dull, gray smoke rising fifty or sixty yards to the left. That one was too close, you are convinced. The sergeant walks up to you and smiles. He tells you that you had better clear off the hill. You had better get into a bunker. And so you scramble quickly and grate-

fully at his suggestion. You crawl into the bunker and look with misgiving at the roof. It is made only of canvas. There are sandbags around you. The sandbags will save you from a lateral blast of steel. They are better than shoulder high. But the canvas roof is still a pregnable brown worry over your head and, unconsciously, you begin to calculate the odds of mortar coming in on direct hits on bunkers. These and dozens of varied personal, selfishly protective worries knock about in your head. At that moment you feel very small and far away from the front lines.

The physical distance was only a few steps from my bunker to that ridge line. At that moment, in Korea, I realized how hard the telling of a war story can be; for, in all honesty, an observer reports only what he can observe. You cannot see war through a canvas roof. You may hear it and feel it. You are even close enough to smell it and taste it. But the only eyes that can adequately observe are the eyes that even now without privilege of canvas or sandbag peer down the cool, blue barrels of guns. The only tongues that can thoroughly relate the awful testimonies are the tongues that, even now, shout on the slopes, and on the ridge lines, and in the valley.

This, therefore, cannot be easy in the telling. On the day I crawled into a bunker, I saw the eyes and tongue of a man who fought this war. It was that evening. It was late. The sun had already set. Four medics lifted the spent body of the soldier into the clearing station. Gauze was swathed thickly about his head. A surgeon, standing under a light that seemed unusually weak, unraveled the bandage.

As the last red-stained fold is peeled from his face, there is a sharp intake of breath. You lean over the table to take a closer look. You see something that digs deep into your insides. The eyes and the tongue of a soldier! One eye is blue

and glazed. The other is bedded deeply in the lacerated flesh of his face. The eye is out of place. It is halfway down the ridge of his nose. The tongue is a black, drying welt, sticking in the open hole of his mouth. His mouth is so opened in the frozen agony of pain that you can see the tartar on the back of his teeth. His chest is still rising and falling. His muddy boots, stretched on the table, are something you would like to clasp in your arms. They seem to cover the only normal and unharmed part of him. Then you walk around the table to the side where the good eye stares at the roof of the hut. And you whisper something to him. Then you see the good eye, still glazed, turn ever so slowly to you, and you hear the thick blackened tongue say something like . . . but there is no describing the sound. You realize that only here, only through the glazed good eye, now slowly fading to the glassy stare of death, only here on this blackened tongue, could the scenes of war and the tales of war be truly interpreted.

It is, therefore, with the deepest conviction of my limitations that I attempt now to tell you about war in Korea and the men who wage it. If I can trace but the faintest glimmer of the glory of their sacrifice across these pages, I shall know that it should never have seemed too difficult to do—so splendid was their vision of duty and so magnificent was their discharge of it among these alien hills.

T. J. M.

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[ONE]

• Tony's Business

It is best to begin with Tony Collier. He was among the very first to know the temper of the enemy we were about to face. Tony had a special sort of business. It was a job for which he had been thoroughly trained. He had a particular reason for knowing the people and their language.

When the American forces were pulled out of South Korea under the observation of what the General Assembly now calls a "Commission" (The United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea had already been dissolved), Tony was stationed at Chunchon. Chunchon is a fairly populous town, roughly ten miles south of the 38th parallel. These were the early and dangerous days of June when American citizens were oblivious, not only to little towns like Chunchon or Kangnung, but even to peninsulas like Korea. Most American citizens were

not aware of the feverish gymnastics that had been going on to settle the internal problems of a split country. The Soviets had slipped in at the end of what these people, out here, called the Pacific War, and they were bargaining down the throat of America. They had already bargained and bullied their way through Manchuria. Many American citizens, the fathers and mothers of the sons who have been waging this war in the Far East, had never known how Chiang Kai-shek was bartered to a standstill by the dilatory tactics of men who dreamed they were in league with a band of simple "agrarian reformers." They had never been informed, these fathers and mothers, how quick and complete was the rape of Manchuria, the plum of the Far East. At the close of World War II, when the Chinese Nationalists had the military right of entering and occupying Manchuria, they were stopped by Russia. The Nationalist forces with American aid were ready to enter either by land, sea, or air. They were denied entrance. The ports of Dairen, Port Arthur, and Hulutao were quickly sealed with Soviet steel. Overland routes were blocked with the sudden entrenchments of Mao Tse-tung's "agrarians." To land by air was to invite the bullets of Communist troops deployed at the outskirts of airports. When the troops of Russia departed Manchuria, it was a *fait accompli*. Manchuria, the mineral-rich, warm water exit to the sea, was in Russia's orbit. (This is not to deny the right of a great people to open waterways; it is merely the detailing of the blunt and powerful gyrations of a nation that wants land and gets land. Korea was next on the list.)

Tony Collier, now in his late thirties and slightly graying at the temples, had reason to sense the tension in the Korean air. He knew that the officers of KMAG (Korean Military Advisory Group) were on edge over at Kangnung. Once in a while he had sat around and listened to them "beefing" about

the situation. The guerrillas from the north were beginning to walk the mountaintops in bigger bands. They did not come into villages like Chunchon and Kangnung in the daylight. But during these early June mornings, they were slipping into towns, probing, infiltrating, dispersing among the civilians. They were not content merely to raid; they were getting rice, fowl, and eggs from the farmers by the simple right of demand.

Tony sat awake those nights on his bamboo chair, listening to the frequent wails of the siren from the police barracks. It was the often repeated signal, warning all those who could hear that the Reds were again in the neighborhood. It was getting to be a familiar sound pattern these nights—ten blasts at five-second intervals. Even as he sat there listening to the siren, he knew that the men of the 8th Division, South Korean Army, were flexing themselves for the blow that might come out of the dark. Even now, as he stared at the ceiling of his room, he guessed what might be going on at Kangnung. Art Mahon would be sitting up late entertaining Major Jerry Larson. They would be laughing; perhaps, a few hands of cards; and surely something to wet one's whistle. He felt it was a privilege to be able to talk to fellows like Larson, Captain Sheavers, and Captain Hanglein. There would be the same problems tossed back and forth.

"How were things over in Seoul these days?"

"Did it look like things were shaping for war?"

"If there should be war, what about tanks?"

"Tanks were cumbersome and unwieldy things."

"What was the value of the tank in this land of twisting, mountainous passes?"

"Was it going to be merely a guerrilla war?"

"Could we equip the Nationalist Army and trust them not to provoke attack?"

These were the heated and interesting questions that were tossed back and forth across the space of a single room.

Of course, Jerry Larson was right.

"Sure," he said. "We need tanks. We need heavy artillery, right now!" Jerry Larson exploded that way. And perhaps Jerry knew what he was talking about. These KMAG men *should* know. They lived with the South Korean troops, ate with them, worked and suffered with them. And they were not getting any promotions either. Art Mahon used to get steamed up about that.

This was the Korea of the early June days. Was it really a powder keg, or would it end in a fizzle? Tony Collier could never be certain. In the meantime, there were other things to do in Chunchon.

It was getting late that Saturday afternoon when Tony Collier walked down the road. Hundreds of Koreans were milling about in the market place. Some of them stared at his face—the white face of a foreigner. He was not really a stranger to them. He had often mingled with them down here in the market place where bags of charcoal and chunks of timber could be bargained for around the smoldering fire of the *hwaro*. But the face of any Occidental has always been a curiosity in the streets of the Far East—a fact that is evident in the language of Japan where the adjective "interesting" has its etymological roots in "white face." This, then, was the reason for the sudden darting of their eyes—the second look—the occasional whisper of neighbor to neighbor, as he passed by.

These streets of Chunchon and the environs were Tony's world. Down here he had seen the seasons come and go with persimmons, apples, and pears piled high on rice mats. Farmers, dressed in their white *turamegi*, were moving about as they had always done every market day. There was pride evident in the strut of these fellows when they came into the market.

Ten or twelve eggs, poised in the palm of the hand, or two chickens slung beneath the arm gave them an air of independence—even security. The price of two chickens could be turned into a bottle of gray *makkari* or potent *soju*. With a drop even of the weakest wine, a man might forget the government officials who seemed always to be after him. The farmer was levied for taxes, conscripted for the army and public works. Even his own sons had to be farmed out at times. But there was still the land, what little bit of it he might have; and there was still the fierce patience of his Oriental blood, summed up in the most typical of all Korean phrases, "*Gwan chan sun ni da!*" "It doesn't matter." With those words, they had weathered war, plague, and pestilence.

Tony threaded his way through the crowd and stopped directly in front of a shop. A small girl was arranging black rubber shoes in pairs along the slanted rack. She looked up at him with sudden puzzlement in her dark eyes. Tony understood the surprise his presence had caused, for was he not a foreigner, a white face, and did he not always walk the roads in the thick leather of the white man's shoes? And what would this foreigner wish now? Was he really stopping to buy her thin rubber *komosins*?

She made a small curtsy when she said the words, "Are you in peace?"

Tony always thought this was a specially delightful Korean custom. All manner of salutations and farewells were pivoted on the symbols of peace. It was never "Good night," but "May you sleep in peace." It was never "Good morning," but "Have you slept in peace?" These, indeed, were appropriate word conventions for a country that is described mistakenly by Westerners as the Land of the Morning Calm.

Tony thought it would be best to get quickly to the business at hand. "What is your name, little one?"

"Han Kwang Ok."

"And how old are you?"

"I have eaten fourteen years."

Tony pondered the next question. It might embarrass this young girl. It was a question he could have asked her many times in the past months, for she was always present in the shop, arranging, dusting, sometimes hovering over the charcoal fire in the freezing gray afternoons of winter. During all the months he had been passing the shop, he remembered wondering why he had never met her on the road with schoolmates. He asked the question casually. "Have you finished school?"

"A year ago."

That would be just about right. She was fourteen now.

"And I suppose you are going to the Middle School?"

The girl suddenly lost her voice and began to rub her arm nervously. The embarrassment was evident. Tony had been waiting for it; he had encountered it in just this way so many times before.

"Would you like to go to school?" he asked.

"I would like to go but my father's money is absent." Han Kwang Ok spoke in a hushed, flat voice. Then she repeated the words, avoiding his eyes, "I would like to go to school."

Tony saw or thought he saw the influence that the Japanese had had on these people. It was mirrored in the regimentation of white blouse and blue skirt and the sheer joy of getting out of the field and into the classrooms. And now, long after the Japanese had been forced to get out of Korea, the white blouse and blue skirt had remained. Nor was it only the Japanese who had left their mark. There was the old Confucianist idea that a man could do much with an education. No Oriental, as the saying goes, has ever wiped his nose with a newspaper. The printed word was that esteemed.

There was a noise at the rear of the shop, and at that moment

Han Kwang Ok's father appeared. He bowed and then offered his hand, a gesture that Tony would be sure to appreciate.

"You have an intelligent child, Hans Kwang Bog."

"I am grateful. The small thing is just as she is," the man replied.

Tony noticed the impersonal allusion the man made to his daughter, and he remembered that if the fellow were speaking of his wife, he might have called her his "jib" or his "house." But there was no absence of affection in it. It was the reserve of the Oriental.

Tony spent the next few minutes discussing Han Kwang Ok. It would be a fine idea to send her to school, say from four-thirty in the afternoon to eight o'clock in the evening. In that way she could still help at the store during the day. His speech was well rehearsed, for he had been doing this sort of thing for years. No, there would be no problem about the returning home at eight o'clock. All the boys came home together, all the girls came home together. It was a program that had already been fairly successful, and the girl would receive the same education that day students in Korea were getting in the best institutions. Who would teach her? Why, the finest and most competent of professors—all Koreans—teachers from the government schools, who had voluntarily offered their time and services to deserving people like little Han Kwang Ok. Surely, he must know the type of teacher who was engaged in this work. Kim Dung Chum was from one of the oldest families in the district. There was Pak Naki also. Kim Oksun was as good a domestic economy professor as you would find in all Korea. About twenty-five of them had already volunteered and were now conducting classes. Language, geography, history, mathematics, and music were some of the subjects a girl could study. And now, what did Han Kwang Bog think of the idea?

The man's fingers twisted in the folds of his *baji*. "There is the money which is absent to me. I could not pay the tuition."

Tony assured him this was no worry whatsoever. As for the school uniform—"A cotton dress, dyed black, will do. We can arrange this easily."

"It will be much trouble to you."

"*Gwan chan sun ni da!*" Tony said. "It did not matter."

The air that Saturday night in June was heavy with soggy ribbons of fog, twisting in the lowlands about Chunchon. It came rising in serpentine folds out of the valleys, creeping around the pots that were stacked under the eaves of houses. Out on the valley floor, the thatched cottages of the townsmen, rising like giant mushrooms, were steeped in the gathering mist.

Tony Collier had no particular reason to note that this was the night of June 24, 1950. There were other and more intimate details to reckon with—people like Han Kwang Ok, for example, who needed a helping hand. It was quiet now in Chunchon. Gabriel, the houseboy, was tamping some faggots at the rear of the house. Gabriel was efficient. He was faithful. You could trust a fellow like Gabriel—trust him with your life.

Tony Collier yawned. It was time to be turning in. "May you sleep in peace, Gabriel," he called.

"May you sleep in peace," was the answer from the yard.

Then the siren sounded. There was a mournful wail in it. It was about five o'clock in the morning, June 25, 1950. Tony heard it, stirred in his bed, and sat up. His ears were sifting the night sounds for trouble. It would have been a little less strain on a man if Chunchon were not so near that 38th parallel. Outside, when the last echo of the siren had died, the drip-dripping of the rain off the roof could be heard. The fog was up in a solid murky wall against the window of the room. There was nothing unusual in the wind. It was probably the same old story. Somebody was in the vicinity making trouble.

Tony settled back and pulled the blankets about him. When

he awakened a few hours later, he was among the very first to know that all Korea was clamped in the flaming vise of war.

The loud-speakers in the city of Seoul were proclaiming the news a few hours later. Jeeps darted up and down the broad avenues of the city, summoning officers and men of the National Army. All roads from Seoul were running north in this first feverish reaction to the surprise attack of the so-called "People's Army." In a matter of hours, the air between Seoul and Inchon Harbor was throbbing with aircraft serving as protecting escorts in the evacuee dash to the sea. American civilians, foreign nationals, and State Department employees had to be pulled out in a hurry. The tides of Inchon soon interfered with this plan and direct airlifts from Kimpo swung into motion.

Within forty-eight hours it appeared to the civilians in Seoul that all this hubbub was at most a tremendous scare. Placards and posters were informing the citizens that there was no reason for alarm. Members of the American Military Mission were at hand, had even toured the battle area, and had expressed the reassuring prediction that the Nationalist Army of South Korea could squelch this nasty business. The skies over Kimpo, meanwhile, were bristling with the twin Mustangs of the 68th All Weather Fighter Squadron. It was comforting to know that the air arm of America was already stretching over the scene, and it was consoling to watch the jubilant, eager faces of the Korean infantry as they went marching northward to the deafening cheers of the civilian populace.

War had come swiftly and surprisingly to South Korea, but listen, citizens, to the news today! Within forty-eight hours the Nationalist Army had stopped the puppet murderers in their tracks. Uijongbu is on everybody's lips. "We have stopped them at Uijongbu. We have smashed them at Uijongbu! Ten thousand years!"

Tony Collier in Chunchon did not hear the cheers, nor had

he any way of knowing about Uijongbu that afternoon. The Red tanks had already rumbled through the streets of his town. Chunchon was lost. Any man with a knowledge of terrain would have worried about Uijongbu. It was as clear as the nose on your face. It was in the path and pattern of three lightning thrusts—the leap across the 38th parallel into Chunchon; the river road to Uijongbu; the 10-mile stab to Seoul. The hammer had struck and the sickle was laid for the cutting.

Nor did the citizens down in Seoul know too much about Uijongbu that afternoon. Within another twelve hours, the Nationalist Army of the Republic of South Korea was to learn what a costly and terrible thing it is to pit human flesh against the steel of tanks—was to learn that Uijongbu had crumbled like rice paper under an iron sledge. Within those same twelve hours, the high hills surrounding Seoul, which had so lately echoed and reechoed the delirious cheering of South Korean patriots, were to catch up another refrain, startlingly different, and domineering. The capital city of South Korea was to fall in less than three days. Tony Collier had no way of knowing about all this.

Gabriel, the houseboy, watched Tony closely that afternoon of the 27th. The last two days had been a nightmare. There had been a chance to escape Sunday afternoon.

“Why do you not go?” Gabriel had asked him. “There is still time to reach Seoul, and if you wish I’ll go with you.”

Tony had shrugged wearily. “It is not for me to say when I go.”

Naturally, Gabriel had known this. He had already accompanied Tony on two trips to see the “boss.” There had been hurried and whispered conferences, and the sure signs of strain had begun to creep over Collier’s face.

“But we can go again to see him. It is still not too late to leave Chunchon,” Gabriel suggested.

Tony paced the floor. He looked at his watch. Five minutes to two. Outside, the sky was overcast, threatening rain. It would be dangerous to walk the roads this time of day. Yet with each passing hour, Chunchon was swelling with North Korean troops. In another day or two they would be swarming the streets, lanes, and byways, searching out those who had gone into hiding. It was not an easy decision to make.

"It will be dangerous for you to be seen with me, Gabriel. Perhaps you had better wait here," Tony suggested.

"If you go, I would like also to go," the boy said.

So they left. They stepped out of the house shortly after two o'clock. There had been a brief moment of indecision outside. Should they return and pick up blankets, clothing, books? No, it was better to leave everything behind. Anyone detected on the streets with bundles would be spotted quickly as a refugee and questioned.

The hill from Tony's house to the main street in Chunchon is a twisting, downward spiral of blue asphalt. That was one of the nice features of Chunchon—blue asphalt in spots, and the air of a little up-and-coming town, smack in the center of the most forsaken and harassed lands in all Asia. It was best to avoid the asphalt this afternoon and keep to the footpaths skirting the hill.

They walked the 200 yards cautiously and with mounting expectation. A man, panting heavily, passed them on the road. He was carrying a trussed pig. The furtive glance of the fellow was enough to tell anyone that war was abroad in Chunchon—and war was claiming a man's property, his rice, his wheat, and even his pig. The man was hauling his pork to safe quarters. Tony greeted him but the farmer was gone in a hurry. A woman (neither Tony nor Gabriel knew her) met them on the road. She had a child she was tugging by the hand. She smiled quickly, and she also was gone.

Then, what they had been expecting during these last forty-eight hours suddenly happened. The voice behind them was loud and harsh. It said, "*Dol yob soh.*" Translated it means "Turn around."

Tony turned quickly and saw two Korean soldiers. One of them was fingering an automatic. The other was brandishing a burp gun. Both of these men were wearing caps that were braided with red. There were arm bands on the sleeves of their mustard-brown jackets. They were North Korean soldiers.

What follows is the conversation as recorded by a witness.

Korean: You . . . you, who are you?

Tony: My name is Collier.

Korean: Collier? Who are you? You are an American soldier.

Tony: No, I am not an American soldier.

Korean: You are an American spy.

Tony: I am not a spy. I work with Koreans. I live with your people. I am not an American spy.

Korean: (To Gabriel) What is your name? Why do you walk with this foreigner?

Gabriel: I work for him.

Korean: You are an American spy too.

Gabriel: It is not true. We are not working for the military.

We do not work for American soldiers. Only for Korea.

Korean: You are a bad bastard. [Gabriel was struck across the face several times at this point.]

Korean: You shall come with us. Quick. [They were told to follow their captors. They walked about 300 or 400 yards and then they were suddenly stopped.]

Korean: I am an officer. Do you not know me?

Gabriel: I do not know you.

Korean: You know. You are lying.

Gabriel: I do not know.

Korean: What work did you do here? If you tell us the truth, we will not kill you.

Gabriel: We have done no bad work. My master, Collier, has not done bad work.

Korean: Did you not hear the story from these Americans that we would cut off your ears and nose?

Gabriel: I have not heard it.

At this point on the road their hands were placed behind them, and their wrists were bound with rice-fiber ropes. To make any escape less likely, they were then tied together with a 3-foot hitch of rope linking them. With the muzzles of the revolver and burp gun prodding their backs, they were ordered to walk toward the post office.

Several trucks and Russian jeeps were parked near the post office. A crowd had gathered and was listening to a speech. It was being interrupted at short intervals by shouts of approval for the "great and liberating force of the People's Army." As Collier and Gabriel drew nearer, the crowd parted and fell silent. They were marched to the steps of the post office, and for the first time they saw the speechmaker. He was a short, thickset individual, standing in black cavalry boots. Even without this military touch, Gabriel knew he was a superior officer, from the manner in which he addressed the soldier with the burp gun. He was using the "low" form of Korean on this inferior officer.

"Who are these men?" the speechmaker demanded.

"They are enemies of the Korean People's Democratic Republic," was the answer.

"You," pointing to Tony, "what is your business in Korea?"

The crowd hedged in, pressed upon them, hungrily attentive and curious as only Orientals can be.

Tony's business!

This was the moment he had feared would come. Not that he was ashamed of explaining his business. The time and circumstances were ripe for such a revelation. In the deepest core of his consciousness he was alive to a promise that had been made to him. He had nothing to fear about what he should think or what he should say "in *that* hour." It would have been given to him what to think and what to say "in *that* hour." It was rather the moment, not the hour, that he feared—that awful, passion-hot moment in time when he should be called upon to say the thing that would explain nothing. To stand before some tribunal that had the semblance of specific and litigious hate for the beliefs he professed would have been easier. To be tried, tested, and even martyred for the things he believed in was a privilege which his faith taught him he should, and "in *that* hour" would, gladly accept. But the words of Joe O'Brien had the dull and now desolate ring of truth. "Those fanatics . . . those mobs . . . they don't kill you for believing in God. They kill you for believing in Wall Street. Martyrdom! It's not martyrdom. It's bloody murder." So here they were—the rabble in arms, the restless crowd milling in a sweat, that at any moment might break out into the hysteria and violence of new-found fanatic loyalties. And there he was, the little man in the black boots, waiting for the answer. This was the stark challenge of the moment; and this was the moment Tony Collier feared.

The crowd was still silent. It was not yet a mob. It was a ring of peering, inquisitive faces.

"You, what is your business here in Korea?"

Tony spoke quietly. "I am a priest, and . . ."

"What is your business in Korea?" the man screamed. "You are in the employ of the American fascists."

One of the Korean townsmen mounted the post office steps and whispered into the ear of the officer. The officer then

shouted, "You work with the American soldiers. You are seen with American soldiers."

"Yes, I speak with Americans. They are my friends, but I am not a part of the American military."

"You are a liar."

"I am a priest. I live here in Chunchon. I work among your people. I know your people. They know me. I am not a soldier. I am not a spy. I have nothing to do with the military."

The officer turned to the guards and directed them to search Tony. The soldiers emptied Collier's pockets and carried the contents to the officer. The man scanned for some time the pages of a letter Tony had received. The frown over his eyes was evidence that the English language mystified him.

"You," he said, pointing to Gabriel, "where are the papers?"

"What papers?"

"The papers of the military." The speechmaker made a quick sweeping gesture over the crowd. "Everyone here knows that this man is a spy on the Korean people."

"He is not a spy. He is a *shinbunim*."

The officer in the black boots stuffed Tony's letter in his pocket. Then he addressed one of the soldiers. "Take them away. You know your duty." He then walked down the post office steps, moved over to a jeep, and leaned on the radiator. He kept staring at Tony.

It was over as quickly and as simply as that. The dread which Collier had feared had come and gone, and he was suddenly about-face and walking, hitched to Gabriel. All the speechmaking must have been finished for the day, because the crowd was now walking with them, scurrying ahead, darting across the road, hemming them in a knot of excited sound.

"Where are we going, Gabriel?" Tony asked.

"I do not know."

"Perhaps to the jail," Tony laughed.

The quick and shocking thrust of a gun between his shoulder blades and the loud voice of one of the guards interrupted Tony.

"Tell this foreigner he must not talk," the soldier said to Gabriel.

Gabriel did not have to relay the word. Tony had understood. They walked through the town in silence, past the open market place, past Han Kwang Ok's shoe store. She was there as always. She was open-eyed and mystified. Unconsciously she curtsied and Tony spoke the Korean greeting to her, "Are you in peace?"

Whether she answered or not, Gabriel was not sure. The pace was too fast, and the babble of the crowd too loud. The soldiers behind them did not prod Tony when he asked Han Kwang Ok if she were in peace. Perhaps they had not heard Tony's question. Perhaps they had.

They continued to walk and every step they took added to the crowd. One of the soldiers suddenly broke the tension. He asked, "Are you not afraid of our People's Army?"

Gabriel did not answer. Tony, at this moment, seemed not to hear.

"What do you wish to say for the last time?" one of the soldiers asked.

The last time! Was this to be the last time, Gabriel wondered. It seemed like a farce. Tony Collier was even smiling and confident. It was a peculiar question to be asked in the center of town, with so much life and so many people around you.

The question was repeated. "What do you wish to say for the last time?"

Gabriel was young—twenty years old. Yet he had come to know what Korea had lived, bled, and cried for. He, at the force of pressures too large for him, had been conscripted in

the Japanese Army to do a job he detested. And so he spoke: "I am a Korean and you are a Korean and I hope some day that we shall all be united Koreans."

"*Dol yob soh!*" It was the sharp command to turn around. The crowd scrambled quickly at this change of procedure. It appeared for a moment that the farce was over. They would probably unleash the rope and send them home. Tony looked up the street and saw the hill that rimmed his house. It would be good to get back, to get out of the rain that was now beginning to fall. And it was an inspired bit of speech that Gabriel had made. To see all Korea united! Even these bandits could appreciate that.

Five shots suddenly rang in the air. Five or six quick shots. Gabriel was not sure where the shots came from until he felt a heavy tug that pulled him to the ground. The force of Tony's falling weight had dragged Gabriel off his feet. Tony Collier was lying flat on his face. Gabriel tried to lift himself in that instant, but all the strength he had in him petered out, "like a candle going out, stopping to give light." What had checked his first instinctive urge to leap and run for freedom was the weight at his wrists, anchored as he was to Tony, and the voice next to his ear. Tony was saying, "Gabriel . . . Gabriel, I am sorry. You should not have come with me."

A burst of sound hammering at his eardrums left Gabriel writhing in the dust of the road. His throat was tingling in red-hot heat. Two more blasts and his hips rolled from side to side. His back was pierced with bullets. The blood was running warm under his chin from the open hole in his throat.

Then there was a curious silence. It came within the next twenty or thirty minutes. It was broken only by Tony's gurgling. No words were said, and no movement was made. The rain kept falling and the mud was cool against Gabriel's cheek. It was still in the early hours of the afternoon. After about

thirty minutes, Tony stopped making the gurgling sound. Gabriel waited. His back was like a flame of pain. He could feel the "heart sound" in his throat.

Sometime near seven o'clock that evening, Gabriel heard a movement. Footsteps were sloshing about in the mud near his head. Then he heard a voice say, "These bastards are dead." Gabriel winced when he felt the pressure on his back. Somebody had thrown two charcoal bags—the heavy hazel sapling kind—over them.

Somewhere close to ten o'clock that night, Gabriel awoke. There was a deathlike stillness about him. He rubbed the fiber rope that bound his wrists against a piece of cement. When he was free, he edged close to Tony. He touched the hair of Tony's head. Then his face. Tony was cold and dead. When Gabriel got to his feet, he put his fingers around his throat to stop the flow of blood. Then he hurried up into a dark familiar lane.

This is a story of one of your sons. At this moment as I sit here in Japan writing about your sons, I realize how selective and partial an author's point of view can be. To begin with, I have chosen to write about someone who lived as a priest and was killed as a "fascist" or "capitalist." He was not the only one to lose his life.

Even while Father Anthony Collier was dying, the sentence of death was hanging over Son Yon-won, pastor of the Episcopalian church. Brutality has an insidious way of seeking out first those who are least in line for it. To call this Korean pastor one of your sons may strike you as being a bit too far over the International Date Line. As a matter of fact, Tony Collier, who died in this conflict between North and South Koreans, was actually a neutral. He was an Irish Columban who had no part, politically, in what was to become a struggle between

East and West. Yet he was your son. And there are many others out here in the Far East who, with skins and languages not noticeably "American," are fighting with your sons. I have chosen to write about Tony because I knew him and some of his missionary brothers who have since been murdered.

Like many of his comrades, Tony will never be in line for rewards and decorations. The withering blast of the gun that cut him down was a brutal but obscure incident on a side street in Chunchon. Even while he was falling, he must have sensed, for an awful moment, the desolation of dying in the light of afternoon on a patch of earth far from home. Yet, here on this plot of ground which his body spanned, was home for Tony. And these Koreans were, by choice, his people. This is how it came to pass that Anthony Collier should know once and forever the saddest of all sad questions: "My people, my people, what have I done to thee?"

His body lies under a mound, three feet high, on the spot where he fell. Flowers are blooming now at the base of a small cross that marks the spot.

In these comparatively quiet evenings that have come recently to Chunchon, you may see a figure of a Korean boy walking the road. He stops occasionally at the mound, and above the ripple of purple scarred flesh that runs along his throat, you can see his lips moving in prayer. Gabriel is still alive. His back bears the marks where the burp gun ate into his flesh. And farther into the town, along the street where apples and mandarin oranges are sold, a little girl still sells *komosins* for her father; and she will ask, these afternoons, the question that Father Tony Collier delighted to hear: "Are you in peace?"

[TWO]

• Where's Andy?

In the years to come, the Chosen Reservoir action, culminating in the successful withdrawal of the 1st United States Marine Division to Hungnam, will be marked as one of the bright chapters of American military history. This is the peculiar and proper estimate that only time and reflection can give a specific action. Nor did the American people need too much time to evaluate the real meaning of this retreat.

There had been optimism that November when the United Nations forces had not only Thanksgiving turkey to console them but also the promise that they would be home (some of them) by Christmas. North Korean opposition was crumbling and there appeared nothing but green lights for the Eighth Army all the way north to the Yalu River. Repeated reports of large concentrations of Chinese beyond the Korean border

had been brought to the attention of our military leaders and to the world at large. What was the evaluation of those reports? Was Red China actually contemplating direct armed intervention? Or was it a tremendous bluff? The answers to these questions in the light of subsequent events are now plain. In the latter part of that November, the Chinese came surging southward, driving a wedge between the Eighth Army and X Corps.

And so the Chinese Communist forces or "Volunteers" came swarming into the headlines of the world. Reactions ran from consternation, to bewilderment, and finally to fear. The 5th and 7th Regiments of the Marines, and elements of the 31st and 32d Regimental Combat Teams of the 7th Division were trapped. Chosen Reservoir was fast taking on intonations of older and tragic last stands. The red bunting of Christmas was spinning into the funeral shrouds of mass annihilation. December, bleak and cold, swept America, and in the chill of those afternoons and nights there was the foreboding tang of the fierce and fanatical East.

Then the news came. Glad tidings in the field dispatches! The retreat was a success; the last stragglers were aboard the transports outside Hungnam. There was a nation's sigh of relief. The President of the United States publicly admitted that Americans had reason to be grateful. The Chosen Reservoir action, begun and executed in the grim desperation of withdrawal, was already assuming the military lineaments of victory. Unique American humor had already described it, not as a retreat at all, but as "an advance in another direction." All this, of course, was retrospection.

Try now to visualize it, not in retrospect, but in the dreadful pall of the present. Mark the route; trace it from the Reservoir to Yudam-ni, and by painful steps to Hagaru-ri; up and down the weary miles to Koto-ri; and all the murderous way to the

sea. You will find that this retreat is a long, tortuous artery that bleeds the entire length of the line.

This is about three Marines who were buddies. It is about several more of them too, but principally about Andy Jackson, Gus Scafidi, and Claude Angers. If you had an opportunity to speak to them, you would realize why it is that men become attached to outfits and to one another. Their memories are fixed on shared experiences—are a mixture of mischief, fun, danger, and sometimes heartbreak. In less than three minutes they can tell you something like this:

“Together? Sure, we’ve been together all the way through. First it was Womido Island. We were in the second wave. Then we set up in a grove of trees in a farmer’s orchard. That was where this Korean Red got into a foxhole between the outpost and the CP. This was outside Inchon. Next we moved to a road right off the Seoul-Inchon highway. Then from there we went to the other side of the Han River, and from there to the ammo dump in Seoul. It was a sort of forestry experimental station. Signs like *Pinus Virginius* were all over the place. From there we went to the staging area in Inchon, got aboard an LST, and made the Wonsan landing. From Wonsan we went to Mumpyong-ni. A gold smelter was there. That’s where Lee shot the prisoner, remember? Lee was our interpreter and he got trigger itchy; so we got rid of him. From there we set up in an agricultural school in Hamhung. The school was in good condition too. Finally we reached Koto-ri, and then, wow, things started happening.”

What had happened was, Andy, Gus, and Claude were no longer together. Sgt. Andrew Jackson of Jacksonville, Florida, attached to Howe Company, 7th Marines, lately released from the 4th Battalion, 11th Marines, was now at the head of that living artery. He was situated, at that black hour of five in the morning, slightly east of the Reservoir. A radio pack was

strapped to his back. He looked upward at the bleak sky hoping that the weather would break clear.

The word was out; it was official; they had been alerted for the retrograde move to Yudam-ni. There was a touch of bitterness to this retreat. A Marine spends only two hours out of four hundred learning how to back up. By definition, theirs is the amphibious offensive arm, the outfit that cracks beachheads and moves ahead. Yet there was desperation in this falling back, for there were things to chill a man's blood, leaving him numb with fear. Eastward, on the ice of the Reservoir, there were sights that made Andy want to scream. Remnants of the 31st Regiment, after being mauled by a roadblock, had split up and started across the Reservoir. Some got through but those who did not were the ones Andy would never forget. They were dragging themselves helplessly on their stomachs through the snow, lifting their heads in mute appeal for assistance. The Chinese had them hemmed with a ring of fire.

It was then that fellows like Beale and McCaleb made him proud he was an American and a Marine. "We're going to get them off that ice if it blows every jeep we have," Captain Beale said. He went out on the ice, then, with his jeeps. The Corsairs and Skyraiders were on hand, blasting the wooded margins, and Captain McCaleb, flying a "cheese-box" OY Stinson, covered Beale's jeep. With his knees on the stick, McCaleb leaned sideways and pitched grenades all over the perimeter until the General sent up word for him to quit. They pulled the dying off the ice that day, and it was a peculiar feeling that ran up and down your back when you looked into the gaunt face of an infantryman and heard him say, "God bless the Marines."

It was mostly in the evening, in the hours that fade quickly into dark, that the medical corpsmen and ambulances had time to work. Andy had heard one of the corpsmen babbling like a baby. "Oh, Jesus Christ! I can't stand it out there any more. I

was out there. We were piling them in as fast as we could. We couldn't get any more of them in. But I heard their voices all around me in the dark. They were screaming for morphine. They wanted to be taken and I didn't have any more room. And then the jeep bogged down in the snow. I couldn't move it. But we finally did get it to move." The corpsman then sat in the snow and cried, and someone said, "Okay, buddie. We'll give it to them Uncle Tare Able. Don't worry. You're doing a first-class job."

That was just a bit of the picture that seared Andy Jackson—this and the stretcher parades with kids lying on them "who might be dead or might not be dead yet." There were more of them out on the ice still waiting.

Andy stomps his feet in the snow. He is conscious of the cold wind whistling in the hollow of his parka. Behind him, the machine gunner watches intently for shadows that may come slipping over the ground. Already the dawn comes, gray and promising. Communications are buzzing all along the line.

Suddenly a wave of Chinese breaks over the ridge of the opposite hill. They come clambering and slipping down the frozen slope. Rifles and grenades begin to burst around the machine gunner. Andy sees him bend over the gun to adjust the barrel and, as he does so, there is a peculiar sound like "fee-um." The gunner falls, pulling his equipment on top of him. Andy knows by the way the fellow opens his eyes slowly, as if coming out of a sleep, that he is dying. Then he is dead with his eyes still staring at the sky. The assistant machine gunner is now manning his gun.

"Polka Dot!"

It was the electric, instantaneous salutation from the sky, humming in the earphones.

"Polka Dot. Polka Dot. This is Howe Seven," Andy whispered. Then the company commander was at his elbow, giving

him the instructions. Azimuth two five zero zero—degrees two four left—down seven. But Andy did not relay it like that. He was trained. For this brief moment, with the enemy seeping in about him, he knew that this microphone at his lips spelled power; that he could with a few words direct a flight of Able Dogs on whatever hill or ridge he chose. He said: “Able, Zebra two five hundred—Dog Easy two four—Love Roger Dog Oboe William Nan seven.”

They came sweeping over Andy's head, whistling and twisting in the strike pattern. This was a sight for tired eyes. All his life Andy had enjoyed seeing things—pictures, scenery, sunsets. But the most beautiful picture Andy ever saw was this flight of snub-nosed Skyraider fighter-bombers.

Then it came swiftly and unannounced. It was like a hammer shock below the knee. There was not much pain immediately afterward. There was only a freezing-hot sensation that came rolling up to his head. Strange lights were dancing in his eyeballs. Andy fell into the snow with half of the muscles of his right leg shorn. He felt the beat of his heart pounding in throbbing bursts below his knee. Life seemed to be seeping out of him in sporadic waves. He closed his eyes for a few seconds; he felt utterly tired. This looked like the end of the road for Andy. But there were things to do even in this hour—routine steps that every Marine has been trained to take. Strength was still in his fingers. He could flip a switch or press a button.

“Polka Dot. Polka Dot. This is Howe.” Andy waited for a moment.

“Howe seven. This is Polka Dot,” the voice came back.

He was still up there tuned in. He would be up there for another three-quarters of an hour, circling and strafing. That was the nice thing about the Able Dogs. They could hang onto a target for loads of time.

“Polka Dot, I'm wounded. I can't give you any more orders.

Call George Company for further orders. I'm over and out."

"Wilco. Over and out."

"Complete."

"Complete. Complete, Howe seven. Good luck to you fellows."

Andy slipped slowly out of his radio harness. Small-arms fire and mortar were swelling around him in a gathering violence of sound. With all the strength he had left, he crawled away from the radio. He moved about thirty or forty feet and then lifted a grenade from his pocket. Battle procedure and all the hours he had spent learning it were dictating what he should do now. He had to destroy everything that might get into the hands of the enemy. He pulled the pin of the grenade and hurled it at the radio. The explosion rocked the ground under him. The radio was destroyed. "I'm secured," Andy sighed. Then he spotted the corpse of the machine gunner. Just beyond the body was another figure sprawled in the snow. The assistant gunner was gone too. Andy dug his fingers into the snow and pulled himself to the machine gun. He reached it, took the trigger housing group out of it and scattered the parts over the snow. The job was done. Andy, in the widest sense of the term, was secured.

A numbness was sweeping over him. The pit of his stomach was as cold as ice.

A Chinese infantryman walked up to Andy. His bayonet was gleaming in the early light. When Andrew Jackson closed his eyes, he thought he was ready to die.

To the south at Hagaru-ri, brawny Sgt. Gus Scafidi waited in chow line. He was just another among the many who were posted along the route of this throbbing artery, keeping it open for the ghost men coming down from Yudam-ni and points north. Those who could not walk were strapped to the

fenders and radiators of trucks and jeeps. And there were the others, loaded like logs, in the stiff posture of death.

Gus Scafidi, buddy of Andy Jackson, was security guard for Headquarters Battery. That was an odd word in this part of the world—security. In chow line here at Hagaru-ri, he did not dare stand too close to the next fellow. Ten yards apart were the orders. Bullets coming out of the hills had already killed or wounded men standing in chow line.

Everything seemed to be going wrong. The weather particularly. Before you could reach your tent, the chow would get cold; and Gus relished his chow. There were times when he dreamed of pizza and chicken cacciatore and the quiet nights around his New Jersey home. Up here in this awful hole of a place, he couldn't open a can of fruit without getting his tongue stuck on it. Even the beans came out frozen. Bean popsicle, they called it. And the Tootsie Rolls were murder. Colonel Adelman broke his tooth on one. Things were rough at Hagaru-ri.

Yes, it was principally the cold that made life unbearable for Gus. Because of the cold, wooden pins could not be driven into the ground; canteens split open if they were more than half filled; illuminating shells for the 60-mm mortars failed to burn, and the fellows on the 3.5 rockets were complaining of flarebacks. It was all due to the cold.

Gus moved along the line, picked up his food, and walked into his tent. Ice crackled in the stiff canvas over his head. The cold air in here was damp and musty. When Gus sat on an empty gasoline can and started to eat, Cpl. "Bugs" Bourke sauntered in and sat beside him. Bourke's face was a mask of disgust.

"What's eating you, Bourke?" Gus asked.

"Aw, it's one of those snoopin' MPs."

"What's the trouble?"

"Well, you see, there was a shipment of candy bars that came in the other day. Hersheys. The ones with the nuts in them."

"Yeah?"

"So I figured, here we are fightin' our heads off, chewin' cold chow, and not gettin' enough sleep."

"Sure."

"What the guys would appreciate is a little extra nourishment, if you know what I mean, Gus."

"Right."

"So I decides to liberate some of these Hershey bars."

"How many did you get?"

"Oh, about fifteen hundred. Had them stashed away in a gunny sack when this MP comes nosin' around. So he asks me what I got in the sack and I tell him tent pegs. But the stinker doesn't believe me."

"He opened the sack?"

"Yeah. I got a court martial comin' up, but I hope the Com-mies kill the lug before he testifies."

Gus sat on the ground and roared. He suddenly forgot the time and place. He forgot the gnawing fears that seemed to eat constantly at his stomach. He was aware only that he was laughing. He remembered, now, other foolish, inconsequential things that made him laugh here in this valley of death. Just the other day it had happened. He explained it this way to "Bugs" Bourke.

"I get a kick out of Reilly, my buddy. We fixed bayonets going up a hill the other day, and Reilly he didn't mean it, but he gives me a jab on the butt with his bayonet. Right through the parka and all. And we sharpened up those bayonets two days in a row!" Gus's eyes were dripping over with laughter.

Bourke stared at him. "You think that's *funny*?"

"Yeah, I do," Gus bellowed, doubling over.

There was need for laughter up here in these hills. There was need especially for it this afternoon. Gus Scafidi had finished his chow and was dipping his mess gear into the immersion heater when the cargo planes came circling lazily overhead. The parachutes were already billowing white and red in the skies. It was an ordinary air drop. Everyone had been alerted to be on the lookout. But there was a twist in the wind, a swerving of the huge sling that oscillated somewhere above his head. Gus Scafidi saw it and dived to safety. The fellow next to him made a flying leap and crawled under a jeep. The crash was terrific. It smashed the jeep flat to the ground. There was not even a moan or a cry. When a few of them pulled the crushed body from beneath the wreckage, they saw the gray color of death on the fellow's face. "You wouldn't have known he was a Negro. He seemed to turn white," Gus explained later. "Afterwards his color returned. It must have been the shock of it, I guess."

Possibly it was some sort of premonition Gus had that night. Up to now he had come through some pretty rough spots. Tonight he was remembering other days. He remembered a woman running out of a culvert on the road between Kimpo and Seoul. He was a truck driver then, packing wire for an OP on a flash range outpost. This woman came out of the culvert, screaming about Communists in her house. That's how the Korean soldier translated it. Gus looked into the culvert. It was plugged with rice bags. About fifteen women and children came crawling out of the hole. That was when General Craig, Commanding Officer of the Brigade, came along. General Craig was a cool fellow. Gray hair and blue eyes. Gus had told the General what the woman had said, and Craig looked at Gus. "If there are Communists up there, go and get them." So, Gus and Armitage and Rankin went. They found the Communists too. Three of them were hidden in the back room

of the house. They were brought back to the General and that was when the fireworks began. A machine gun opened up on them. Everybody scattered, including the General. They crawled into a ditch. The fire was coming from a house about fifty yards off the road. This was one rough spot for a general to be in, Gus thought. Hand grenades were thrown at the house. Young and Dailey were heaving them. (Young, by the way, was dead now. He was killed by a butterfly bomb in Hoengson.) But hand grenades at that distance were no good. The rapid chatter of the machine gun was still spitting steel through the grass-mat door of the house. That was when Gus crawled out of the ditch and ran toward the house. "Probably they'll get me," he had thought. But the eyes of the General were upon him, and for human and boyish and reckless reasons, he charged. The grenade was poised in his hand. He flung it through the door. The roof of the house went up like matchsticks. Gus came back to the General, flushed and shaking with the tension. "The machine gun is knocked out, sir." And the General, brushing the dirt off his pants, said, "Good work, son." It was the way he said it that made Gus think he would have been willing to die ten times for a man like Craig. The General packed the three Communists on the hood of his jeep and headed south. It was only later that night, after Gus got a bawling-out for not attending to his wire duties, that he began to think how quickly and easily he could have fallen under the fire of that machine gun.

These were some of the memories that could make a fellow think.

For some unknown and pressing reason up here at Hagaru-ri, Gus Scafidi began to feel the chill shadow of danger creeping in and around him that night. It could be his imagination. But there were other signs and portents. It could be felt in the attitude of the men lying here in the tent—the way they were

quiet tonight, the way they stared at the black, dancing shadows that the candles threw along the canvas flaps. Outside, the artillery was belching intermittently. The wave of sound was like a hammer, like a huge fist striking and shaking the tent. Out of the corner of his eyes, Gus spied Charlie Kilpatrick and Harry Wolvington. They were sitting on sandbags writing letters. Groves and Phillips were writing, too. After four days of sleeplessness, it seemed strange that the fellows would take out time to write the folks back home. Yet that was what they were doing, and Gus Scafidi knew the type of messages they were scribbling.

So, Gus took a few sheets of paper and pencil from his pack. Ink was out of the question. The entire supply of ink had frozen. He sat near a candle and wrote:

December 2, 1950
Frozen Chosen
N. Korea

Dear Family,

As you probably know already, the Chinese have cut us off from the outside world, but they are throwing supplies to us by parachutes—big flying boxcars are dropping them. It is a pretty sight, cause the sky is lit up with all colors and types of chutes.

We got word that when we leave, we will fight our way out no matter what the cost may be.

Today Father Sporrer gave us Holy Communion and gave us hope that everything will be okay. So now I am ready to meet my God. In case I don't make it out of here, it's cause of the will of God, but even so, my body will come out regardless. I am not afraid to die now but I am scared of the thought of all those fanatic red guys being misled. These guys are doped cause they wouldn't march down a hill in mass formation to

attack us if they weren't doped. They die by the thousands but seem to keep coming all the time. I am sad cause I couldn't say good-by to you in person, but God understands how we all feel. We aren't giving up, also we still have the will to come out together and alive. They said this will be just like a game, only if the team sticks together we will come out winners. Well, I am proud to be on such a fine team cause the odds are always against us. So just pray to God and never give up, we'll all meet again when we are at God's side. Who knows, I might have a machine gun post at the gate so the devils won't get in and wreck the place. Well, God bless all of you. Love always.

*Your son and brother,
Gus*

The candles in the tent sputtered and melted quickly. Gus Scafidi, in all his life, had never seen candles burn so quickly. That was probably due to the cold. Or probably they were Korean candles. Anyway, he felt better, now that he had written the letter. And yet he did not feel exactly satisfied. A fellow never gets to say all that he means on paper, especially on a night like this. He sharpened his pencil with his knife and continued to write:

Dear Mom and Dad,

I am sorry now I wasn't a son to you I should have been. I know I have caused all of you a lot of worry but I guess it's too late to think of that. I want you to remember I'll always love you for all the things you have done and gave me, mainly for the trouble when I was born. I wasn't much of a son but I know you will be happy to know that I am in the state of Grace so don't cry over me leaving, just thank God he gave me a chance to square away before meeting him.

I love you both.

*Your son,
Gus*

Shortly after Gus finished this letter the flap of the tent was opened. Someone called his name; reminded him he had security watch. Gus affirmed it and when the fellow walked out into the night, he saw the green-white blaze of an illuminating shell descending over a nearby hill. Well, he had a few more minutes. He was sure in the mood to write tonight.

Dear Chris,

I want you to be a good boy and grow up the same way. Don't do the things I have done, profit from my mistakes. I love you Chris, and I know you love me, but I am not going down without a fight. You can have the trophy I won for boxing. It is yours, and I want you always to be proud of me. Also make Mom and Dad proud of you too. God bless you.

Love,

Your brother,

Gus

That was about the most Sgt. Gus Scafidi had ever written at one sitting. He looked around him. Wolvington and Kilpatrick were still writing. Practically everybody was writing tonight. Nor were there any remarks passed when, here and there, the sleeve of a man went up to brush something from his eyes. Marines can cry. Gus Scafidi knew it. He was looking at them, his buddies, silent, haggard, bearded men, all of them doing what he was doing. When he checked his watch, he had to blink a few times before he could read it. Just about time for one more.

Dear Sal and Tony,

First of all, I don't want you guys enlisting to get revenge. You see I don't hate the Chinks and I don't want you guys to hate them either. The Chinks don't know what they are fighting about. They are misguided people.

I am leaving my car to you guys so do the wisest thing in your life, share it. I don't have much but it is yours. Don't do nothing you will be sorry for later. God bless you both.

*Your loving brother,
Gus*

P.S. Well Folks,

Nothing much to say except to tell Angie I love her always. I don't have anything to give her but tell her to be a good wife and mother. Bring her kids up the way she was and nothing will go wrong. Tell Frank to take care of Angie or I'll haunt him till his dying day.

Whatever I got left or saved in the bank, Mom and Dad gets, plus the \$10,000 insurance—you're rich now (ha-ha).

*Love to you always,
Gus*

It was time to go now. Gus folded the sheets and slipped them into his pocket. No doubt about it, it was the longest letter he had ever written. He really did feel better now. No matter what happened it was good to think that you were getting squared away with everyone, especially with the ones who counted.

Looking at an overlay of the route of withdrawal, tracing the thin pencil sketch of the road from Yudam-ni to Hagaru-ri, Sergeant Scafidi could imagine himself sitting out on the rung of a topographical L. Right now, coming down the main stem of that L were the 5th and 7th and elements of the 11th Marines. With them would be Andy Jackson, Bruce Carrol, and many of the friends he knew back in Norfolk.

The big problem was, could the men make it? The 89th Chinese Communist Division, frantically hurling four- and five-pronged assaults at the retreating lines, was desperately

trying to cut into the leg of the L, to isolate it and pulverize it before it should tie into Hagaru-ri. This, at the time, was beyond Gus Scafidi's vision. A man at a machine gun post sees only the arc that his weapon commands. He could not know that for three savage days the 5th and 7th Regiments would never forget a hill at Yudam-ni, numbered 1240. He did not know that between the dark hours of eleven o'clock at night until seven in the morning an entire regiment of Chinese was battering Charley Company of the First Battalion—that a Lt. Col. J. W. Stevens would come out of this war to remember, always, a kid he called Billy, a machine gunner who refused to budge from his post. (There were 51 Communists officially counted dead in front of Billy's gun at Yudam-ni.)

These were the flaming hours of early December when ground was contested, not in terms of hills, but in sectors and slopes; when the roar of artillery mingled with Chinese bugles and whistles; where company rushed to reenforce company, and platoons wheeled back and forth to changing operational control. The shouting of the Leathernecks along the ridge had one incessant ring: hold the high ground and keep the supply route open. When Fox Company, 2d Battalion of the 7th Regiment, was cut from 256 to 67 able-bodied men, officers like Captain Barber and Lt. Joe Brady went out on the hill, pulled back the wounded, and propped them in their foxholes. "We'll need every man to hold this ground. That means we need the wounded too. We'll need everybody and anybody who can still lock and load," said Captain Barber.

With fury mounting to frenzy, the Chinese riflemen, spear-headed by grenadiers, came swarming over the hills. They came running in a half crouch or fully upright. The grenadiers flung grenades that were booster-charged with sulphur. The living artery of Marines, contracting in the ever-tightening peristalsis of retreat, leapfrogged its mortar and machine gun

fire. So close did the action run, that the artillery forward observers were unable, at times, to call in their barrages. Yet, yard by yard, the artery, like a living organism, continued to contract, pulling with it its own tragic slough of the dead and wounded. In desperation, the enemy deployed, circling widely, probing for a soft vulnerable segment. The enemy knew that the quickest way to destroy an artery is to rupture it and gut it with the charred embolism of the roadblock. There were ambushes along the line—smoking, disabled trucks cluttering the way, halting the flow of escape. But the artery merely convulsed. Like a healthy organ, it bulged and rippled forward. It employed, literally, all its muscular energy to burst the clot that stopped the flow. It moved the burning trucks aside, shouldered them off the road, raked the ambushed areas, opened the MSR. The artery was throbbing again, dragging in its tide the rubble; sealing itself in the places where it had bled; sensitive, grateful; grateful especially for the assistance that came roaring from the sky with its cauterizing ordnance of flame. There is not a Marine who walked from the Reservoir to Majongdong who will not bless to his dying day the pilots who banked off the hills of North Korea.

The line was moving to Hagaru-ri.

Gus Scafidi waits at his gun post at Hagaru-ri. The hours tick off slowly. Routine. Darkness to dawn. A few hours to knock off. Back to the post again. Then wait. Boy, it sure will be good to meet the old gang again, Andy and the rest of them. It all depends, naturally. It depends upon whether they can make it, whether nothing happened to them, whether the 5th and 7th can get through. Gus squints quickly. Something's ahead. Something's moving on the bend of the road. He picks up his field glasses. They're scouts! Lead scouts! They're coming in. They got through! Gus, looking through the glasses,

read the numbers on the bumper of the jeep. "It's them! Yowee! They made it."

Sergeant Scafidi heard the men in his outfit cheering along the hills. From where he sat, there was never any parade like this. It was coming closer into view now—the long line of jeeps, trucks, trailers, and men marching in file. There were cheers and more cheers.

Later there were no cheers.

It was different, later. Standing off the road, Gus watched them as they trudged by. How would you describe them? "Zombies" was the word. They had the dead, expressionless masks of automatons. From the hillside, what appeared to be marching now turned out, at closer view, to be the shuffling, limping gait of men who had not known what sleep was for more than five solid days. They passed slowly. They rarely looked at you nor did they look at the trucks that threaded grindingly between their files. The trucks caught your eyes. They were leveled off to carry the stretcher cases. And when the other trucks rumbled by, someone next to you said, "Jesus!" These were the special trucks holding the dead; and the dead they held were stacked like cords of lumber. Nor from this vantage point was there any mistaking death as it rolled by in low gear. The stiff and unmistakable posture hit you between the eyes. Some of the legs were pointed at different angles to the sky. This was the toll America was paying for a passage to the sea. "Hundreds and hundreds of them," someone said. "Holy Christ, we sure got it." And the dead continued to rumble by in their truck-hearses.

Gus felt the taste of death in his stomach. This was the caravan moving on limping feet, and where the caravan moved there would be more death. The Chinese even now were swirling in frantic moves to pinch this escape.

“George!” Scafidi yelled. He spotted him in the line. It was Georgie George. “How are you?”

“Okay.”

“Boy, you guys been really hitting it. How would you like a lift, George? I think I can fix you up for a jeep or something.”

George’s face was a blank. “It makes no difference, Gus. We walked *this* far.” George kept walking. Gus swore he was in a stupor. He was convinced of it.

Then he saw Bruce Carrol. Bruce used to be about two hundred and fifty pounds. He was a monster when he left the States. He was a good guy on 30-caliber machine guns, the heavy water-cooled type.

“Bruce! Carrol! Is that you?”

“Yeah, it’s me. How you doing, Gus?”

Gus wanted to run into the line and pull him out, but you couldn’t do a thing like that. You just bit your lip and looked at Bruce Carrol, a fellow who had shrunk to skin and bones. He had lost at least a hundred pounds.

“How was it, Bruce?”

“Nothing to kick about, so far.”

“I’ll be seeing you, old man.”

“Okay.”

“You didn’t see Jackson, did you?”

“Andy Jackson? No, I didn’t, Gus.”

The voice was lost then in the grinding of trucks.

Sergeant Scafidi stood off the side of the road, shouting occasionally to the weary faces he recognized. Nobody, so far, had seen Andy Jackson. Maybe Andy would be along any time now. Andy, Claude, and Gus! The three of them together again! Claude was at Koto-ri. That was the next stop down the line. Maybe if everything turned out okay they’d play “Pig” again. Maybe they’d get after Dodo Dauria to filch a

little coffee for old time's sake. Yeah, maybe Andy'd be along any minute.

Then Gus saw the face of an Army man in that line. He looked like a kid eighteen years old. No beard on his face. Young. The helmet on his head was too big for him. It jerked and shimmied at the jolt of every step he took. His eyes were riveted on Gus. Gus wondered why.

Then immediately he knew the answer. Phosphorus. The left side of the fellow's face was burned. His left eye or, more exactly, the fleshy part of his left cheek was seared. His eyes were transfixed. They could not focus forward or to the left. He *had* to stare right. He *had* to look at Gus.

Young, beardless, little Army kid, still proud in your slogging shoe pacs; little unknown kid who came through terrors that neither tongue nor pens shall ever describe; little anonymous, helmet-flopping Army kid who had "eyes right" for all the other curious eyes that searched the faces of your ranks that day; little fellow, there are those who would like to meet you some day.

This roughly was what Sgt. Augustine Scafidi thought as he watched the small figure walk up the road. It was really hard to put into words except to say that "the little guy had what it took." An aura of tremendous exploits was hanging in casual glory over the sagging shoulders of one little Dog-face as he slogged into Hagaru-ri.

Not many hours later, Gus was in the line moving to Koto-ri. The gray of the December sky was hanging like a shroud of death under which, on orders, he and twenty thousand had yet to march. Gus wondered if he would make it.

And where was Andy?

The southeastward movement from the Chosen Reservoir to Hagaru-ri spelled out the L. From there to Koto-ri, the push

was due south, so that the line of march from the tip of the L became the leg of a topographical chair.

At Koto-ri, Claude Angers, a wiry, blond corporal with Headquarters Company, 11th Marines, crouched beside the battered body of a gunnery sergeant. Angers was holding a blood bottle, studying it as its contents seeped into the man's arm. Sub-zero temperatures at Koto-ri were raising havoc with the Medical Company's plasma. Angers watched the bottle intently, hoping that the plasma powder would not clog the tube. A man's life was literally hanging on the swing of the thermometer.

"You'll be all right, Mac," Angers said.

"You think so?" The sergeant looked at Angers with tired eyes.

"Sure. You'll be flown out of here this afternoon. Couple of hours from now, you'll be sleeping between nice clean sheets. First class."

"Japan, huh?"

"Yeah, Japan sure looks good from here."

"You can say that again." When the sergeant closed his eyes, Angers kept watching the bottle.

About an hour later, Claude Angers leaped from a jeep at the airstrip. An R4D was being readied for a take-off with a load of evacuees. A crewman was just about to shut the door when Angers ran up.

"Hey, you got room for one more?"

"We're filled up. We're stacked to the roof."

At that moment Capt. Bud Warren of the 1st Marine Air Wing appeared at the door. "What's the trouble?" he asked.

Angers pointed to the stretcher on his jeep. "He's got it bad."

Warren hesitated for a second. "Okay, bring him aboard."

Angers helped carry the wounded man through the door

and in the semidarkness of the plane's interior, he stumbled over the prostrate bodies of men lashed to the floor. These were the tough cases, the ones on the floor. The nurse could reach them more easily.

Captain Warren surveyed the gloomy cavern of the ship. Like all the pilots who had been flying air evacuations from Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri, he felt the preflight tension. Here in Koto-ri especially, he felt it. The field was a small postage-stamp strip that the Engineers had to blast before they could grade it. It was extended from 1,100 to a usable 1,800 feet. Coming in, you had to be on the ground in the first 50 feet, and your braking action had to be cautious. Landings were made to the north and take-offs to the south, regardless of the wind. Any mistake on the runway would either land you in a river, on a hill, or as Bud Warren described it, "into the arms of all those unfriendly laundrymen." These were merely the technical headaches that a pilot had to contend with at Koto-ri; they faded to nothing when he saw the wounded—the thin, pain-racked, yet hopeful faces, the blackened feet, the chests and stomachs bound in the tight lattice of bandages. It was for such as these that Capt. Malcolm "Monk" Moncrief stood out there on the field right now, acting as a landing signal officer within actual range of sniper bullets; and it was for such as these that Al McCaleb roared off the runway in his TBM "Turkey" carrying eleven on an aircraft that normally carries four. For such as these, Bud Warren, veteran pilot of two wars, felt the preflight tension.

"You see, it's not only the business of getting the plane off that strip, or worrying about the small-arms fire that gets you. It's the kids themselves. You fly at high altitudes and there are fellows behind you with punctured lungs strapped to the deck. They're having a hard time trying to breathe at those altitudes. You know there's bumpy flying ahead, and every bump gets

a groan out of some poor devil. Rough weather opens up wounds sometimes.”

That was the way Bud Warren felt. That was the way all these pilots felt.

A few minutes later, Claude Angers waved from the jeep to Captain Warren. The engines roared, the plane wheeled onto the flying track, paused, then rumbled forward picking up speed. It was up and away, over the hills, and Claude Angers knew then, in this lonesome pocket of the world, that Japan must be some wonderful land beyond the horizon with clean sheets, and plasma that never froze. Japan, from here, was home-sweet-home.

Angers lifted the blankets from the pyramidal tent and heaped them in a pile on the frozen ground. On top of the blankets, he threw bandages, plasma, albumin, glucose, and whatever else he could lay his hands on. Suddenly he felt a sharp rap across his back. It was Gus Scafidi's hand.

“Gus, you old clown, when did you get in?”

“Just now, and brother I could stand some coffee.”

“How about Andy? Did you see him?”

“I don't know about Andy. I was looking for him at Hagaru-ri.” Gus sat on the ground. His voice was weary. “You know it was pretty rough at Yudam-ni.”

“I know.”

“That's where Andy was.”

Angers tossed a can of gasoline on the pile of medical supplies and set them ablaze. “I could run ten drugstores with the stuff I've got to burn before we pull out of here. Come on, let's see Dodo for some coffee.”

Six of them sat near the folded pyramidal tent that afternoon—Gus Scafidi, Cpl. Lonnie Cassell, S/Sgt. Bruce Paveto, Johnny Coop, Larry Overman, and Claude Angers. Dodo Dauria walked up with the coffee.

"You know, guys, they're goin' to have to give me oak leaf clusters, cherry clusters, and the whole cabbage for what I'm doin' for the morale of this outfit," Dodo said. "They tell me the Army travels on its stomach. And you know what them stomachs are travelin' on? Dodo's coffee!"

They laughed a bit, and shivered, and talked, the seven of them. They had no way of knowing that for some of them this would be the last cup of coffee they would drink. There was no foreseeing that, within three hours, more than half of them would be dead.

Andy Jackson, with a ligament of one leg shot away and the other punctured with dum dum bullets, lay on the frozen ground, east of the Reservoir. His eyes were closed. The bayonet of a Chinese infantryman was pressing against him. This was how death would come. A plunge of steel through his parka, into his flesh, into his stomach. That was the Chinese way of doing it. He had a sickening thought then. The heart would have been better. Quicker. Three . . . five . . . ten . . . seconds passed. Andy opened his eyes and looked upward. The brown eyes of the Chinese were studying him. The man made a motion with his rifle, signaling him to get up. Andy tried to tell him he could not move. Again, there was the quick commanding gesture of the rifle.

Andy knew he had to rise and walk. All the stories of death marches he had ever heard flashed through his head. A prisoner who could not walk signed his own death certificate. As weak as Andy was, he still wanted to live, so he staggered to his feet. The Chinese indicated the direction with his gun. For six or seven steps, Andy weaved in an uncertain line. Pain, like hot poker stabs, ran into his thighs. His stomach had a sickish feeling. Then he noticed that the ground began to get hazy. He squinted his eyes in an effort to see. It was like a dark

curtain, this new sensation. The light of day seemed to be going out. This must be what death is—a physical darkness folding in over you. When Andy hit the ground, he did not feel any pain. He was out.

Later, when Andy opened his eyes, he saw the ceiling of a Korean hut over his head. Near him were farming tools. He was lying on a straw mat. A movement at the other end of the hut caught his eyes. It was a Chinese guard sitting on a pile of mats. The guard reached for a candle, lit it, and then proceeded to eat rice. Andy was not sure it was rice. The stuff looked white in the candlelight. Andy was not sure of anything those first few minutes. It seemed as if this must be some sort of horrible nightmare. When he moved his leg, the shock of reality came throbbing in waves over him. He had been unconscious for nine, perhaps ten hours. Maybe more. Maybe for an entire day—two days. He could not be sure. When he moved his arms, he felt surprising freedom. That was understandable. Someone had taken his parka. He knew also that his shoes were gone and this left him feeling lonely and afraid. It was odd what shoes could mean to you. Without them the thought that you were a prisoner and helpless became strikingly real.

For the first time he realized he was shivering. Apples were lying on the floor near him, but Andy was not hungry. He closed his eyes and became conscious only of pain and darkness and fright. "O God, how long is this going to last? Help me. Help me, God." Something like that he prayed. It was strange now how this thought of God was mixed with warmth and Florida and the distant brightness of home. Andy shivered on the hard mat.

He was awakened by the pounding of bombs. Already light had begun to filter through the straw shutters of the door. The bombing went on intermittently, then died away.

An officer, followed by a guard, entered the room. The

first words he said surprised Andy. "Hello, Jackson. How are you?"

"I'm not feeling so well. My legs hurt."

"I am sorry. We have no medical aid here." The officer was studying the contents of Andy's wallet. He lifted out the identification card and held it close to his eyes. "How many men are in your regiment, Jackson?" The officer crouched beside him.

Jackson didn't answer.

"What was your job?"

"I was a rifleman."

"You're a sergeant. Is that not so?"

"Yes, I'm a sergeant."

"And a Marine too. Yes?"

"That's right."

The man made a gesture in the direction of the guard. "This soldier, Jackson, he knows much about Marines. It is true that to be a Marine you are required to kill so many people. Yes?"

"No, that's not true."

The officer's face was twisting in what seemed to be a smile. His fingers felt the wool of Andy's lapel. "You are clean. Your clothes are new. You did not fight in Seoul. No?"

Andy lied then. "No, I just came in. I don't know anything about Seoul."

"And a rifleman, what is he required to do? Be a good shot, as you say?"

"I'm not so good, sir. Of course, I qualified."

Andy was mystified by this casual questioning. The man's English was perfect. Andy was sure he was a Russian. He was even more puzzled when the man spoke again.

"You like baseball. No?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have been to San Francisco and New York," the officer

said. He stood up and threw the wallet to Andy. Then he walked out of the hut.

Hours passed and with them came the distant booming of artillery. Jackson tried to squirm into a comfortable position on the mat. All that day and the following night, he could not sleep. When morning came at last, he dozed.

On the afternoon of the second day, he woke with a burning fever. His own groaning awakened him. Or perhaps it was thirst. His legs seemed to be on fire. Strangely, he could see better. He even thought he was hungry. Propping himself on his elbows, he called to the guard. "Chop chop," he said, making the motion of a man eating. The guard stared at him, then pointed to the apples that were strewn over the floor. Andy reached for one of them and bit into it. It tasted good. He lay back on the mat shivering either with fever or cold. He fell asleep even before he finished eating the apple.

The evening of the third night was the most painful. Three Chinese guards were eating and drinking what must have been wine. Their faces were flushed and their voices were loud. There was a hollow, painful emptiness in Andy's stomach. He wondered if he was starving. Yet the dry, aching pain of thirst was what he felt most. "*Mizu*," he called. The guard would understand the Japanese word for water. "*Mizu*," he called again, simulating the act of drinking from a bottle. The guards looked at him and said something unintelligible. One of them laughed and pointed a finger at him. They kept eating and drinking the wine. Andy reached for another apple and chewed the juice out of it.

It might have been seven o'clock or later when Andy tried to sit up. The hut was silent except for the snoring of a single guard. The Chinese was sitting against the wall, his head hanging sideways in deep sleep. Empty wine bottles were scattered

on the floor. Then something attracted Andy's eyes. It was the guard's rifle lying to one side.

Andy was breathing fast when the plan flashed through his mind. Escape! That would be his only hope for survival. He would dry and rot like the apples on the floor if he stayed. With the rifle, he would have at least some kind of a chance, even a fighting chance.

He began to crawl across the floor. His pants had become embedded in the clotted wounds of his leg. Slowly he approached the spot where the gun lay. Andy had difficulty trying to stifle the pain that racked his body. Closer and closer he crawled until he had a good view of the rifle. It was a captured American weapon with fixed bayonet. Jackson felt something warm, like exhilaration, shooting through him when he saw it. Just as he gripped the barrel, the Chinese lifted his head. His bloodshot eyes blinked straight at Andy. Then he lunged.

It was done inside twenty seconds. The bayonet that Andy thrust forward pierced the body of the Chinese and its tip jolted against the wall. Jackson knelt beside the guard, his body in an ague of nervous tension.

Some minutes later, he was crawling over the snow-crueted ground. It was an area he didn't know, but his thinking was clear. He would take his time. The night would be long and black. *Keep to the wooded areas*, he kept telling himself. He froze momentarily when he saw a shadow on the side of the hill. He waited for it to move. Slowly his eyes made it out. It was a tomb, a square box on top of a mound. Strange, how much like a squatting guard it looked.

The following eighteen hours were a freezing hell. With daylight on the hills, Andy had to lie motionless most of the time in bramble thickets. He pounded his ribs and arms to

keep from sleeping. To sleep now meant death. Never before had he to fight against drowsiness like this. The fear of being recaptured, and the certain death that would follow, inflamed his lagging senses. Yet, more than fear, the fierce hope that he could still contact a rescue party prodded him to alertness.

When the shadows came over the eastern mountains, Andy moved again. He must have crawled about twenty yards, when his head began pounding. Dizziness was making the earth spin. He had to keep awake. Perhaps the cold shock of water would do it. He rolled downward on a slope of the hill to the creek he had left some hours ago. The icy fringes broke under the heels of his hands, and when he drank and splashed water on his face he felt sick and spent. Pain was like a hammer hitting him in the head. He filled his canteen with water but when he tried to hitch it to his webbed belt, he rolled over on his face. Sleep was what he needed. Just a few seconds or minutes. He closed his eyes and when he opened them again, Andy Jackson was sure he had gone out of his mind. This *had* to be a nightmare.

A Chinese woman dressed in a faded pink uniform was standing beside Andy. Where was he? Who was this woman? His eyes traced the outline of the room. Near him was a bedpan. Small bottles of medicine were lined across a table to his left.

The woman moved aside when a man, dressed in a grayish-green suit, entered. He, too, was a Chinese. Without saying a word, he rolled back the sleeve of Andy's shirt, jabbed him in the arm and drained blood. So that was it. He had been recaptured and brought to an aid station. He was lying on a cot. No, it wasn't a cot. It was a hammock. This man was a doctor and these women, there were two of them now, were nurses.

The doctor said something to one of the nurses later, and she gave Andy two shots in the arm. Andy looked at the doctor

and the man said two words. They sounded like "gas gangrene." The doctor then began to cut away the cloth fragments that were still buried in Andy's leg wounds. Later he questioned Andy: asked him how long had he been wounded; when had he last eaten. Andy was not sure.

That afternoon, one of the nurses brought him a box of captured C-rations. It must have been C-6 because there was no spoon. She left them on a box near the hammock. She also offered him some rice. When Andy said, "Thanks," she smiled and walked away. That was when Andy turned to the wall and wept. *God Almighty, what a war. What a strange, dirty, rotten, awful business was war. What brutalities and what mystifying mercies.* Andy Jackson would never forget the face of the Chinese he had bayoneted. He could never erase from his mind this one box of C-rations and the fleeting smile of a girl dressed in a faded pink uniform.

Some fourteen shots in the arm later (Andy counted them) the doctor returned to the room with two soldiers. "We do not have the proper medical equipment here," he said, in flawless English. "If our soldiers carry you back through the American lines, can you guarantee their safe return?"

"I sure can, sir," Andy said.

"Will you sign a statement?"

Andy signed a written promise. The doctor handed it to one of the soldiers, giving him instructions in Chinese. Then he gave Andy a paper with a list of the medical treatments he had received. A few minutes afterward, Andy was transferred from the hammock to a stretcher. Later he was strapped to the back of a Russian jeep. One of the soldiers gave him a carbine. Andy read the number on it: 7117075. They had removed all the ammunition from the magazine. The jeep took off over what seemed to be back roads and rice paddies. After a few hours' drive, they reached an area that Jackson identified as

friendly. A Navy Construction Battalion was doing some bridge building. The Chinese driver stopped the jeep and loaded Andy's carbine with ammunition. When the jeep started forward again, someone began to shout.

"Halt and raise your hands."

Lieutenant Roberts of Los Angeles, a tall, slim officer with a yellow ball patch over his left pocket, came forward. There were two Seabees with him. Roberts ordered the Chinese out of the jeep. Turning to the Seabees, he said, "Take these men to G-2."

The Seabees approached with pistols.

"Leave those men alone," Jackson yelled.

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I said. I signed a statement. Anybody who lays a hand on them, I'll shoot."

"You know what this means, Sergeant?" the officer said.

"I have a rough idea."

The officer ordered the Seabees to lift the stretcher from the jeep and get Andy out of the way. When they approached the jeep, Andy said, "You're not getting me out of the way. Just put me on the ground, that's all." Andy Jackson sat on the ground between the Seabees, and looked up at Roberts. "Sir, I wouldn't be alive if it wasn't for these Chinese. I wouldn't even be here. I gave my word they'd get back safe."

The officer was silent.

Andy saluted the two Chinese and motioned them to get into the jeep. They did so and drove off.

Lieutenant Roberts watched the Chinese as they faded up the road. "They didn't look back," he said. "They didn't look to the left or right." There was a twinkle in the Lieutenant's eyes.

Sgt. Andrew Jackson had only one thing to say: "Boy, it's good to see guys like you again."

The closing stages of the great retreat saw a remarkable evidence of military doggedness that America is likely to forget. Up to now, national interest was focused mainly on the trapped Marines. Back along the expanding beachheads on the eastern coast, the men listened to the words glumly. What had been high spirits a few weeks ago now turned to sober resignation over the setbacks sustained all across the Eighth Army and X Corps fronts. A numerically superior Chinese force was threatening to annihilate the Marines. There was no chance now of getting home by Christmas. There was only the rough and dangerous job of going into the interior to meet the Marines, swinging in behind them, giving them cover to the sea, and coming out as best you could. The job was going to call for nothing but sheer doggedness, and that, perhaps, is as good a reason as any for calling it Task Force Dog.

Slowly the task force assembles. It begins away up in Hongwon where the "Red Devils" of Col. Leon Lavoie's 92d Armored Field Artillery turn slowly in their tracks and negotiate a perilous descent over ice-covered roads to Hamhung. Trucks and trailers buckle their link-pins along the steep gorge routes. Task Force Dog takes shape under Brigadier General Mead of the 3d Division. Two artillery battalions, the 96th Field and the 999th Armored, in conjunction with Lavoie's "Red Devils" will provide mutual shield fire for the retreating Marine and Army units. Elements of the 7th Infantry Regiment and the 1st Marines move forward to effect the link-up. This move into the interior is beset with real danger. Vertical cliffs dominating both sides of the road, bridges over branch streams, and precipitous gorges leave the men open to ambush and roadblocks.

The task force moves to Oro-ri, up to Majong-dong, and on up to Chinhung-ni. In a furious attempt to stave off these relief forces, the Chinese disable thirteen trucks to glut the road.

A bulldozer and reconnaissance party move ahead and the trucks are nudged off the road. Point-blank artillery fire is called in upon the fanatical enemy who charge recklessly into the very mouths of the guns. "Legs and arms float in the air," Colonel Lavoie reported. "It's not something you'd care to look at."

But the junction is made.

In the early hours of the 10th of December the ghost men who have walked from the Reservoir start to pass through Task Force Dog. The morning breaks clear and registers 10 degrees below zero. All that day, exhausted Marines pass at the rate of 5 miles per hour. Overhead, Navy and Marine pilots smear the hills with naplam at treetop level.

Down to the sea the entire column moves. With the weary survivors from the Reservoir trap hauled aboard transports, the artillery units turn for the last time to stave off the enemy in a city of rubble and mud. Elements of the 3d Infantry Division, with their backs to the sea, contain the enemy while loading of tentage, ammunition, vehicles, and armor goes on along the Hungnam beachhead.

America still waits for what may be the good news. It is now the 19th of December. The perimeter shrinks in a city that is completely sandbagged and barbed-wired. Throughout the night, 8-inch naval gunfire blazes from the bay. Cooks, in the few remaining mess tents, curse when the concussion extinguishes the fire in their stoves.

December 20th dawns warm and clear. Administrative installations are beginning to check out. Battalion embarkation officers direct final loading. Out in the bay, the *Robin Kirk*, *Manderson Victory*, *Sultan*, and *Southwind* are some of the ships that wait to steam off to sea and safety.

In the early hours of December 22d, a group of fatigued

artillerymen squat on the beach. Bunched together for warmth and companionship, they listen to tall, gray-haired Lavoie.

"There were a lot of people waiting for those Marines and Army lads to come out. Nobody appreciates it now more than you fellows. And there are a lot who'll wait for those who'll never come out. We've been hurt, too. But remember this—" the Colonel, whose jeep bears the head of the red demon, and who goes by the name of Daddy Devil of the outfit, speaks solemnly—"we can thank God and the M-41s that we made it." Daddy Devil has a rare reverence for the Almighty and a self-propelled gun. His is one of the only two self-propelled battalions engaged in the entire Korean theater, and Lavoie had to argue like the very devil to persuade his bosses that these Cadillac-motored monsters could wheel with effect in the present war.

The last of the men go wriggling up the rope ladders into the ships. The chill and grime of two bitter months are sung away under hot showers. December 24th comes over the bay of Hungnam bright and biting cold. Small craft shuttling from shore to ships bring in the last dog-tired Infantry troops—yet not quite the last. At two o'clock reverberations go up in the doomed city. These are the demolition crews touching off fuses, blowing tons of high explosives to the sky. Closer the sound waves come as underwater demolition squads wreck beach and pier installations. The job is complete. Naval batteries continue to rake the shore as destroyers escort the convoy to sea. Sixty thousand men, in the face of numerically superior enemy forces, have been lifted out of the jaws of death.

But there was a price America paid for this retreat. She paid it in blood in North Korea; she paid it in heartbreak in the homes that waited and asked the question: where are they? America's casualties: 541 killed, 182 missing, 2,972 wounded,

3,655 nonbattle casualties. The price the enemy paid was staggering: he had lost more than an estimated 25,000 killed in action; he sustained 12,500 wounded.

Where are the fellows who, not so long ago, laughed and joked over games of "Pig"? For these who were and are your sons—Lonnie Cassell, Bruce Paveto, Johnny Coop, and Larry Overman—death came quickly. "There wasn't a mark on them. That's how concussion grenades get you. And to think that half an hour before, they were alive and kicking." That is the way the young corporal explained it.

Where's Andy?

And where are Gus Scafidi and Claude Angers?

Only the other day I saw them in a sunlit valley south of Yanggu. The three of them are together again. In their own words, they "made it" somehow.

"Funny thing," Gus Scafidi said. "I never thought I'd make it. I even wrote my last will and testament."

When I told him I was curious about a Marine's last will and testament, he removed three soiled sheets of paper from his pocket. "These are letters I wrote. I've been carrying them with me since those days at Hagaru-ri."

"I would like to copy them, Gus," I said.

"You're not going to *print* those, are you?" Gus asked.

"There's nothing wrong with them, is there?"

"Well, no, I suppose not. Go ahead. I figure myself, maybe it's a good thing to let people know how you feel about them before you actually do kick off."

The days now are a bit different from that dark December. It seems ages since I waited at the airstrip, watching the planes come in with the wounded from the Reservoir. Those days, the pilots allowed me to walk up the ramp of the plane before they removed the stretcher cases. It was a kind of bad and sad dream, then, with tired nurses bending over hysterical boys. They

reached out for my sleeve those nights, and tugged at it from the racks in the planes. They were like hollow-eyed, babbling children coming out of a delirium when they realized that the engines had stopped and they were safe at last in Japan. When I first saw Andy, hobbling on his crippled legs, I thought he would never see another battlefield; but Andy comes from stubborn stock. He is a descendant of the great Andrew Jackson, warrior of the Seminole Indian War. Andy's proudest possession is the sword which the United States Army gave to old Andrew Jackson and which is now in the museum of Jacksonville, Florida.

"I'll get that sword whenever I want it," Andy says.

While Sergeant Jackson is not yet fit for front-line duties, he still moves within the sound of artillery. His face is thin and sober, and he will tell you that he never looks at a bayonet without thinking of C-6 rations, and the kindness of a Chinese nurse. He still remembers the look of a man he killed. "It's a funny kind of war," Andy says.

[THREE]

• A Steel Bolt

This is, incidentally, a story of a steel bolt. According to specifications, it is no thicker than $\frac{5}{8}$ inch and no longer than 8 inches. Yet, as slight as are its specifications, its dimensions are as broad as America; for in a definite sense it is the reflection of the hot furnaces that glow red against the sky of Pittsburgh, of the sweat-soaked miners who chew into the coal beds of West Virginia, of the white-tiled laboratories of universities, and more specifically, of the men and women who carry lunch kits and compacts to the factories and assembly lines of Indiana and California. Its tensile strength has the exacting beauty of statistical computation; but there are no scales sensitive enough to measure the devotion of the greasy hand that holds the wrench and tightens it to the framework of the common cause which, in this instance, is war. This single bolt, however,

is not merely a symbol. It is a definite piece of steel. It lies invisible within the fuselage of a jet Shooting Star.

The biting breeze of March that stings the orchards of Taegu is whipping the cold mists off the mountaintops. The atmosphere is brilliant where the sun soaks through. Great blasts of exhaust, pouring from the tails of jets that taxi to the runway, roar across the valley floor and shudder in the sound pockets of the hills. It is a day for flying.

Capt. Bill Yoakley of Yukon, Florida, snaps the button of his crash helmet, adjusts his lip microphone, and is set to go. Leader of this flight of F-80s out of the 8th Fighter Bomber Wing, this is just another armed reconnaissance job for Yoakley. Lt. Willy Wall is the element leader this morning. There are four planes in all. Weather to the north around Wonsan is reported not too good. At a signal from the tower, the sleek planes nose into the wind, gather speed, and leap to the air with quivering, rocket-laden wings.

Armed reconnaissance is all that the mission implies. The pilot relaxes over friendly areas, recognizing the curvature of terrain already won. It is only when he soars beyond the hairlines of his map—those critical sections that lie in altitude tint legends—it is then that reconnaissance takes on the significance of the hunt. His jet has become a bird of war, seeking and being sought.

Bill Yoakley, as yet, has time to admire the weather and to feel the joy of being alive. Up here where the sun dances along the silver spread of the wings, he is conscious of the power that hums around him. There are those who have reported, with no end of ridicule from the lads who handle the old flying Turkey, that jet pilots are *different*. Bill is not ready to go on record about being different. He has mixed with too many Mustang admirers and Corsair crusaders to be able to say that the cockpit of a jet has anything to do with the mak-

ing a man. But this he knows. This glass dome above his head that juts like a bubble on a silver cigar houses one of the finest pieces of workmanship that has ever knifed the air. Streamlining was the word that dictated every inch, fore and aft. Streamlining was the performance pattern that had been written into the blueprints. To attach any exterior equipment to the sleek contour of the ship was, theoretically, to knock the bolts out of it—as her designers had declared. This F-80 was first and foremost a fighter-interceptor. Yet, though it was cleanly cut for the tricky business of interception, the jet that Bill Yoakley rode, that morning, had been harnessed, comparatively speaking, with a load bigger than a B-36's. The hum that trailed behind him was the war song of aviation's first improvised jet bomber. There is pardonable pride that runs in the blood of the man who sits at the controls of an F-80. Bill Yoakley was hitched to a Shooting Star.

The weather was a smudge about Wonsan. Like ducks avoiding scud, the four jets banked low to get under it. The bearing was westward, but when the clouds got darker and heavier, they twisted off at 180 degrees and whistled upward to Hamhung. The arc took them more than 80 miles above the coastal city. Clearer and colder up here, the terrain spread out in sunned and shadow-blue valleys. Snow in white splotches gleamed in the lowlands. This was the time for scrutinizing every paddy and road for telltale marks. The pace, clocked to the last gallon of fuel consumption, was the quick eye-raking of the area to spot human, animal, and vehicular movement.

At about 12:30 P.M. the four jets were sweeping over a valley. Like all Korean valleys, it spread wide and then was instantly choked in a funnel-pinch of mountains. Traveling at jet speed, it is easy to miss the mound that is really a camouflaged tank. But this morning there was no mistaking the trail

of the enemy. He was abroad on trucks and in oxcarts. His supply dumps were evident scars in the snow.

"Gas Mask Baker Lead," Yoakley spoke into the microphone. "I've got something."

The message was an instant alert. From the weaving, searching lines of reconnaissance, the four jets stiffened into the spaced slots of hungry falcons that have found their pitch and are getting set for the stoop.

Yoakley ordered the flight to hold off while he went in for the first run. Overshooting the valley intentionally, he sped back in a hill-skirting sweep and ranged his jet for the direct dip into the target area. The accompanying team, with ordnance switches checked and tank tips poking at the sky, circled watchfully, ready to dart in as soon as Yoakley should speak.

In this split instant, as the lead F-80 climbs for the diving altitude, there is the quick juggling of target value in the back of Yoakley's head: What is the lay of the land? It is clearer now. There is the valley below him. There also is the mountain road. The road is what Yoakley wants to reach. It is a twisting line carved into the shoulder of the mountain, about 1,000 feet above valley level. The road bristles with men and material. But above the road rise 2,000 feet of bare, hard rock.

Target value is a quantum that involves the calculated risk of destroying either the enemy or yourself. There is, besides, and this is a point that is bandied about in the ready rooms, the taxpayer's money. It is invested in every rivet of the ship. A man is trained not to expose hundreds of thousands of dollars to a passing whim. Yoakley had plenty of reasons to juggle his thoughts as he prepared for the decision.

The decision is made. Targets are few and far between, and this is a good one. From his flight angle, the procedure is to be roller-coaster fashion: dive, level off, fire, and climb. The jet pitches forward in the dive. Yoakley watches the valley

floor rising to him, a big tableland coming up out of infinity to portrait focus. He levels off, and the power of his plunge scoots him at better than 450 miles per hour in a trajectory toward the road. Closer and closer he comes. The scurrying of Communist soldiers and the blinking of machine guns are only yards away. A press on the button and his 50-caliber machine guns beat a staccato against the mountainside. He needs only $2\frac{1}{2}$ seconds to pour 1,800 rounds of fire, but $2\frac{1}{2}$ seconds are more than enough. There is no need to fire a salvo. Strafing results, in the terminology of fighter pilots, are already "excellent." For demolition, he might have released one of the rockets but the sharp angle he is now negotiating precludes rockets. He might blow himself and the taxpayer's money to smithereens.

In a fleeting moment, Yoakley catches sight of the sheer wall of rock that rears before the nose of his ship. He is trying to climb out of a bowl. The cliff is a blur that rolls under him. Through the glass dome, his eye measures the angle of the incline. Closer and yet closer his jet smothers in toward the shoulder of the mountain. Yoakley knows now that his plane is too heavy. Six hundred yards had been eaten up in a flick of time. He could lighten the load by dumping the rockets but he needs at least 2,500 feet for safety clearance. The rockets must ride with him.

Captain Bill Yoakley did not have all the time necessary to write off, in these fast-running seconds, what might or might not have been pilot error. There is no board of experts that can definitely establish liability on the color of rock or projection of shadow. What Yoakley *did* know was: his Shooting Star was doomed. He knew it without advertising to himself the fact that he himself was trapped in it. If you might have had a chance to sit down with Yoakley and if you had asked, "Were you scared?" he would have given you the same and almost

unbelievable answer that all these war-gearred pilots give you. There was no time to be scared. That is—consciously. Perspiration soaked them. Reflexes drove them to feats of strength that ripped their jackets and tore nails off their fingertips. But there was no pain. There was nothing like a morose and deliberate reflection upon peril. "There was no time to be scared."

So Bill Yoakley knew that his plane, streaking upward in a blistering drive of better than 300 miles per hour, was doomed. A jutting boulder was rushing straight at him in the ascent. This was a murderous frontage of rock. This he could miss. He could raise one wing and pull the jet to the side. But above and beyond the boulder was the hard crest of the mountain cap—a stiff mushrooming of land that defied every angle of elevation. Beyond any shadow of doubt now, the plane was going to crash.

The nose of the Shooting Star was pointed straight at the clotted mass of rock and dirt. This was the angle of instant death. There was no way to escape it but to point the Shooting Star straight to heaven; but to do this was to throw it into a power stall. Yoakley pointed his Shooting Star to heaven. The silver speedster, designed, by every stress of the test stands, to roar ahead on the air it could eat, had no air to eat. It shimmered in space for an instant, pancaked with a thunderous belly-crash against the crag, and of its own momentum shot out like a stricken ricocheted projectile from the smoking muzzle of a mountain. Captain Bill Yoakley was aloft. At the shimmering point of impact, his head felt as if it had been torn loose from his shoulders. The enamel of his crash helmet was splintered against the cockpit's wall. Smoke, acrid and gray, was pouring in clouds about him. He coughed and waved a gloved hand frantically in front of him to read the instrument panel. The jet roar was still back of his senses. The

Shooting Star was still in operation. Or was it his imagination? Was it a humming in his ears? He leveled the stick between his knees and fanned the air again. A burning sensation was in his throat. That was the smoke. There was no use trying to fan it away. It was seeping in through cracks and crevices. It was pouring in through the intake ducts. A warm sensation began to creep through his shoulder blades. Fire! To the rear, the accessory and engine compartment was ablaze.

Lieutenant Wall's jet nosed above his stricken flight leader. Willy Wall followed the smoking wreck, weaving 2,000 feet above and off the tail. In all his born days, Willy had never seen anything flying on wings that approached the tangled crate below him. He had already buzzed Yoakley on the radio but there was no answer. Billows of black smoke were trailing out now in ugly spumes. Wall waited tensely for the fatal orange burst that would spell disintegration and good-by to the guy he had had coffee with a few minutes ago. He waited and then he saw something that made him wonder. Yoakley was still operating. The glass canopy enclosing the flight leader flew up and out into space in a lazy end-over-end spin. Yoakley was at least conscious.

Down in the stricken plane, Yoakley felt the "pooh" of ice-cold air rush into his open cockpit. There had been no time to worry about altitude and oxygen. He had pulled the yellow handle and the glass dome was gone. The whoosh of the air, in cold and rarefied shocks, racked his body. It roared in a whirlpool back of his neck. He reached for his oxygen mask and clamped it over his mouth. He turned the oxygen valve to 100 per cent output and pulled his wind goggles over his eyes. A raging fire was now piling the heat in thicker waves against his back. All that had happened so far took place in not more than a few seconds.

After the initial impact had slackened off, it was time for a

man to get scared. Yoakley pressed the radio switch. Would it work? Had the pancaking smash against the mountain torn it loose? There was a power hum inside his helmet when he pressed the switch. It had the smooth electric whisper of the carrier wave.

“Gas Mask Baker Lead . . . Can you hear me, Willy?”

“Yeah, I can hear you, Bill. For crying out loud, get out of that wreck.”

“Come in and check me.”

The element leader was already swooping in a braked curve. He pulled up off Yoakley’s right wing, a dangerous 10 yards away. Willy’s eyes popped at what he saw. The great and once beautiful right arm of Yoakley’s flying bird was as shattered as the wing of a mallard ripped with a Double O charge. It was hanging on by the main spar. The tubular, cigarlike length of the fuselage looked as if some giant hand had tried to bend it in two. The tail pipe was flattened out and pointing at a crazy angle. But the thing that frightened Willy Wall most was the engine. It was plainly visible. It was stripped of its lower mounts and hanging down amidship in an angular fashion. The left upper mount was gone too. The engine, like the exposed entrails of some dying animal, was suspended by the sinew of a single bolt. It was still roaring. Lieutenant Wall unconsciously measured the seconds when that one bolt would crack and spill the engine and Yoakley to certain destruction.

Wall had assessed the damages. His simple and recorded recommendation was: “Get the hell out of it fast.” Either there was going to be an explosion or that bolt would snap. “Yoakley, that engine is going to cut loose.”

“What about the wing?”

“The wing is bad . . . very bad. You’ve got only the main spar.”

Yoakley remembered now. It was peculiar how the jigsaw

of a few nerve-shattering moments could settle into place. The condition of the wing was due to an exploded rocket. He remembered that now. One of the rockets, maybe two, had gone off on the impact. By every rule of the book, his Shooting Star should have been a splintered wreck back there over the hills. Yet she was still moving. She was still wobbling and roaring on a heart that pulsed through the thin artery of a number 10 bolt.

"Willy, let's head south," Yoakley said.

"South?"

"Maybe to Wonsan. I don't know. I'll fly as far as I can. The Navy . . ."

"Are you nuts? Wonsan from here?" It was at least twenty air miles away.

"The Navy, Willy, call them."

"Roger!" Willy Wall swung off. He had very little confidence in the message he was about to send. Yoakley was sitting on the triphammer of instant disintegration.

"Monte Carlo . . . Monte Carlo . . . May day . . . May day . . ." The six signals went out in the crisp repetition of distress.

"This is Monte Carlo," the flat voice came back.

"This is Gas Mask Baker Three."

"Gas Mask Baker Three, this is Monte Carlo. Go on."

"My leader is badly damaged. Trying to make Wonsan. Do you have a 'copter?"

"Roger, Gas Mask Baker Three. We have a 'copter. We will alert. Give position and stand by."

Willy Wall leaned sideways to watch Yoakley's smoking ship. He won't make it. He can't possibly make it. That thing down there is going to explode any second. These were Willy's thoughts before he gave the position.

"Gas Mask Baker Lead . . . Willy."

"I got the message through on Channel B, Yoakley. They'll have a 'copter."

"Ask them if there are any friendly islands near the mainland. I may have to go into the water."

The information came back. Reito Island was friendly. Plenty of Marines in the vicinity.

"Willy, I may not be able to make it. This thing is getting hotter. Can you hear me?"

"Yeah, I hear you. I see you."

Yoakley watched the rough terrain peel slowly under him. From here to the sea seemed like an eternity. To bail out now was to fall into enemy hands. The plane was kicking like a cement mixer. Air currents in the gaping holes were tearing it farther apart. A bolt was still holding, but it could never last in this turbulence. Yoakley then got a wild notion. If he could climb, he might be able to slow up and ease the shock of the air resistance. He lifted the plane to 12,000 feet. The engine was still pushing. Up and up slowly to 15,000 feet. The strain along the length of the ship had slackened but the freezing temperature at this altitude was making him numb. His feet began to sting with pain. It was either freeze at this altitude or come down again to the speed level that would wreck the plane. Yoakley came down. The bolt might hold. It had held so far.

The throttle linkage giving him power was now gone. Yet the jet was operating steadily and stubbornly. Yoakley had the sudden impulse to use his ejection seat. He had pulled up the arm rests to the side position. His finger was on the ejection trigger. Maybe if he bailed out here, he might have some chance. The hills were fairly thick with Communists but it was not the first time anybody had bailed out behind the lines. The hot flame behind was too much to gamble with. Before you could flick the lid of your eye, it might blow you to

bits. So he pulled his radio cords free. He checked his parachute harness. He had his feet in the ejection stirrups. One press on the trigger and he would be catapulted into space, free of the burning death wagon he was riding.

There is an indefinable trust that a man puts in the machine that he knows and runs. The nose of this F-80 was still pointing to the sea. It was nothing—this nose—but the trim front of a crippled craft that groaned onward. Still burnished and proud, it was like a finger, maintaining a fierce fixity on the horizon. With his finger resting on the ejection seat button, Bill Yoakley still waited.

Then at last there was the sea! It spread flat and peculiarly reassuring. Water was not an element that Bill Yoakley particularly liked, but it was better than the uncertainty of enemy-infested hills. He lifted his goggles from his eyes and saw the curling white line that marked the shore about Wonsan Harbor. He saw the ships lying off the coast. The Navy was in operation. Far to the right, a small blur was whizzing in his direction. That was the helicopter.

Yoakley was about to sigh with relief, when a strange noise hit his ears. The jet was sighing like a hurt and tired thing. It was about to give up. After a hurried check of his emergency harness, he leaned over to the right edge of the cockpit. Every fiber of his body suddenly contracted at what he saw. The wing was shivering through its last stages. Before his eyes, he saw it come up and fold like a broken arm. It slithered in the air flow and pulled the plane into a dive. The six machine guns at that moment were shorted and began firing in the whip-over. Still throwing its terrific propulsive blast, the jet engine dangled and continued to dangle on a thin piece of steel. The horizon spun in a dizzy whirl before Yoakley's eyes. It was land, sea, and clouds crowding his vision in a whirling revolution. This was death spinning up, down, and around him. Then the en-

gine, like a berserk dynamo, whooshed the one-winged plane into a bold arc. Yoakley felt for the ejection seat trigger. He pressed it, and instantaneously the .37-mm shell, with the kick of a mule, catapulted him clear of the cockpit.

Tumbling in space, Captain Yoakley heard the explosion. Even before he had time to disengage himself from the heavy ejection seat, the blaze told him that his jet was gone. Like the racing streak she was named after, she had faded violently—like a spent star.

Ejected into the air at about 500 miles per hour, the blast twisted Yoakley in all directions. Blinded by the terrific swish of air, he felt nausea sweep through him. The skin along his face felt as if it were being dragged from his skull. Yoakley waited for the bare fraction of time when his propulsion should taper off. His first job was to get rid of the seat. Fumbling for the snap on the safety belt, he finally unbuckled it and kicked the seat clear. End over end he tumbled toward the slate gray of the sea. The rapidity at which he was falling had to be checked, so he flung his arms wide in spread-eagle fashion. The seconds ran by like hours as he waited to pull the D ring over his heart. When he finally pulled it, there was the sound that is music to every paratrooper's ear. The silk billowed in the air with a resounding slap. The shock from the shroud lines went through his body. While he was falling, however, he passed through the risers. They were hopelessly crossed, leaving him no control over oscillation in the descent. The wind was off shore. It would carry him out to sea.

When he was at 3,000 feet, the helicopter swung near him. Yoakley grinned when the pilot and crewman waved. Relief! That's a word that the men of this war understand as they watch this fantastic, whirling machine pace a pilot like a mother bird over a crippled fledgling. Yoakley, for the first time that morning, relaxed. He had time to think about home and his

wife, Dottie. His body was trembling. A wave of something like thankfulness welled up inside him. The harrowing moments of this past hour had cramped him into a corner where he had to function with the desperate tension of an animal in peril of its life. The world about him was suddenly back again—real, wide, expansive, colorful. From his swinging parachute perch, Bill Yoakley shivered with an emotion that was pure gratitude for being alive.

Then danger came flashing back. The sea was rising to him and Bill knew that he had to disengage himself from that heavy parachute harness. The water below was cold—so cold that to stay in it for more than ten minutes would be fatal. His riser straps were already fouled. It was more than a ticklish business. A mistake now could be the difference between life and death.

His feet, churning the air before the impact, hit the water with a splash, and Yoakley plunged so deep that the water pressure closed his ears. Jerking and flailing his body in an effort to rise to the surface, he felt the drag weight of the escape and evasion vest weighing him down. The gear that was strapped about him—the C-ration, fishing kit, and the 200 rounds of ammunition slung over his back—were like lead sinkers. Slowly he fought to the surface.

He came up clear of the parachute. So far so good. He inflated his Mae West and then tried to loose the harness that crisscrossed him over the shoulders and under the crotch. Somewhere over his head, he heard the beating blades of the helicopter. Everything seemed to be going according to schedule until Yoakley realized with a sinking feeling that his harness was not coming loose. His fingers were already losing sensation in the cold water. The wind started to drag him behind the open parachute. He began to gag and choke on the salty water. Why wasn't the harness loose? He had unsnapped the

buckle; he had done everything that bail-out procedure called for. The pressure against his leg was the answer. For some reason he was knotted and fouled in the leg straps.

The helicopter, piloted by Lt. Don Whittaker, fluttered over the helpless and now freezing pilot. William Moore, the crewman, lowered the cable. "Grab it and hold on," Moore tried to yell above the roar of the blades. They saw Yoakley reach upward and grip the sling. The cable rose slowly.

For the first time that day Bill Yoakley felt physical pain. The weight of the water-soaked parachute was like a tourniquet about his leg. As the cable rose slowly the muscles of his arms and shoulders tightened into knots. The pain was excruciating. With two wrenched shoulders, the desperate pilot clung to the sling. The grip of his hands was the hold he had onto life.

Then the leg straps fell free. Yoakley swayed over the waves for a second or two. The cable rose slowly upward, pulling him toward the waiting crewman. Yoakley felt the good and sure grip of the young fellow's fingers circle his arms. He was yanked into the small cabin, soaking, shivering, exhausted, but safe.

"Thanks, fellows."

"Aw, don't mention it," Moore said.

Whittaker in the pilot seat was smiling.

Something there is that creeps up inside a man and makes him want to shout and cry, all at the same time. Bill Yoakley stared at his trembling hands. He swallowed hard.

They put Bill Yoakley aboard one of the LSTs that day. And to prove that the Navy is hospitable they transferred him to their sleek cruiser, the *Manchester*. What he needed was a sea-style R & R. They took care of him for six days. But the men of the sea set their price. If the 8th Fighter Bomber Wing wanted Yoakley back, they'd have to bail him out. Capt.

Bill Yoakley was finally ransomed for a case of Johnny Walker. It is not certain, at this writing, whether it was Black or Red label, but seamen are not inclined to be too finicky about the shade of paper.

A few days ago, I talked with Bill Yoakley. He is back again on the Kimpo airstrip. Brown-haired and brown-eyed, he is a mixture of professional alertness and boyish sentimentality. Jets are still his business. Yet he likes to take time out to remember.

"Let me put it this way," he said. "I wouldn't be sitting here if it weren't for a lot of people I'll never know. I had a beat-up plane, but it brought me all the way to Wonsan on nothing more than a good engine and a bolt. Maybe I owe everything to some little grease monkey who tightened that bolt. I don't know. But this I'm sure of—counting the Navy, and old Willy Wall, and the rest of them—a fellow's life in this war depends upon an awful lot of things he doesn't see."

This, incidentally, was a story about a bolt. In the ledger of war research even pins are major matters. The brains of our best scientists and the hard-earned dollars of our citizens go into testing devices that determine heat treatment and Rockwell readings. When instruments gauged to detect such mysterious factors as 150,000 psi are sensitive enough to let a man know whether a piece of metal is too brittle, or too hard, or just right, we have, with the help of God and our native ingenuity, reached a kind of perception that sympathizes with lifeless metal.

But this is not merely a story of a metal bolt. Principally, it is the sincere testament of a man who is grateful for the thousands of crisscrossed efforts of a nation back home. It is his thankful appreciation of the grease-stained American kid who grunts with a wrench in his hands and does the job his orders

demand, even in faraway places like Korea. The coffee shall continue to percolate in the houses of Speedway, Indianapolis, Indiana. The same monotonous routine will continue to haul men and women to jobs that spell bread and butter. But there are jobs that spell blood. The men and women of Allison who turned out the jet engine that carried Bill Yoakley over Korea are people whom he will never know, but to whom he shall be forever grateful. In his own words, it was "a good engine." And to the thousands of Lockheed's Californians who fashioned and wrapped that silver body about Indiana's stout heart, there go also this pilot's sincere thanks.

The thin bolt! From what furnace did it come? From what smelter? Who is the miner or steeler who shall take credit for it? Every citizen of Pennsylvania or West Virginia, every man who walks with a brief case or lunch kit, all the wrangling gentry of management and labor went into the making of that one piece of steel. It was good. It held. It saved one man's life.

You may never know—those of you who read these lines—what it means to finger in a foreign land the smallest product that bears the stamp of America. Our cars are good. Our tires are good. Our cameras and lenses—shades of Leica and the new Japanese ascendancy—are just as good. But our steel! Our steel, less than an inch thickness of it, is enough to bring back into the warmth of our homes someone whom we call father, brother, husband, or son.

[FOUR]

• “Little America”

Much has already been written about the valiant stand our forces made at Chipyong-ni. It has been claimed, by those who are in a position to evaluate tactical defense, as one of the most brilliantly executed actions of the Korean war. Since the purpose of this book is to tell people back in America about their sons (the Army and Navy nurses have violently objected to this cleavage of the sexes), it appeared at first to be a futile effort to find human interest in something that is broadly described as “defense.” True, one who attempts this sort of writing has the obligation to sift the cold array of S-2 and S-3 statistics until something comes out that is warm and recognizably human. But the action at Chipyong-ni was so classically compact that it tends to assume a personality and character distinctly its own.

Consider yourself a layman, which most Americans are, in the complex business of war. The name Chipyeong-ni means about as much to you as Yongdong-po or Sokchu. A main supply route is a dull and obvious main supply route, and a perimeter is roughly some line of men and guns flung around some more men and guns. As a layman you might stifle a yawn if someone said the Chinese cut the MSR from Chipyeong-ni to Yosu, completely encircled a regiment at Chipyeong-ni, failed to crack it, and sustained heavy losses. That briefly and essentially was the action at Chipyeong-ni. In outline it sounds like dozens of other episodes that have come out of this war.

When Father Ed DeMars, Regimental Chaplain of the 2d Division, introduced me to Gen. Clark Ruffner and General Stewart, I took a deep breath and told them what I was after—human-interest stories. The two Generals looked at each other and I had a feeling that I was the caboose on that long train of journalists, feature writers, and PIO sergeants who had already rumbled through the files.

“Have a cup of coffee,” General Ruffner said. The irrelevance of this suggestion, which sounded something like “pack-up your stories in your old kit bag and fly, fly, fly” was offset only by the quick and comforting thought that I could at least tell Jim Pringle I had dinner with a couple of Generals.

“There are a lot of good stories in this Division,” General Ruffner said. “As a matter of fact, this Division is a story in itself.” He was beginning to beam like a patriarch. “Just received good news from Washington. My boys received the Presidential Unit Citation. I’m proud of them, and that goes for all the attached units too.”

By this time I had that general-staff sort of feeling and the coffee cup was getting more steady in my hand.

“Now, George there,” Ruffner pointed to General Stewart, “he could tell you something about Wonju, but I’d like you

to look at this map first." General Ruffner, with his coffee in one hand and a long stick in the other, began tapping a large topographical map. "Did you ever hear of the Chipyeong defense?"

"Yes, sir." Of course, I had. It was that place where the Chinese failed to break through. It was *that* to me and nothing more.

In little less than forty minutes, listening to and watching a seasoned General tap out the story of the bumps on a map, I saw, even with a civilian's limited vision, the pride and glory that shall ever be synonymous with Chipyeong-ni.

The defense of Chipyeong-ni can be adequately understood only if the offense and purposes of offense against it are clear. The time is February, 1951. The forces of the United Nations are still rocking on their heels, following the explosive entrance of Red China's "Volunteers" into the war. In less than three and a half months, the Communists have smothered half the peninsula in their drive southward.

This was more than a rabble. The cunning of field tacticians, coupled with modern military equipment and hordes of seasoned Manchurian fighters were out to sweep the "imperialist aggressors" off the face of Korea. And they had a plan. The strategy was "Three rivers and the sea." The formula for total Red victory was four concentrated lunges: first, to the Chongchon River, breaking the forward wall of the Eighth Army; second, to the Taedong River, securing the North Korean capital of Pyongyang; third, to the Han River and with it the South Korean capital of Seoul; fourth and last, the steam-roller push southward to the sea.

When the exhausted United Nations team began to collect its wits in January, it had reason to wonder and worry. Lt.

Gen. Walton Walker had been killed in a jeep accident; a new Commanding General, Matthew B. Ridgway, was in the field, and the Chinese had accomplished the third phase of their operations. There remained the fourth and final lunge.

The Chinese openly publicized their intentions for this last drive. It would be a steel arm, punching through the heart of central Korea. After the final blow was delivered, all the United Nations forces would either have fallen or fled and the complete occupation of Korea would have been an accomplished fact. That there should be no doubt about this, the Chinese Communist and North Korean forces were promised more armor, more artillery, and more air support. Like a giant boxer, flexing his muscles for the final round, the enemy waited in the Chunchon corridor for the bell.

Then he struck. He struck twin blows: one to the heart of the United Nations forces, which was at Chipyeong-ni, and one to the solar plexus, which was at Wonju. (That was what General Ruffner alluded to when he said General Stewart could tell a story about Wonju.) But for this moment and for clarity, it would be best to see Chipyeong-ni as it really appeared on a captured Chinese war map.

In outline it was a startling miniature of the United States—a “Little America,” with a perimeter running east to west for two and a quarter miles, and north to south, one mile in depth. Occupying this “Little America” was the 2d Division’s 23d Regimental Combat Team. In terms of Americana, it was bristling from “Maine” to “California.” On the northwestern perimeter, the 1st Battalion was covering an area extending roughly from “Oregon” to “North Dakota.” On the northeast, the 3d Battalion swung over in an arc from “Minnesota” to “Maine” and down to “Maryland.” The 2d Battalion was dug in from “Virginia” southwestward through “Florida” to

“Texas.” On the southeast, the French Battalion was holding “New Mexico,” “Arizona,” and the long leg of “California.” These were the border states battalions.

To bolster them, they had behind them their own battalion reserves, plus a company of Rangers and Engineers forged in a ring that described a rough circle through “Utah, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Illinois, and South Dakota.” Within this circle was the tighter ring of the artillery, the thunderous guardians of the regiment, poised to belch steel at all points of the compass. Deep within all this was the core, the nerve of the Regimental Command Post, centrally sandbagged in “Kansas.”

It would not be too wide of the mark to compare Chipyeong-ni to a “Little America” on that fateful day of February 12th. It stood like a small bastion, blocking the strategic road network to the south. As long as it remained in our hands, it was a threat to all the Communist forces below the Han River. The Chinese had another reason besides strategy for wanting to take Chipyeong-ni. Less than two weeks before at the Twin Tunnels area, two of their regiments had been mauled by this same cocky 23d Combat Team. Their casualty count from the combined United Nations air, ground, and artillery assault was more than 3,500. These were the wounds they were still licking. They wanted Chipyeong-ni; they wanted the Twin Tunnels, four miles south of Chipyeong-ni; but more than anything else, and with vengeance, they wanted the 23d Regiment.

If numbers meant anything, the Regiment was already doomed. The entire perimeter was encircled. The full strength of the Chinese trap was five divisions in an enveloping move designed to choke escape from any direction. Chipyeong-ni was ripe for the invasion. Two Chinese Communist divisions, the 115th and 116th, were south of “Little America’s” border. The 126th Division on the west was ranged to smash the “Pacific coast states” area. The 125th Division directly north was set

like a triphammer over the heart of the “midwest”; and the 119th Division to the east was a steel thunderhead along the “Atlantic seaboard.” The shape-up was five divisions of Chinese Communist forces against a single regiment! When the enemy finally struck that night, the fury of his attack was official; his orders had come and his orders were—annihilation.

The defense of Chipyong-ni was on.

It is not certain when it first started. Some say that Charley Company in the “Montana” section received the opening barrage about ten-thirty that night. Others report that Mike Company’s mess tent over in “Pennsylvania” was ripped to shreds shortly after ten o’clock. The French down in the “Arizona” sector heard the rapid barking of burp guns as early as nine o’clock. Whatever be the time or sector marking the initial assault, it is established now that the entire perimeter of “Little America” was brought under a blasting deluge of mortar, small-arms, bazooka, recoilless rifle, and artillery fire shortly after ten-thirty.

Col. Paul Freeman, Commanding Officer of the 23d, finally had his answer. Not too many hours before, he had wondered if the Chinese would attack. Speaking to the officers of the 23d and particularly to Capt. Rouse Lacordaire of the French Detachment, he had said bluntly: “I don’t know if they are going to attack. Nobody knows. They have all kinds of roads to the south. But our patrols have been active for the past ten days. We know where they are and we know how many they are. The chances are they *will* attack. When they do, they’re going to pay heavily.”

The answer to the question was plain and deadly. It was coming in, on this night of the 13th, from all directions. And for reply, the muzzles of the howitzers shifted and spat back the yellow flame of “Little America’s” defiance.

Take a look, now, along the entire perimeter. This is the

high ground. This is where the riflemen and machine gunners are dug in. This is the skin of the regiment, stretched taut and protectingly around the central nerve that buzzes with communications at the Command Post. Though it is high ground here along the perimeter, it is not the dominating ground. That was the decision Freeman had to make. Off in the distance, there were steeper hills. These would have made a stronger line of defense; but it would have been impossible to spread out a single regiment on a broader perimeter. As Capt. Sherman Pratt described it, "We had dominant ground but it was not the dominating terrain." That was the gamble Paul Freeman took, and that was the job the infantrymen along the "border states" sectors were holding down.

They are out there on this night of the 13th, huddled in fox-holes and bunkers. They strain their eyes and cock their ears for the sound of the approaching enemy. The whoosh of incoming artillery is not their business. It is frightening, to be sure. Fellows have cracked up from the sound of artillery alone. If it comes, if it hits near you, it is nearly always fatal. Artillery is big stuff. And tonight they are using big stuff. Six kilos southwest, you can hear them. Japanese-made howitzers located behind the range of hills beyond their mortar positions are pouring in tons of death upon "Little America." Mortar is coming in too. It is the 82-mm Russian Battalion type. But neither mortar nor artillery is your business tonight. You have a job. It is the crux of the whole business. All your training as a soldier has devolved upon this great and terrible lesson that is being taught to you on this night of the 13th. The enemy has tipped his hand. His mortar and artillery are fired for one purpose: to soften you up. In a matter of minutes it will stop. Then he will come in on you on two legs. He will come in on you like an infantryman with grenades and rifle; he will strike out and try to pierce the skin of your defense. He will meet

you man to man and bullet for bullet; and this, in the ultimate reckoning, has been the way of all wars. Man against man. So you cock your ear along the spread of this perimeter and your eyes see in every waving bramble the shadow of the man who comes crawling to take your life.

Big, hulking Bonwell, down in Heavy Weapons Company, stomped over the frozen rice paddy shouting orders. In all his days as a mortar platoon leader, Lieutenant Bonwell had never seen anything like this. Shells were coming in like rain. Bonwell went into a huddle with Capt. Al Metts, and when Metts nodded his head, the Lieutenant grinned. “All right you guys. Dig. Get picks and shovels and dig!” Bonwell roared.

“What’s the idea?” a corporal asked him.

“We’re going deeper underground and don’t ask questions,” Bonwell snapped. “I want you to dig here . . . and here . . . and here.” Bonwell indicated the spots.

While some of the platoon stood by to fire, the others dug. Eight inches down, the earth was frozen solid. Below that, it was cold, red mush. They shoveled it into sandbags and stacked it about the ammo trucks to thicken the barricade. When Bonwell’s men completed the job that night, they had their mortar tubes sunk below ground level. They had constructed a prairie-dog city where twenty men in subterranean passages relayed mortars to the firing crews. “A very cozy deal this is, specially when artillery is liable to bust you one on the nose,” Bonwell explained. “Besides, I have to live long enough to get a promotion before Griffith does. Colonel Kane is strictly a subway man himself. He appreciates something like this. Bonwell’s subway!”

Up on the hill crests, youngsters were trying to remember all that had been drummed into them by their officers. They remembered that as long as they held their positions, they had a good chance of saving their lives and keeping the Regiment

intact. They remembered that a foxhole was a man's investment in safety. He had to hold it even when the enemy was yards away. He should not run. He should not get panicky. Didn't the facts prove that most of the casualties happen when men get out of their holes? Granted a man doesn't like to be left alone. Soldiers, even the bravest of them, fear that. This dread of being left alone accounted for more break-throughs than any other single factor; and a break-through of even twenty yards tonight could be fateful. So, the orders were to *hold*. Don't abandon the position. Never abandon the position—that is unless. . . . And then the lectures, the indoctrination, buzzed in their heads, leaving the stark dilemma that is and always will be the infantryman's own personal problem. *Discretion is the better part of valor*. That was sound military advice. The only question was—when does discretion begin and valor leave off? Who could determine that answer? For the men entrenched on the perimeter, the answer would come soon, for even now their eyes catch sight of something that puts knots of tension in the pit of the stomach.

A herd of oxen comes wallowing toward the western defense. Screaming Chinese foot soldiers urge the beasts forward. Muffled explosions mark the areas where the cattle breach friendly mines. The oxen leap sideways on the crimsoned snow. Onward they plod, exploding a path for the yelling horde behind them. Trip-flares are kicked by the frantic beasts and the scene is a turmoil of shadows and lights; Chinese with long pole-charges lope ahead in search of tanks; orange flames spurt from weaving burp guns; soldiers are openly changing into female dress; rifle butts are smashed against the haunches of the oxen. "I saw one of those old bulls," a private said. "He was crippled in the rear. He was sitting down with the hind part of him shot away. One of the Chinese finished him off. He must've been an ASPCA boy."

The length and breadth of “Little America” is now a rim of answering fire. The Chinese are crawling up the slopes, probing for the soft hole in the skin of the perimeter. Mortar platoons feverishly adjust their angles to smother the advance. Down in the “Florida” sector, where Company G is strung out, the enemy is threatening to burst through. The line sags, is split apart, and Company B in reserve is alerted. This looked like the hole in the dike. Company G was on the records now; it was that bleeding mangled segment that had collapsed under sheer weight of numbers. Yet, Company G rallies. It surges back to patch the hole. Hand grenades are thrown with such fury that they knock over the enemy from physical impact alone. The Chinese, in this war, have been known to scream while on an attack. Company G outscrambled them in this hot welter of body-to-body contact. The rupture is healed and Company G is back in the line. “Florida,” for the time being, is intact.

Over in the “Arizona” sector, some Frenchmen are learning for the first time what war is in Korea. These are the newly arrived hundred, the contingent that came in to reinforce the battle-stripped battalion from France. Sgt. Louis Flouriac has known only one night’s quiet in Korea. That was last night, the 12th. Tonight, he is brought off the hill on a stretcher. He speaks to Chaplain Fabre a few single words. “I am dying but *ça tient!*” Louis Flouriac died then. Chief Cpl. Jean Pierre Jacob was to speak later. These were the peculiarly gallant and crisp phases of men with the blood of life dripping from them. Jean Pierre, with his arm blown off, smiled and asked for Holy Communion. “*Je vais très bien. J’offre ce pour les autres.*” He offered his Communion for the others, while his blood spilled and congealed in the snow.

The fighting in the “Arizona” sector in these early hours of February 14th was ferocious. A man shudders in his foxhole

and calls for the medics. Roger Lefleur and André Thierry come forward. They pull the man from the hole, place him on a stretcher and start down the hill. Above their heads, they hear the droning of American B-17s. The planes are dropping flares, lighting the black night. "It is good to see by the light of the flares," Roger said to the wounded man. "We will not bump you too much." Then there was an earsplitting sound. The stretcher fell to the ground. Both medics were sprawled in grotesque heaps under the glare of the descending flares. Roger Lefleur and André Thierry were killed instantly. The wounded man whom they had lifted from the foxhole crawled into the aid station. He was half hysterical with grief. "They were so afraid they would bump me on the way down, those two."

Up in the "New England" sector of the line, Sgt. Larry Numkena of Company K was learning by experience what Freeman had insisted upon—"for defense, it is not necessary nor is it safe to hold the absolute crest of hill. Occupy the forward slope or the military crest and you have command not only of direct fire but sweeping cross fire." With the heavy stock of his Browning Automatic pulled against his armpit, Larry looks down the slope. A band of Chinese comes slithering upward in a straight line at him. The Browning pours a steady hail of lead and Larry Numkena counts them as they fall . . . 3 . . . 5 . . . 8 . . . 16. Sixteen Chinese are stiff, mute testimony to the value of the forward slope. But this is only a momentary setback for the enemy. The riflemen who followed this grenade team stop in their tracks. They are so close Numkena can hear the bolt action of their weapons. They make a dive to the left, away from Larry's forward fire. A fat ripple of land protects them as they shift to take Larry from the rear. Numkena crawls from his hole and hurls two grenades over the rise. The surprised remnants of the party scramble

back and Numkena's Browning goes into action again . . . 10 . . . 20 . . . 27. Twenty-seven more Chinese fall under this withering blast. Numkena is sure now that there is no position quite like the forward slope. Forty-three Chinese who, a few minutes before, were alive are now sprawled in death.

This is the licensed and approved procedure of defense. In other circumstances, Larry would have felt like a butcher. "I could never kill anything . . . I don't think I could kill an ordinary rat without . . . you know . . . well, it's hard to kill anything that's alive. But that night . . . 43 of them I knocked off. I could have knocked off 143 of them and it wouldn't have made any difference. When they're out to get you, boy, that's a different story. You shoot, and you don't think anything about it."

The dawn of the 14th broke gray and turbulent, and with the coming of light the Chinese withdrew to their bunkers on the opposite hills, carrying their dead with them.

Down in the heart of "Little America" it was time to count the dead and wounded. Doc Hall worked patiently over the critical cases. He was thankful this day for the Engineers who had dug and sunk a log-piled aid station. They had to strip timber from the railroad bank to do it. There was heartbreak here in the hospital dugout. It always came back to Doc Hall. Down in the Command Post, Maj. Harold W. Shoemaker, S-2 of the Regiment, was killed. The Commanding Officer, Colonel Freeman, was severely crippled by mortar. This 14th of February was bleak for more reasons than one. Orders had already come for Freeman to be evacuated. "Losing Freeman was like losing the heart and guts of the Regiment," Captain Metts said. In the meantime there was work to be done—Doc Hall's kind of work. He looked at the sky that day and wondered when the haze would pass to let friendly air and helicopters in. Mortar and machine gun fire was still falling in the

hospital zone. Doc Hall smiled weakly when he read the sign that some joker had posted at the entrance. It read: SILENCE!

The furious rate of mortar and popular arms fire during the first night had already begun to sap the ammunition supply. Without ammunition the perimeter would collapse. The main supply route was definitely cut, and Chipyeong-ni within the space of twelve hours was fast becoming the United Nations' number-one concern. It might have consoled the men of the 23d Regiment to know that on this same morning of the 14th, General Ridgway had flown to the X Corps area to direct immediate relief of the isolated bastion. Ridgway wanted not only relief; he wanted the 23d Regiment to stick it out. Relief could have come by sending a task force to extract the besieged Regiment. There could have been a withdrawal. The sharp-eyed General had seen something in this stubborn stand of Ruffner's Combat Team. "The action of one small determined unit can, by unyielding defense, influence the entire situation along the front." This was the General's stand. Lt. Col. John Chiles was to be flown in to relieve the crippled Commanding Officer. The main supply route was to be opened with a twin stab by 5th Cavalry Tanks and the 27th British Brigade. "Little America" had high priority on this day of February 14th.

Back within the perimeter, there is an odd prelude to the battle that shapes up for the night. A squad leader puffs a cigarette and points to the shenanigans of his men. "Look at them, the crazy dopes." Three privates were chasing an ox. The beast was one of the many that had wandered into the perimeter. "They must come from Chicago, those boys," the squad leader said. The ox was felled with the blow of an ax, and the three panting privates returned. "We got steak coming up," one of them said. "Genuine Chipyeong-ni sirloin. Who's got a sharp knife?"

Lt. Richard Kotite laughed. He was used to the antics of these blustering, happy-go-lucky kids. With the shadows of evening only hours away and another night of horror on the hills, they could take time out to argue, joke, and plan a barbecue.

Arguing is their specialty! Davis is a squad leader and a point is being made: “A squad leader has the hardest job in the whole United States Army. He’s got a harder job than Freeman, or Ruffner, or Ridgway. Yeah, even MacArthur never had the job to do that a squad leader has to do. And if you doubt it—well, listen to the facts. [Artillery from the 37th punctuates the point.] Consider a squad leader. How many men does a squad leader have to account for, huh? How many? Eight! Eight men he has to account for. Okay! Now take an ordinary general. How many men does he have to account for, huh? Three! He’s got three regimental commanders to worry about. Just three guys, y’understand? Okay. Now, a regimental commander—how many does he have to account for? Three! Three battalion commanders and that’s all. And what does the battalion commander have to worry about? He’s got nothing but five—five company commanders to handle. Follow me? Okay. Now a company commander—what about him? He’s got it soft. He’s got three rifle platoon leaders and one weapons platoon leader. That makes only four guys he’s got to worry about. And a platoon leader—[Lieutenant Kotite, the platoon leader, coughs at this point. Davis is a good squad leader and nobody interrupts a squad leader before battle.] A platoon leader looks to his three squad leaders. *Three* men he’s got to worry about. And now look at the squad leader. How many men does the squad leader account for? Eight! *Eight whole men!* That’s a squad leader’s job, and it’s the biggest job in the United States Army.”

The banter that follows is raucous and good-natured; but

there is a note of concession in it. There is this to be said for a squad leader which nobody can deny: when he leads his squad and does the things he is called upon to do, his record in the Army of the United States has been too frequently closed with three letters—KIA—killed in action.

Suspense hangs heavily along the hills this night of the 14th. Down at the Command Post, Lt. Col. John Chiles prepares to relieve Paul Freeman. The plane that was to have evacuated the wounded Colonel blew a tire and sustained a damaged right brake. But the talk, now, is not about evacuation. Freeman is worried about the critical shortage of ammunition, specifically 4.2 regimental mortars. Above the Command Post, the C-119s drift over in single file approach. This is the air supply train and it is directed in by the blaze of a flaming gasoline cross and the lights of Lt. Dan Morgan's jeep. The parachutes billow and the crates hit the frozen ground. When Capt. Guthrie Green and his retrievers go out to haul the loads back, some of them hurl curses in the general direction of the flying box-cars. "Look at some of the stuff those dummies dropped us—water!" A river runs through the heart of "Little America" and water, tonight, is not an appreciated item. Nor is it the fault of the flying boxcar boys. They had jockeyed the huge planes in this tight perimeter, dodging extreme ground fire. The fault was somewhere in communications and prepackaging. "Little America," like the big America it resembled, was having its share of hit and miss and try again. Meanwhile a radio hums an urgent appeal for ammunition and more ammunition. The stock is so low that it is necessary to search the glove compartments of trucks and jeeps for stray supplies of rifle slugs.

At eight o'clock that night, the Chinese opened up a fierce all-out assault. Artillery and mortar barrages rocked the entire regimental area. In a desperate attempt to burst through the

border defense, the Chinese again drove a murderous wedge at Company G in the “Florida” sector. This was the area astride three hills overlooking the road south. If it were penetrated, the enemy could barrel through in strength, knifing deeply into the vital core of the Regiment. Up here in the foxholes, Privates Stamper, Nace, Broyles, and Enger steel themselves against the human mass that comes plodding forward. Seven and a half raging hours of battle pass, and the line still holds. But for how long?

The radio now calls for an emergency drop of ammunition. Within minutes, crews in Japan are alerted to load and be ready to lift at dawn. To the south, Tank Task Force Crombez prepares to punch its way through to the cut-off Regiment. But time is of the essence, and the pressure of five fanatical divisions is threatening to crack the thin, stubborn regimental front.

The hour of three-thirty this black morning is a seething hell for Company G. Weary with battle fatigue, the line wavers. Swirling shadows are up and around them. Private Paul Stamper watches a mortar burst cut the wire communications. He crawls across the open terrain, repairs the wire, and the earth around him is suddenly chewed to pieces by machine gun fire. Locating the direction of the fire, he inches outward and away from his foxhole. Hurling a hand grenade, he sees the machine gunner and his weapon collapse. That was one less gun Company G had to contend with. Private Stamper, from the Bluegrass State of Kentucky, had done his job on the line. He had done it completely. He died moments later, and his spent body on the snow was the quiet testimonial of a Private *First Class*.

These are the men it would be well for America to remember. Private Paul Baker, for example. Paul has come face to face with the military choice between discretion and valor. The Company’s line is already pierced. A painful withdrawal, yard

by yard, is now in progress. Baker, if he wishes, can leave his foxhole; but there is this other consideration. As long as he stays, he can delay the enemy. He can cover for his buddies. So Baker stays to cover for his buddies. His rifle chatters lonely defiance in this lonesome hour of the morning. When they found Private Paul Baker, he was lying side by side in his foxhole with the Chinese foot soldier who had dynamited him with a satchel charge.

Private Albert Enger, meanwhile, was making his choice. Four hundred yards are already lost to the enemy. Human instinct, in the face of this murderous break-through, would be to keep moving, keep running, get out of the way. Albert Enger is suddenly attracted by a shadow. It is the outline of a machine gun. The American gunner is dead beside his weapon. So Enger makes his choice. He mans the gun, swings it into the face of the running Red tide. They swirl about him and over him; and Enger dies with his arms around his battered, borrowed weapon.

With this dent of 400 yards on the perimeter defense, the enemy were in possession of strategic ridge points overlooking the inner plains of "Little America." They were in possession of vital equipment that had been abandoned in the assault. Private Harry Nace of Pennsylvania elected to do something about it. He crawled back over those 400 yards and retrieved a .30-caliber machine gun. On his return down the slope, he was wounded. "There's another gun up there we can use," Harry said. In the face of probable death, he crawled up the hill, found the gun, and painfully squirmed his way back to the lines. Nace had literally plucked two .30-caliber machine guns from under the nose of the enemy.

Down on the hard floor of the valley, Lieutenant Bonwell's mortar crew blasted a steady stream of loop-fire over the hills. The puzzled enemy astride the approaches called in his how-

itzers upon the area. While more than one hundred rounds of artillery landed on Bonwell's position, his mortar tubes continued to belch during these barrages. Bonwell was blustering in his underground city. "Not a single one of you fellows is hit yet, and we have thrown more than a thousand and eighty rounds of them tonight."

Nevertheless, the hole that was now gaping in Company G sector threatened disaster for the entire Regiment.

The exhausted company tried to drive the tenacious Chinese from the hill, but every attempt was hurled back. The Rangers, coming out of reserve, smashed to within yards of the military crest, but the deadly stream of machine gun fire coming from Company G's lost foxholes halted the drive.

The morning came bright and bitterly cold, but for all the sunshine it could well have been Chipyong-ni's blackest hour. Allied air was up and diving in savage thrusts at the entrenched Chinese, but the enemy was there to stay. He could not be budged.

Company B, which was also in reserve, now came forward. The job that lay ahead of Capt. Sherman Pratt, Commanding Officer of B Rifle Company, was clear-cut. "If we want to live, we've got to take that hill and close that gap." The men of Company B understood this. They also understood, at this sunny hour of ten in the morning, that if you wanted to live, you had to be willing to die for the chance. The plans were brutally direct. Lt. Richard Kotite, the stocky Syrian, was to take elements of the platoon up and over the ridge and rout the Chinese from their holes on the military crest. Captain Pratt would take another platoon, make a side-sweeping stab around the hill, and attack the flank.

The slow upward climb begins. Rifle squads fan out and their hunched figures are clearly visible against the snow. From the Command Post, they look like slowly moving quail, feed-

ing upward from the valley. Friendly mortar bursts step ahead of them. Over their heads there is the whine of their own machine gun fire. Upward they move, slowly and tensely, awaiting the initial shock of the enemy. In this noise it is not easy to pick out the crack of Chinese rifles. Your eyes can tell you that, however. The sudden lurching to the left of you reveals the muffled pain that spreads over your buddy's face. He's hit. The sharp command of a squad leader suddenly changes to a gurgle. One squad leader is dead. Another squad leader collapses in the snow. Inch by inch, up the rugged slope, the platoon keeps moving. As the line nears the dangerous ridge, a machine gunner topples over. Lieutenant Kotite knows now that these are murderous moments for his platoon. He sees his platoon sergeant crumple, then the assistant platoon sergeant is hit. Twenty-one men are casualties. Small tin cans, glinting in the sunlight, are sailing over the ridge line into their midst. These are the offensive grenades that the Chinese can hurl for comparatively long distances. The battle line wavers in these last few yards. Over the ridge summit, death is whistling at them. To lift your head above that line is to invite the fire of burp and machine guns. Kotite feels a lead slug shatter a can of tooth powder he is carrying. The bullet veers under his webbed pistol belt and settles in his back.

Davis, leading his squad, crouches under the lip of the hill. "Those machine guns are just about here," he yells. Then he is up and over into the full blast of it with his arm poised to fling his grenade.

"Davis," Captain Pratt said later, "Davis was a good squad leader. He led his men over the top. Sounds funny, but that's what leadership means. It means to *lead*."

The last of Kotite's crippled platoon scaled the hill. Pratt came driving in with his platoon on the flank. The fighting was hot and savage, hand to hand. It was an hour and a half of blood

and tears but at eleven-thirty the ruptured line was again sealed. We had an unbroken perimeter defense; stubborn “Little America’s” borders were intact again.

Weariness is deep in the bones of the Regiment. Eyes, bloodshot with sleeplessness and fatigue, keep constant vigil. Through the ranks of the Regiment passes one question: What is it going to be like tonight?

On the landing strip, the plane that was to evacuate Colonel Freeman is now repaired. Cpl. Donald Brosnahan was flown in to do the job. The plane starts down the runway, twists sideways, and sustains more damages. Brosnahan volunteers to put it back in shape, even though he is an exposed target. Again the plane is ready. This time it lifts into the wind, clears the hills, and the Regiment is aware that it already misses the Old Man. When Brosnahan is about to be ferried back to Division Headquarters, he scans the weary faces of the men around him. “If it doesn’t make any difference, I’d like to stay here. Maybe you can use an extra mortar man.” The Regiment *could* use a mortar man, so Brosnahan stayed. He later joined the French unit as a rifleman.

The weight of the Regiment fell now on Colonel Chiles’ shoulders. As the afternoon shadows lengthened, he too wondered how the weary lines would weather another night of assault.

Then the good news was flashed. Rumbling up like thunder out of the south, a column of General Patton tanks was reported a thousand yards below the perimeter. The 49-ton monsters of the 70th Tank Battalion, plus a company of medium tanks from the 6th Tank Battalion had barged at better than 30 miles an hour through the surprised Chinese. This was the task force commanded by Colonel Crombez. It paid for the mileage in pain. The tanks, with infantry loaded aboard, ran a gauntlet of fire. Out of some two hundred men of 5th Cavalry’s

Love Company, only eight arrived at the perimeter. This was what Capt. Louis Michelet of the French Battalion described as one of the "desperate solutions of warfare."

When the tanks burst into the perimeter area, they wheeled and let their cannons roar at the enemy-infested hills. Pandemonium broke loose among the Chinese. Flak wagons, led by Lieutenant Halbur, raked the disintegrating lines. The guns of the 37th Field Artillery, and batteries from the 503d Field Artillery and the 82d AAA Weapon Battalion, added to the crescendo. In less than three hours, the menace of five Chinese divisions collapsed. The hills were dotted with enemy dead. Those who could move ran or limped off over the horizon. Chipyeong-ni was saved.

It is now a matter of official record that this gallant defense of "Little America," executed in conjunction with the stand at Wonju to the southeast, was the vicious body block that broke the plans of Red China to sweep the United Nations from Korea. It was also the breather that allowed our forces to strike out on that drive which, on the 21st of February, was designated "Operation Killer."

Some bitter criticisms from high Chinese quarters were directed at the grave miscalculations of their commanding officers who had tried to seize Chipyeong-ni. It was a document that flayed their lack of communications, and their shoddy failure to coordinate and pile-drive in strength against the single Regiment. The rankling defeat, underscored by more than 4,000 casualties, 1,746 of whom were counted dead by the Americans and French about the perimeter area, was cause for a reshuffling of commands. But whatever miscalculations the Chinese may have listed for their defeat, they failed to include their greatest miscalculations—young American boys: Gene McGovern, Bruce Broyles, Flores, Burkeen, Harber, Meadows, Lucero, and the others who died rather than yield an inch. They mis-

calculated the more than two hundred sons of the Americans and French who were willing to cushion the impact of steel with their bodies.

Chaplain Frank Wood, a wiry, red-haired Irishman, adopted in Korea by the Regiment and voted officially by the 2d Battalion as the only extant “buck” sergeant in the United States Army, who plodded with them up and down the peninsula in the dark days and in the brighter ones, said: “Nowhere, not in the whole world have I ever met nor do I ever hope to meet a Regiment that compares with God’s own 23d.”

[FIVE]

• Doing a Tremblay

Fred Sparks, a scribe of no mean ability, has a horror of aviation in any and all of its phases. It makes no difference to Fred whether it be jet or reciprocating engine. Anything that has the audacity to tinker with the law of gravity sends shivers through Fred; so he travels between Seoul and Tokyo by way of the old "Red Ball." It is a leisurely jaunt. You go to Pusan by railroad, then across the Japanese Sea on a huffing-puffing tug, and from there you spend hours and hours yawning through the windows of the *kisha* at hundreds of miles of Japanese landscape. Fred is in no hurry.

This aversion that Sparks has for aircraft came to me as a consoling note in a world that is revved up and roaring for take-offs. Personally, I am geared to speeds slightly in excess of oxcarts. The mere thought of stepping into a plane leaves

me with visions of all the headlines ever printed about air disasters. Claustrophobia is a word I never really knew the meaning of until that day, aboard my first airplane, someone slammed the passenger door. This was it.

It was a flight from Providence, Rhode Island, all the way to New York City. I was fascinated by the complete disregard for human peril that a traveler from Boston was exhibiting. The man was actually asleep in his chair. Shortly afterward, when the plane by some miracle rose off the airstrip, I saw disaster coming to us in a matter of minutes. The trouble was out on the wing. Something like an iron ball, which is commonly described as mortal terror, developed suddenly in my stomach. Oil was trailing in an ooze down the wing. It would be no time at all, I figured, before the engine would start crackling and smoking . . . a burst of flame . . . and a new headline in the evening paper. The stewardess looked queerly at me when I told her to inform the pilot we had developed an oil leak. She wanted to know just where I had located this serious condition, and when I pointed to the wing, she peered out the window and began to smile. "That's perfectly normal," she said. "It always does that for the first few minutes when we climb to pressure altitudes." The iron ball in my stomach began to dissolve slowly—but not until I had inspected the other wing, which I did when the stewardess was not looking. The other wing, happily, had an oil ooze, too. If it had not, I am sure I would have concluded to some aeronautical unbalance that would flip us into a spin.

Throughout the years and after several thousands of air miles travel, I still approach an airplane with that remorseful why-do-I-have-to-do-it-again feeling. No amount of safety statistics that air enthusiasts quote seems to make any difference. Nor does that fatalistic summation, "If your number's up, it's up," carry any consolation whatever. That is one numbers game I can al-

ways beat. Whatever be the hidden designs of God's will, I know that I shall never crack up in a plane if I don't get into one.

In traveling throughout Korea and Japan to get material for this book, it was necessary to use military air transport service frequently. Flights between Seoul and Tokyo leave most correspondents with a shuttle-complex that is not too unlike the casual resignation with which passengers accept the Times Square to Grand Central run. You go and you come. That's all there is to it. For me, however, these were adventures into the jaws of death. My next of kin had always to be written out on the form they gave me.

Flying from Itami to Haneda, one night, I sat trying to copy a song that ten or twelve Marines were singing. Capt. Pat Bruckman, a human dynamo when it comes to sparking a party into song, and a member of what he calls the "Fabulous Checkboard Squadron," was waving his hands from the podium of two mail sacks. This was something I thoroughly enjoyed. With all this singing it was easy to get your mind off the 10,000 things that can go wrong with a plane. To the tune of McNamara's Band, Pat and his fellow Marines sang the following:

*Oh, my name is Colonel Mangrum, I'm the leader of the
group.*

*If you will step into my tent, I'll give you all the poop.
I'll tell you where the Commies are, and where the flak is
black.*

I'll be the first one off the deck, and I'll be the first one back.

CHORUS:

Early aboard, avoid the rush.

Early aboard, avoid the rush.

Early aboard, avoid the rush.

Oh, the raggedy end Marines are on parade.

This is a bit of color, I said to myself. Perhaps I can use it in the book and let the folks back home know how the boys sing on a flight. I was scribbling the notes as fast as I could when Bruckman, the maestro, shouted for the second verse. The plane rang with the bellowing of the Marine ensemble.

*Oh, my name is Major Dexter, and I lead the 323.
And if we go on rail cuts, my boys will follow me.
But if you say Pyongyang, I'll tell you what I'll do.
Get in your plane and go ahead, and I'll wait here for you.*

CHORUS:

*Early aboard, avoid the rush.
Early aboard, avoid the rush.
Early aboard . . .*

Wheesh! It happened. Every man aboard the aircraft buckled to the point where his chin almost hit his knees. My pencil and paper went flying from my hands. This was not a down draft. The plane shot skywards as if it had been rammed under the belly by a giant fist. Bruckman went toppling from the canvas bags. Seconds later we learned what had happened. We could see it from the windows. The streaking lights of a jet plane were fading in the dark. We had missed an air collision by a margin of feet. Pat Bruckman steadied himself and yelled, "We didn't finish the chorus." So the rest of them joined in:

*Early aboard, avoid the rush.
Oh, the raggedy end Marines are on parade.*

Beads of sweat were still moist on my forehead when Bruckman wanted to know if I'd like to hear the boys sing "In China They Serve and Eat Chili" or "Morphine Bill and Cocaine Sue";

but that quick brush with possible mid-air cremation left me with an old feeling for oxcarts and dirt roads. Far back in my mind I wondered about and in an odd way envied these men. They were still singing when I could not get over the shaking fact that a few minutes ago I might have had to render an account. Never, never again would I fly in a plane. If I had to go to Korea, I would go by the simple and easy stages of Fred Sparks' old "Red Ball."

The next day at Tachikawa I boarded a plane bound for Korea.

That's the way it is with planes. You walk away from them, shaking like a man coming off a bender. But once you are far from the airport, a bit of the old daring comes creeping back. If you are not careful, you'll catch yourself looking with avid interest at the latest airline advertisements. These usually show a completely relaxed businessman surveying a serene green world below him. The contentment which this gentleman exudes distracts you from any thoughts about down drafts, oil leaks, power stalls, fog, ice, or storms. The appeal, of course, lies in the insidious magic that a mere photograph or painting creates. Before you are aware of it, the decision you made to renounce all contact with aviation begins to waver. It is much like looking at those other advertisements which portray "Men of Distinction." Alcohol leaves many a man declaring a fervent "never again." On his white, coated tongue in front of a mirror he swears it. But comes the turning of the page and the "Man of Distinction" sits there in the photograph poised and posed before panels of executive walnut or the Harvard Classics. He is generally a middle-aged fellow, fabulously successful, sedate in conservative serge, and apparently healthy as all get-out. The fact that he is holding a glass of something of the sort that almost killed you the day before begins to toy with your imagination. In no time at all you begin to measure your chances for worldly

success by the brand of the bottle you plan to buy at the package store.

That's how it is with planes.

Not so long ago, after what I thought had been absolutely the last flight I would ever take, I found myself sitting in a four-engined monster. The departure schedule was set at the ghoul-ish hour of a quarter to one in the morning. The estimated time of arrival in Korea was six o'clock. After we were airborne, an operation which includes all sorts of engine roarings and groanings as the ship manages to stagger over the hills, I settled back to breathe once more. This is usually the time I take one fond look at the twinkling lights of Tokyo, averting if possible the ghastly red glare that seethes under the cowl flaps. There was a glum atmosphere brooding throughout the ship. This is routine when the flight is Korea-bound. All the buoyancy of R & R has petered out and the men sprawl in various shapes of dejection and weariness.

The trip was uneventful until we were two hours outside Kimpo. At first I thought it was my imagination. There was an odd and frightening odor in the air. Then the old iron ball was back again in my stomach. Billows of black, acrid smoke began to swirl through the plane. The smoke was so thick that the men sitting opposite were hardly visible. Through the crevices of the wall separating the passengers from the pilot's cabin, the dark, ugly smudge curled out in thicker ribbons. My first suspicion was that the entire forward section of the plane was on fire. By this time, it was hard to breathe. I wanted to get up and open the doors in the aft section, but the stories of wind suction pulling passengers out of planes left me sitting there in a frozen stupor of resignation. Two or three officers were now pounding at the door leading to the pilot's cabin. A man sitting near me was hunched over, and he was running his fingers through his hair. I took a purple stole out of my pocket, and held it ready

for the moment when the plane should burst into what I was sure would be a raging inferno. As a matter of fact, I had already whispered twice the words of general absolution. The stole was an afterthought.

As the smoke got heavier, blinding my eyes, I remember now and I shall always remember what it feels like to face what appeared to be quick and violent death. The feeling is one of resignation, and it comes like a trickle of some dark fluid into your mouth.

The cabin door was flung open. Two air officers were prodding fire extinguishers into the roof of the plane. This fire-fighting equipment seemed, at the time, vastly more appropriate than the Mae Wests which were piled in a heap over the baggage. When you are flying over the hills of Korea, Mae Wests are a poor substitute for parachutes. (Wherever they hide the parachutes on some of these flights still remains a mystery to me.)

Twenty minutes later the air began to clear. My nose, which from my mother's side is a big McManus one, was still sniffing for the spark that had not been quenched.

We were due to land at Kimpo at six o'clock that morning. The next hour and a half were an eternity. When six o'clock finally came we were bouncing and roaring through fog. Sixty-three chimed somewhere on mother earth and we were still careening through mist. What I thought had been salvation seemed to be developing into more excruciating forms of meeting death. Naturally, I had the problem solved. The fire in the plane had burned out all our electrical equipment. We could not make a GCA approach through that thick layer of clouds below us, and to make matters worse, the landing gear mechanism had undoubtedly gone out of commission. There was nothing left for us but to chance a belly-landing providing the gas held out and we didn't ram a cliff in the descent. Fifteen,

twenty minutes dragged by. Then seven o'clock was chiming somewhere below on terra firma. We were now an hour overdue. Never, never, if I ever got out of this thing alive, would I go near an airport again. Shortly after seven-thirty that morning we broke through the overcast, and in a few minutes taxied to a stop. That definitely was the last of my flying days. I marked the day well—January 3, 1952.

Three days later, I took a single-engined plane from Koje Island to Pusan, and at three-thirty that same afternoon, flew back to Haneda on one of those same four-engined monsters.

There are undoubtedly hundreds of thousands of plane commuters back in the States who have experienced more exciting moments than these, and have come away from them without so much as having their digestion disturbed. These are the people who have that enviable quality of being able to take everything in stride. Just when you get through telling them about a particularly "hairy" flight you remember taking between Chicago and Los Angeles, they recall in the coolest manner possible at least a half dozen trips that make your own seem like a hayride. To such as these I now propose to relate the story of a flight which, fortunately, I did not make, but concerning which I take a great deal of vicarious satisfaction.

The 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade was having some difficulty in securing the proper air-to-ground support from the 5th United States Air Force. The brigade had been in Korea two months and the liaison organization between Division Corps and Army was still spotty.

Captain Patrick Tremblay, a ruddy French Canadian, approached his senior officer and requested an opportunity to go to Fifth Army Headquarters. "I want to study the organization of American air support, sir," Tremblay informed Brigadier Rockingham.

"It's all right, Pat. Take all the time you need," was the answer.

That was the prelude to a flight which the members of three Canadian regiments and the residents of Saguenay County will tell their grandchildren about long after the pips and stars are tarnished.

When Captain Pat arrived at headquarters in Seoul, the Air Force major was sympathetic. "You say you are the Senior Liaison Officer?"

"That's right, sir, but the setup is still rough. I'd like to get an over-all picture of operations."

"If you really want to learn, we'll give you lectures and briefings. We'll let you ride our air spotters and observers. If you wish we'll also give you a hurry-up course on maps and terrains," the major said.

After five or six days of study, Pat felt he was reasonably ready to return to his Brigade. Some of the information he had already known. He was aware of the fact, for example, that the perfect controller on the ground to direct air support is always a pilot; and conversely, the best pilots for calling in barges are ex-artillerymen trained for the task.

"So that you'll have a complete picture of operations, Captain, you may want to ride as a passenger in one of our light observation planes," the wing commander at Pyongtak suggested. "I'll be looking for a detailed report on your observations when you return."

The idea sounded like a good one, and Pat attended the briefing. A tall, fair Texan, Captain Wittom, was to be pilot. Fifteen minutes after the briefing, Tremblay and Wittom walked to the plane. It was a T-6 Harvard, about the size of an average fighter. Before they boarded the plane, Wittom spread a map on the wing and ran his finger over the marked areas indicating ack-ack activity.

"When you get up around here, Tremblay, that's when you start to watch and pray," the pilot grinned.

Tremblay climbed into the rear seat, adjusted his earphones, and placed the map across his knee. "I see you have dual mechanism on this ship," Tremblay noted.

"That's right. Sometimes we leave the rear control stick in. Sometimes we remove it to give the observer more room. Is it in your way?"

"It's all right, Captain."

They were airborne quickly. The first thing Tremblay did was to line up his map with the terrain below. He had no difficulty locating Suwon and the MSR. The ground training and the Airborne School at Manitoba were paying dividends now. Pat was actually elated.

Three-quarters of an hour later they were over the front lines. "Know where you are?" Wittom asked.

"Yes. That looks like the first ROK line, Imjin River."

"That's right. We'll fly around Kaesong for a while."

The propeller of the T-6, whirling with its peculiar buzz-saw resonance, sliced off slivers of sound as it beat northward. Tremblay again congratulated himself as he identified landmarks on his map. At Kaesong they circled for a time at a thousand feet. The town, shortly before the peace talks, was comparatively quiet.

"Okay, Tremblay. We're going deeper up the line. You'd better keep your eyes open from now on," Wittom warned.

Tremblay bent forward in his seat searching the land that lay ahead. As the hills rolled under them, the enemy infantry positions began to appear. There was no activity evident, but the slit and crawl trenches were visible scars in the earth.

"Remember," Wittom called over the phone, "we want to establish the position of their guns."

Tremblay scanned the terrain with his binoculars. As yet all the heavy mission guns were well concealed.

“Find anything yet, Pat?”

“Not a thing.”

“All right. See that hill to the left? Watch it closely.”

Pat saw that the hill was heavily wooded, and he noticed also that Wittom was dropping slightly to get a better view. Just as they cleared the crest, a quick shattering burst broke below them. The air was thick with .50-caliber and 20-mm ack ack. The first blast was the one that did the damage. It pierced the plane between the pilot's and observer's compartments. The glass in the panel dials was shattered.

“Wow, that one was too close for comfort,” Pat yelled into the phone.

There was no answer from the pilot's seat.

Pat watched Wittom closely. The pilot's head and part of his shoulders were barely visible above the seat. On the floor, a large red trickle of blood was running into Pat's compartment. Tremblay pushed the button again. The plane was wobbling in a slow half-turn to the left.

“Witt, are you hurt?” Tremblay knew he was hurt.

A faint sound came into the earphones. Wittom was trying to talk. “Wait . . .” the voice said. Then Wittom continued: “May day . . . May day.” His voice became unintelligible after that.

“Are you hurt, Witt?” Pat yelled again. “Are we going to jump?”

Wittom's head was now hanging limp over the edge of the cockpit. His hand, flung out over the side, had a deathly white pallor. Pat Tremblay who, in all his life, had never touched the controls of a plane, was riding with a pilot who was either dead or unconscious.

The T-6 with its engine still roaring began to bounce and jiggle. Pat looked in dismay at the switches and dials on the panel. There had been moments in past life when he had imagined being in just this sort of predicament. Pat looked over the side of the plane and noticed with fright that the ground was coming up fast. He reached forward for the stick. There were only two details that Tremblay knew out of the vast science of aeronautics: push the stick forward and the plane goes down; pull it back and the plane rises. The tug he put on the stick zoomed the ship upward like a rocket. "Easy . . . easy . . ." Pat reminded himself in a cold sweat. Steady as she goes. This was trial and error. The last thing he could afford to do was throw the plane into a power stall. Slowly the T-6 moved over, and he was going down again. For the next several minutes, anyone observing the antics of the plane would have been led to believe that the pilot was an old-time roller coaster operator. The Thunderbolt at Palisades Park had dips and twists that were mild compared to Tremblay's charge through these Korean skies.

After Pat brought the plane under some semblance of control by jiggling the foot pedals, his mind shot back to the situation on hand. Wittom was still sagging over the cockpit. He decided that he had the alternative either of jockeying the plane back over friendly territory and ditching it, or, if Wittom were still alive, to take a chance of bringing the ship down. But how was he to know if Wittom were still alive, and how would he slow up the plane sufficiently to land it? To pull or push any of these confusing instruments might send the plane into a half dozen different gyrations. Pat did not know the starter from the stopper. Tremblay had problems.

Approaching Kaesong, Pat recognized the terrain. This alone was enough to give him a lift. As the plane drew nearer

to friendly lines, Pat measured the bail-out procedure of a free drop as against the attempt to land the plane. What was he going to do?

A few minutes later, Pat knew definitely what he was going to do. Wittom's hand opened slowly. It was a slight movement, but Pat noticed immediately. "Witt, can you hear me? Can you make me out?" Pat called.

No response came back. Tremblay tried several more times but it was of no use.

The sun was bright in his eyes and he had difficulty holding to a level course. If he could only keep the plane flying around until Wittom regained consciousness, there would be a chance for both of them to come out of it safely. While he was thinking of this, Wittom lifted his hand slowly. With apparent effort he twisted himself around and looked at Tremblay. His face was quizzical and pain-racked. He turned his head away from Pat, took one look over the side of the ship, and then flung his hand in a weak gesture toward the left.

"You want me to turn to the left?" Pat shouted.

The hand was raised again. Yes, it was directing Pat to the left.

Tremblay eased down on the foot pedals. He was not sure whether it was the slant of the stick or the foot pedals that did the trick, but after a few minor jounces and corrections the nose of the ship was pointing east. That's when Pat saw the strips of Kimpo. Tremblay then asked himself what kind of approach he should make. Somewhere down there, there were wind pennants indicating the direction of approach. From where Pat sat, however, Kimpo was a vast blur. The only clear details were the landing strips.

While Pat was still holding on to the stick he was startled by the change of the engine. Somehow through the haze of semiconsciousness, Wittom, who was partially paralyzed with

ack-ack fragments in his spinal column, reached out and pushed the button for the landing gear flaps. He knew that Tremblay could not touch choke-off speed. The plane pointed her nose over. Tremblay was working the pedals like mad when he saw they were coming in on the down wind. A Navy fighter plane was heading toward them on a take-off. They were coming in on the strip in what was practically a dive angle. A hard pull on the stick leveled them off but not enough. The plane hit the hard concrete, bounced into the air, and in that fleeting, perilous instant as they were suspended in the air, the fighter plane zoomed under them. The T-6, out of control now, went sprawling into a field, weaving from left to right. It crashed through a 4-inch raid-wall that some Koreans were building. Dust and flying debris were thick in the air when it came to a shuddering stop. Flames were licking around the engine when Pat unhooked his harness. Jumping out on the wing, he lifted Wittom from the cockpit. The six-foot-two Texan, whose face was completely smeared with blood, looked more dead than alive. Emergency crash crews rushed to the scene and a few minutes later Wittom was carried away in an ambulance.

"Where are you going, Captain?" a startled fireman asked Tremblay when he saw the Canadian jump up on the wing of the smoking plane.

"I forgot my reports and maps," Tremblay said.

An hour later, Pat Tremblay was flown to Pyongyang where he made his first official report as an observer. He pointed out the coordinates on the map to the wing commander, and in a voice flavored slightly with the French Canadian of Chicoutimi, he affirmed, "On this hill, truly, there are gun positions."

The wing commander ran his fingers through his hair. "You say you never flew a plane before?"

"Today was the first time I ever put my hand on a stick."

“How long did you pilot it?”

“About forty-five minutes, sir.”

A major who had listened to Pat’s story suggested that he be booked for the Distinguished Flying Cross.

“What would I do with a DFC?” Pat asked.

“Oh, I don’t know, but for the rest of your life you’d have one whale of a time trying to explain it.”

At this juncture somebody produced a bottle of spirits. “Canadian, of course,” Pat explained to me. “You see, in our outfit if anyone goes through a hardship, we figure he needs a shot.”

“And what about Wittom?”

“The last I heard, he was doing all right after they took those fragments out of his spine.”

This is the kind of story I particularly enjoy. Should it ever have happened to me, and I have flown behind the dual control system of the T-6, the chances are there would have been twin obituaries. But this has never prevented me from dreaming and redreaming my favorite aeronautical emergency. It’s an episode where I take over the controls of an airliner.

The ship was a huge DC-6, the Advance Mercury, whizzing westward over Texas. More than 50 passengers were resting comfortably, blissfully unaware of the tragedy that was about to stalk them for the next seven hours. The light over the cabin door flashed red. NO SMOKING. FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS—the glass panel warned. The ship began to labor through rough air currents. A cold front had suddenly developed. Conditions behind were as bad as those ahead, so there was nothing to do but proceed. Murky gray clouds surrounded the plane, and lightning began to flash at frequencies of twenty seconds. The blaze of lightning was so brilliant, it blinded the eyes. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred a DC-6 could rise above these dis-

turbances. That night was the one time it could not. Tremendous air pockets developed and the ship dropped and shuddered frightfully on the impacts. The huge tail section began to sway in the grip of high-velocity winds.

Nervous, as usual, I looked about me at the other passengers. The aged couple in front of me were approaching hysteria. The old gentleman would groan audibly every time the ship plunged in a down draft. He kept calling out to the pilot to bring the plane down. The stewardess went forward at a signal from one of the passengers, but halfway down the ship, she was tossed off her feet. Coats, hats, brief cases, blankets, and pillows were strewn all over the plane.

Then the door of the pilot's cabin opened. The second stewardess stood framed in it, pale and shaken. She managed to crawl down the aisle on her hands and knees, and when she reached her companion I overheard the frightful story she told.

"All of them," she cried, "the pilot, co-pilot, and engineer, they're all dead. Electrocuted or asphyxiated or something. What are we going to do, Marjane?"

Immediate panic began to spread among the passengers. I will confess I was shaken myself.

"Wait a minute, everybody," I shouted, standing up and clutching the seat in front of me. "This is an emergency and it's not going to do any of us any good if we start losing our heads. If you'll all be quiet, I'm sure I'll be able to handle this thing."

This, needless to say, was nothing but the rankest lie. As I staggered up the aisle, I felt their strained, terror-bright eyes watching me. "Probably an old pilot from World War II," their eyes were saying. "Probably an ex-Wing Commander of the Berlin airlift." I patted a shaking, white-haired executive on the shoulder as I went by.

I remember it now—those first few moments alone in the pilot's cabin. I placed the bodies of the crew in the engineer's compartment so that I should have room to move around. The door opened behind me. It was the second stewardess. She wanted to know if there was anything she could do.

"Yes," I said. "Which gadget is the radio?"

A fleeting look of suspicion passed over her face. I suspected she knew that I was unacquainted with the technical details of aircraft. After she had indicated the earphones and the microphone, I advised her to go back and offer any assistance necessary to the passengers.

Surprisingly enough we had broken through the cold front and were sailing along in level flight. A few seconds later I sat in the pilot's seat and in a voice that quivered slightly I kept repeating, "SOS—May day . . . SOS, May day. This is Advance Mercury."

"Advance Mercury . . . this is Dallas Control."

"Dallas Control . . . this is Advance Mercury reporting pilot, co-pilot, and engineer dead. Advise you clear all air channels. Alert civilian traffic control, and dispatch aircraft to escort ship for directional bearings. Am not acquainted with instrument panel or let-down procedure. Require detailed radio broadcast describing same."

Little did I know then that within a half hour, practically a whole nation would be standing by for the outcome of this hair-raising flight. NBC, CBS, and MBC had thrown open their networks to record my air-to-tower broadcasts.

"Roger. This is Advance Mercury. Repeat. Which dial is what?"

The voice said: "The dial three inches above your left knee is the fuel indicator. Over."

"Roger. Fuel indicator. What about it? Over."

"How does fuel indicator read?"

I gave a fairly good description of the needle angle and proceeded to request more detailed instructions for let-down procedure. "Roger. This is Advance Mercury. Three Constellations and a C-54 are coming in now at one o'clock . . . they are circling over me. Now they are taking a veering to right. Instruct escort ships to lead me to Mojave Desert. Am just a bit confused about regular airstrip landing you describe. Over."

"Mojave Desert! Why the Mojave Desert? Over."

"Contemplate negotiating belly landing. Will take ship in on the long oblique."

This startling decision I had made evidently caused some confusion back at air control, but finally the voice came through. "Roger, wilco."

The rest of the story, of course, is what everybody read about in *Life* and *Newsweek*.

"Like a huge bird that had labored through a storm, it settled slowly . . . slowly while a nation prayed. Below, the sands of the Mojave stretched endlessly. One man alone behind the throttles knew the real agony of this descent. Never in the history of world aviation had there been such a daring gamble with human life. Fifty-three passengers, numbed with suspense, peered from the windows. They also prayed. Constellation pilot, chunky, puckish, William Varian relayed the ACA. 'You are ten feet above sand . . . five feet . . . three feet . . . easy . . . hold it . . .' A slight ripple, then a feathering, swirling spray leaps up where the belly of the ship creases the sand. The Mojave was sweet touchdown to a 'pilotless' airliner. Three minutes later, fifty-three hysterically weeping, laughing passengers surrounded Mulvey. With characteristic shyness he tried to pass it off. His request: 'A glass of

water.' Said air-wise stewardess, Marjane: 'I'll fly with him any day.' Repeated Varian: 'The nicest belly landing I've ever seen.' "

This particular story is absolutely true up to a point. I have flown in a DC-6 when it was the one out of the hundredth time that it could not rise above the storm conditions of a cold front. I still have the American Airlines passenger log to prove it. The fact that the pilot, co-pilot, and engineer did not happen to die on this trip was a circumstance beyond my control. A Mitty complex, of which I have more than a modicum, provides me with enough cadavers to render the Queen Mary crewless and if *that* isn't a job, trying to bring the big lady through the Narrows all by yourself, then you just don't have any idea of navigation.

Seriously, here in Korea, these who are your sons, by their courage and ingenuity, have actually taken much of the myth out of Mitty. The exploits they have performed in the line of duty and above it are unbelievable. Captain Pat Tremblay happens to be only one of many servicemen whose courage has written fact out of the fantastic. Just the other day I met Lt. Robert Bussjaeger of 7th Air Force Headquarters. His eyes were alight. "I've got a story for you that's really a humdinger. Two jet pilots carried another one home on their wings," he said. I was inclined to disbelieve this "miracle" but Bussjaeger said it was the truth and would send the details. Yesterday, I saw John Dille's account of it in *Life* magazine with a scientific explanation. If anyone attempted to dream up this stunt, even by Walter Mitty standards, it would be putting a stretch on the imagination. Yet it was done by Capt. Jack Miller and Lt. Wood McArthur.

Skill, imagination, and a lightning decision by a helicopter pilot saved the life of a pilot downed in freezing water. When

the pilot could not be released from his parachute, the helicopter captain tilted the blades of his ship. The shore was not too distant. By whipping up a small machine-made gale, he billowed the soggy parachute and blew the pilot through the water to land and safety.

The determination and expert airmanship of an aviator brought home himself and his plane. After crashing through a mountain wire trap set deep in North Korea, the pilot was startled to find he had a heavy drag. The reason: a concrete block was dangling from the end of a cable that was embedded in his wing. The normal procedure would have been to bail out over friendly lines. The pilot, by fancy maneuvering, brought back his plane, cable and concrete attached.

Pat Tremblay has a way of explaining it. "Training is the spine of all maneuvers, sometimes even of the ones you were never trained to do." Whatever be the explanation, there continues to be a lot of laughing and celebrating when the boys gather around to trade memories: Capt. Bud Warren force-landing his Corsair on a field south of Kobe no bigger than a Japanese tea garden . . . Captain John Fischer of Santa Ana gambling a general's life and his own on the ice-laden wings of a Beechcraft against altitude and mountain peaks . . . these and a hundred other incidents are the things they talk about. They demanded training and more than training. They demanded that instant and fearless execution of the "impossible" which might best be described these days as "Doing a Tremblay."

[SIX]

• “*Onze Lieve Vrouw*”

His name was Joop Goosens and according to Alfred Van Sprang of Radio Holland, it should be pronounced Yope Hosens. An ash-blond, curly-headed youngster from 's Hertogenbosch, Joop decided one day he was fed up with roasted coffee, custard, and beans. Not that he disliked food. Food was fine in its place. It was the day-to-day handling, packing, and canning of it that bothered Joop. His work in De Gruyters, a Dutch version of the A & P, was the placid life of a grocery boy. Once in a while, he was called upon to fill in as a mechanic; but these were mere interludes in the prevalent and monotonous theme of coffee, custard, and beans.

Joop's pay at De Gruyters was good. He earned about forty guilders a week. This was not bad for a single man; but Joop came from a large family and he cast his eyes around for some-

thing that might add substantially to the Goosens' income. So he signed up for a year with the Netherlands Army and volunteered to fight in Korea. Joop was honest about the matter. "Yes, I'm ready to fight the Communists. But that's not the only reason why I joined. Maybe it's not the only reason why some of the others joined either. A lot of us never had good jobs. The army looked like some . . . what you call a good thing. I fight Communism because I do not like Communism. I also fight Communists because I must support my family. The army is a job with me." That was how Joop stated it at the beginning.

Joop soon learned that action in Korea was more than a job. Even the seasoned Indonesian campaign fighters of the Netherlands Battalion were to learn that army life in the snow-capped hills about Hoengsong was far from the "good thing" with extra guilders—that it was a life-and-death struggle for a man to negotiate twenty yards, much less a round-trip ticket to the sunny south province of Noord Brabant.

The snow was falling that day when the Netherlands detachment took up its defensive blocking position north of Hoengsong. The tragedy of Massacre Valley was like a pall thick and palpable in the air. The 8th ROK Division had been ripped by four Communist divisions. Supporting American troops of the 38th Infantry Regiment reeled under the blow that tore through the ROK lines. The order was to retreat, but the Chinese and North Koreans, in their deadliest road-block of the war, massacred the battalion columns. Trucks were torpedoed and their drivers killed or captured. Piled wreckage cut the escape route; waves of Red troops decimated the artillery personnel, forcing them to abandon nineteen of their howitzers. But more painful than the equipment losses were the casualties sustained by the battered Regiment. More than a thousand men from the 1st and 3d Battalions were killed

or wounded. The remnants of these two battalions, together with elements of the pulverized ROK Division, were now trying to break through their last roadblock to Hoengsong.

These were the men whom the Netherlands troops were awaiting. These were the men they would cover by what is tactically described as a defensive blocking position. Blocking defense is not a "cheery action" as the British would say. It is the disheartening and dangerous job of saving what can be saved, of holding off the enemy long enough for the limping battalions to pass through, and then of withdrawing your own neck, exposed turtle-wise, to the safety zone of some regimental shell.

Joop Goosens shivered behind the pine-laced bunker. As he watched a small task force of five tanks and twenty men move north to join up with the cut-off battalions, he did not know that there would be two betrayals that day, and that the night would fall upon him, blacker than any he had ever remembered.

Lt. Bob Uzzo, a tall and mild-mannered high school teacher from Pennsylvania, sat in the pyramidal tent shortly after four o'clock that snowy morning. A call had come from Col. John Coughlin, the Commanding Officer of the 38th, for more ammunition and armor. Lieutenant Gibbons, platoon leader of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Patrol, was also summoned to the orderly room.

"We have to break through to those two battalions and we haven't got much to do it with," Lieutenant Dickey said. "All the available artillery from the Corps area has been gobbled up. However, we can send a platoon of tanks and some infantry."

Bob Uzzo was a gentleman. He knew that Gibbons' patrol had just come up from the river bed. The men were tired and

cold. “I’ll take my security platoon on one condition, sir.”

“What’s that, Uzzo?”

“I’ll go provided Dumpy Basil and Tom Lambert don’t steal any of my salami.”

“We’ll throw a special security guard around that salami, Bob.”

The orderly room brightened a bit with this joking that went on before dawn. Hot coffee was drained from the cups, pistols were checked on their belts, and in a matter of minutes the tank-infantry task force, with Bob Uzzo in the lead, was on the way.

The tanks crossed a small river, cracking the ice with their treads. The infantrymen, sometimes waist-high in water, held their rifles over their heads. Privates Carl Clayton and Woody Woodruff admitted later that they were too scared to be cold. These hills were infested with Communists, and shivering was a luxury that might only upset your aim. They ran across stalled ROK Ranger trucks and jeeps. Disheartened and bedraggled South Korean soldiers were walking southward past them. Some of the men wanted to open fire on the retreating soldiers.

“Hold your fire,” Uzzo yelled. “You don’t know what those guys have been through. A couple of hours from now, some of you may be running the other way, too.”

As the task force approached the village, the tanks opened up with their 76-mm fire. The village was quiet. Coming into the village, Uzzo saw a crowd of approximately four hundred men. They were apparently clean and well-dressed. Some of them were holding white flags.

“Look at the guy in front,” someone said. “He looks like a Rajah!” The “Rajah” was, in fact, dressed in a flowing cape of black and white. A bandana knotted like a turban was perched on his head.

“What do you think, Uzzo?” the tank commander asked.

That was the question Uzzo and his conscience had to answer. He could have ordered point-blank fire and killed—whom? Innocent, defenseless civilians? Or infiltrating guerrillas? White flags were still fluttering in their hands.

The tank commander shouted to Uzzo. "Tell them they had better lay down their arms or we'll open fire."

Uzzo agreed. It was the simple and practical solution. Beads of sweat stood out on Bob's forehead. He walked slowly toward the "Rajah." It could be a trap. It was definitely a gamble—but all of Uzzo's heart was in the gamble. Human life for this American lieutenant was still sacred here in these Korean hills.

As Uzzo came close to the "Rajah," his suspicions were aroused by the movement of the North Koreans. They began to fan out in a wide circle. Uzzo, at this moment, could again have called for tank fire. He waited a few agonizing moments. The North Koreans stopped their circling movement and stood still. They were watching Bob and the "Rajah." Uzzo, still in doubt, knew that one false move now could end in bloodshed. What was the right move? Bob could not be sure, but he would play it all the way like a man. He would speak to the "Rajah."

They stood face to face. From where the tanks were standing Uzzo's lips were seen forming the words. He gestured a few times to make clear that the North Koreans should place their arms on the ground. The "Rajah," with his robe folded impressively about him, appeared to be listening intently. Then in one movement, he turned from Uzzo, signaled to the North Koreans with a nod, brought out a burp gun from beneath his cape and riddled Uzzo from the waist to the head. Lieutenant Uzzo fell forward in death.

Bob, indeed, had all his heart in the gamble, and in the ultimate tallying who shall say Lt. Bob Uzzo had really lost?

The tanks, wheeling into position to fire upon the Koreans, accidentally killed two infantrymen, Pat Garner and Roy Rider. One tank heeled over on the narrow road, pinning the tank platoon leader between his gun and the ground. Sgt. Paul Knudtson maneuvered his tank to cover the trapped man while others dug him out.

The tank force had to withdraw that morning, but on a second run, it finally burst the roadblock and joined the two mauled battalions. Men like Charlie Heath, Donald Barry, Gilbert Hernandez, and Capt. Charlie Watson will go down in the records of the 38th Infantry Regiment as those among the many who opened the hole for their weary comrades in arms.

This first betrayal by white flags hit close to home for Joop Goosens and the Dutch Battalion. Bob Uzzo was the kind of man who was respected and loved by infantrymen, Americans as well as Dutch. He was a fellow who would flip you a couple of hard-boiled eggs or a chunk of salami when you were a bit down in the mouth and hollow in the stomach. Where the eggs came from was a mystery. But Bob was gone and the tattered remnants of two fighting battalions were now coming in over the road that skirts Hoengsong. The dead and wounded were stacked on the tanks. Men on bandaged legs clung to jeeps, half limping and half running.

As the battalions were coming through that night, the Netherlands detachment held its ground in the blocking defense. Joop Goosens' Commander, N.P. den Ouden, was to experience the second betrayal that day. A group of white-clad civilians was challenged. "Don't shoot," they screamed. "We are South Koreans." Other voices were heard saying, "GI . . . GI." Then, as with a rehearsed timing, a ring of orange flame leaped from concealed guns. Colonel den Ouden fell mor-

tally wounded. The Battalion Command Post was rocked with intense fire. Darkness added to the confusion. Out on the road with battalion traffic still moving slowly southward, no one could tell South Korean from North Korean, Chinese from Dutchmen or Americans.

Capt. Ben Carrol, with the 49th Field Artillery Battalion, was riding in the weary cavalcade. The road was pitch-black. Something like a hillock appeared directly ahead.

"Switch on the lights for a second. We don't want to get sandbagged," he said to the driver. The jeep's light found the battered body of a Chinese. The tires of the battalion had already pounded the corpse into the road. The jeep moved over the "obstacle" and continued on until a sound to the left attracted Carrol's attention.

"Halt!" Carrol shouted. His pistol was pointed at the moving shadow.

"It's all right," a weary voice answered.

Carrol's searchlight played on the sober features of a young blond Dutch boy. He had his arms around a wounded GI.

"I am Joop Goosens. Here's an American soldier. He is wounded bad."

They lifted the American into one of the gun trucks. Carrol turned to the young Netherlander. "You'd better come along. I can put you in my jeep."

"Thank you, sir, I must join my battalion." Joop Goosens walked north into the face of the approaching enemy. He had to keep his defensive block intact. Carrol felt a warm glow come over him. This was the kind of thing that you saw in men only on the blackest nights. The jeep moved onward.

"Who are you?" a voice shot from the dark.

Carrol answered, "We're Americans heading toward Wonju."

A slight man, a major, came staggering toward the jeep. He had been hit in the arms and legs.

“My Commanter has been kilt,” the major said with a Dutch accent. “We have lost many others. I am now in commant.” Fatigue and desolation were in his voice. He might have collapsed on the spot.

“Why don’t you join our column?” Carrol suggested. The man was wounded enough to be evacuated.

The major shook his head.

Carrol again asked him to join the column.

“No, I must commant.” The major lurched forward into the dark and Captain Carrol was sure he had come face to face with bravery hobbling on dutiful steps to the uncertain job that lay ahead in the night.

Joop saw the yellow flares going up to signal the withdrawal. Yet the blocking defense had to go on. It was retreat with your face to the Chinese—slow, backward, crouching tactics, jabbing desperately at the enemy as he crowded you for the kill. One of the Netherlanders was wounded and as Joop was running to his side, a bullet shattered his knee, veered downward, and pierced his left foot. Joop toppled down a slight incline and crawled to the road. Two American soldiers, who were limping by, saw him. They pulled Joop to his feet, draped his arms over their shoulders, and began to drag him along the road. They had proceeded about fifty yards when Joop knew it was useless.

“What’s the matter, can’t you make it?” one of them asked. The GI’s voice was rasping in pain.

“Thank you. This is good enough. You leave me here, please. It’s better only one should die than all three of us.” They lowered him to the ground. One of them tapped him gently across the back. “Don’t worry, Dutchie, we’ll come back and pick you up.”

Joop waved to them. Their figures were weaving silhouettes against a dozen burning houses to the south. It was difficult to believe that they would come back. They were on the verge of collapse themselves. If only a truck or a jeep would come along now, things might be different. Joop crawled to the edge of the road, saw the lateral ditch, and eased himself into it. The orange glow of the burning buildings was flickering out now. Darkness came lapping in and around him like a cold wave. Joop felt the brittle stubble of the ditch pressing upward against the length of his body. In other circumstances, even this might have been a bed. His young, hardened body was used to the field. But with pain stabbing his legs, and the Red hunters creeping closer to him, Joop trembled with the elemental terror of the animal that waits in the trap.

This was a night blacker than any he had ever remembered.

Dawn was gray and desolate. A sound on the road broke the eerie quiet. Joop lifted his head to the level of the road. He saw a GI trudging slowly toward him from the north.

"Can you help me?" Joop asked.

The soldier's eyes were glazed and red-rimmed. "I can't help you, Mac. But I'll send somebody back to pull you out of this." The fellow lurched on as if in a stupor. He stopped suddenly in the road, walked back to Joop, and bent over him. "I mean it, buddy. I'll send someone to pick you up."

"Thanks."

As the American faded from sight, Joop felt hope starting to gather inside him. Just to have been able to talk for those few seconds and to look into eyes that recognized the fix you were in—this was like a shot in the arm. Joop had not talked for six hours. They seemed like six weeks.

About forty minutes later, he was startled by the sound of Chinese voices. Red troops marched by the spot where he was lying without glancing in his direction. Joop, who had hardly

breathed, was congratulating himself on having escaped detection when a shout went up off the road. The next moment he felt hands clutching at his jacket, pulling him over on his back. A Chinese soldier stood over him, making motions for him to get up and walk. Joop pointed to his legs and shook his head. The Chinese shouted loudly to someone down the road. Joop waited and his captor waited. Then without warning, the Chinese turned from him and walked away.

It seemed hours before Joop had the strength to turn himself over on his stomach. This, in itself, was a problem. Should he roll over on the right side or on the left? To turn right might snap his leg off at the knee, he thought. It would be better to ease over on the left and drag the right leg after him. He had no sooner settled on his stomach again when a Korean leaned over the ditch. “GI,” the man said. “GI . . . me GI.”

Joop tried to recall the Korean phrases he had memorized in the army booklet, but nothing came back to him. The man was evidently a South Korean. He was pointing southward, gesticulating and speaking excitedly. Joop understood nothing. The Korean then jumped into the ditch, lifted Joop, and placed him on his back. After carrying him about two hundred meters down the road, he stopped beside a weapons carrier. This was too good to be true, Joop thought. This was getting a ride right out of the jaws of hell. His dreaming was stopped short, however, when the South Korean pointed beneath the weapons carrier. The man lifted a stretcher and two sleeping bags from the vehicle. He placed these under the weapons carrier and motioned for Joop to crawl in upon them.

“You drive?” Joop used sign language.

“Have-a-no drive,” the man said.

There was nothing to do but follow directions. Loss of blood and extreme cold were making Joop weak. The stretcher and blankets looked good. Joop crawled under the truck, tried to

get into one of the sleeping bags, but did not have the strength. He used the bags and the blankets to cover him. He watched the South Korean squat alongside the truck. The man smiled at him and Joop dropped off to sleep.

Joop could not tell how many hours he slept. It must have been late afternoon or evening when he awakened. He was surprised to see the same Korean sitting beside the weapons carrier. The man's face was wrinkled in concern. He pointed at his stomach. "Chop chop?" Was Joop hungry, the fellow wanted to know. No, Joop was not hungry.

There was a sudden commotion on the road. It was coming from the direction of Hoengsong. About twenty Chinese marched up to the South Korean and began to ask questions. One of them stooped and pulled Joop by the arm until his head was clear of the vehicle. The American soldier who had passed Joop that morning was now a prisoner. They were bringing him north. Joop spoke to the GI but there was no answer. The soldier's face was white, the color that comes up before a man vomits. The Chinese kept questioning the South Korean and finally they pushed the fellow ahead of them. He too was being taken prisoner. They looked at Joop. They went into a buzzing monotone of conversation. Then they left him where he was with his face directly under the right door of the weapons carrier. They began to walk northward along the road when one of them came back. He was a short man with a sparse beard on his chin. He bent to where Joop was lying, inserted his hand, and pulled away one of the sleeping bags. Then he mounted the weapons carrier. Joop heard the motor turn over. The vehicle began to roll.

"Stop . . . stop!" Joop shouted. His body was directly in the path of the rear wheel. With a supreme effort, he tried to twist himself from under the truck, but he was not fast enough. The right rear wheel rolled over his right leg and foot. He

felt the bones cracking inside his shoe. That was the time he screamed the Lady's name—“*Onze Lieve Vrouw*,” which means, my mother or my beloved lady. “*Onze Lieve Vrouw van 's Hertogenbosch*,” he continued to cry. And his words were the conscious prayer of someone who had been taught from his youngest days to call upon the woman who is the mother of Jesus—Mary. Joop Goosens was a lonesome, hurt Netherlander, lying face upward under a darkening Korean sky, with a shattered knee and two smashed feet. The weapons carrier had jerked forward about twenty yards and wound up straddling the road and the ditch. It remained there. Joop did not remember the Chinese driver coming back. He himself was back again in the same lateral ditch. He had pulled himself into it after the truck had rolled over him. He lay there for the rest of the evening and all that night.

When morning came, Joop could barely move. His arms were numb. A Chinese patrol passed by and he called out, “Take me somewhere.” He no longer feared detection. Right now it was good to see anything that was alive and moving. Even Chinese. “Take me somewhere,” he called to them.

Two Chinese walked up to him and surveyed the scene. One of them lit a cigarette. His pants were torn at the knees and Joop saw crusted blood through the tatters. This Chinese bent down and offered Joop a cigarette.

The three of them puffed in complete silence for about thirty seconds. The two Chinese began talking to each other. Then they reached down and lifted Joop. Their fingers under his arms and legs seemed icy cold. It was then that Joop knew his uniform was soaking wet. They carried him to a hut that was fairly well blasted with small-arms fire. But it had a roof on it, and there might be warmth. That was what Joop needed most of all—warmth.

He tried to express the word with his face and hands.

"Thanks" was hard to say when you had a real need to say it. But these Chinese soldiers seemed to know what he meant. They grinned at him. One of them lifted a packet from his pocket and gave it to Joop. The packet was filled with salted sunflower seeds. Joop pretended to eat the seeds but the salt worried him. He was afraid he would get too thirsty. When the Chinese left, Joop tossed the seeds away.

Alone in the hut, Joop had time to study his surroundings. Damp, musty straw was strewn over the floor. The walls were the dark, hardened mud of a farmer's house, topped with thick layers of wheat or rice stem matting.

The hours dragged by that day and Joop felt hunger and thirst starting to gnaw at him. He pulled himself over the straw and his fingers struck something metallic. It was an old pot. Joop lifted it and then stared at the roof. Over in the far corner, there was a drip-drip of melting snow. He found the spot and placed the pot under the slow trickle. With his back against the wall, he waited. It was really a fascinating sort of game. He calculated the number of drops it would take to make an inch of water; between four hundred and four hundred fifty drops. A thick rusty scum was rising in the water. Joop lost count, rinsed the pot and wiped it clean with the edge of his coat. This time, he decided not to count. There were other things to do. While he waited for the water, he would do some foraging. Inch by inch he searched the straw. He found a pen-knife and some Life Savers. Troops had evidently occupied the hut. Joop lay flat on his stomach and counted the Life Savers. There were exactly seventeen. Despite the mud and straw that had been stuck to them, they were delicious.

Joop wondered if there wasn't food of some kind left in the straw. Methodically, foot by foot, he searched the length and breadth of the floor. His hands felt something sticky. In the dim light, he saw that it was his own blood. He was leaving a

trail wherever he pulled his battered legs. Farther on he found a woman's coat. He threw it aside and continued searching for food. Exhausted at the edge of the hut, he lay still for about twenty minutes. There was no food except the packet of sunflower seeds. He could pick them apart with his fingers and throw the salty shells away.

He edged backward over the straw, taking the woman's coat with him. While the water still dripped into the pot, he cut the lining from the coat and made a bandage for his knee. Then he lifted the pot from the floor and drank. The water was flat and foul-tasting but it was a relief. He took the knife, crawled to the south end of the hut, and dug a small hole through the mud wall. This was his peephole. With the woman's coat over his shoulders, he would wait here and watch. He wondered whether he would see them again—the men of his battalion—coming back over the road. Joop shivered in his cold and solitary vigil.

The hut is silent and shadow-filled. Time is a gray perdurance, a trickling of minutes into hours, broken by the fitful breathing of wind against mud and straw. Thin pencils of light trace the passage of the hours across the cold and dirty floor. Time moves from gray into the softening purple and blue of evening, and on to the black etchings of night. It is measured sensitively by a man's breathing, punctuated by a sigh, a rustle of a shoe in straw, a cough.

Here in this quiet hut, Joop Goosens had time to think about time. It was mirrored in the glassy stare of his eyes. On fingers, thin and pinched blue with cold, he could count the lagging days . . . five . . . six . . . seven . . . eight . . . nine . . . He had been without food for more than two hundred hours. Hunched against the wall, his body contracted under the squeezing fingers of starvation.

The long nights were a delirious blur, terrifying at times,

at times soothing. It seemed to Joop that he had somehow escaped it all, that he was running again on feet that gave him no pain. A soccer ball was bouncing from his toes and he was kicking it across the grassy fields of Noord Brabant. Magically, he was riding a bicycle to Limburg, and all the way to Antwerp. Foam was running down glasses of beer, and he heard voices singing, "*Sarie Marais is so ver van my hart . . . maar ek hoop om haar weer te sien.*" My Sarie Marie is so far, far away . . . but I hope to see her again. And there wasn't any sound of mortar or rifle to spoil the chorus of it. It was loud and clear and full of the warm sun. "*Daar onder in die mielies by die groendoring boom . . . Daar woon my Sarie Marais.*" Down there in the corn field by the green thorn tree . . . there lives my Sarie Marie.

Pain, like a knife searing him from his ankle to the thigh, inevitably shocked him back to the reality of straw and mud, back to thirst and hunger and the numbing cold. But more than anything else was this awful sense of loneliness. Joop Goosens was never so utterly alone as he was on this ninth night. "God help me . . . God help me . . . God help me . . ." It was as steady, this prayer, as the ticking of his heart. Then he was sobbing like a child. "*Onze Lieve Vrouw.*" The Lady Mary would hear him and hold him. She knew what it was to sit in straw. She would come into this bloody Bethlehem and swaddle him in a woman's coat and he would speak to her here; he would talk to his Lady of 's Hertogenbosch.

Time seeped slowly with the drip-drip of water into a pot. Then time seemed to stand still in the parched hours of thirst when there was no dripping. Ten . . . eleven . . . twelve . . . thirteen days . . . Three hundred hours without food.

The blond Netherlander is a hollow-eyed shell of a man. The peephole through which he peered southward had revealed the same dull emptiness. Two weeks before it had been bristling

with the men and machinery of a blocking defense. It is an ironic word now—defense. What was the guard a man could raise against the lance of starvation? Or the cold? A shivering, chattering bag of bones was all that is left of a man, twisting in the straw, trying to roll into a ball, trying to huddle in upon the small flame of warmth that flickers somewhere inside his ribs. Where, for Joop Goosens, was the blocking defense against death?

General George Stewart was not aware, that morning, that a Netherlander was dying in a hut to the north. As Deputy Commander, he was busy preparing his own defense. The victorious Red elements that had smashed their way through Massacre Valley and Hoengsong were now set to sweep Wonju. These were the forward-wall legions that had rolled unchecked all the way from the Yalu River. In terms of a war gridiron, they were still carrying the ball, and Wonju with its C-47 landing strip was the goal they were after. Contemporaneous with the all-out drive that had been flung at Chipyeong-ni, this attack represented the same violent strategy. The United Nations forces on this February day were scheduled to be swept off the peninsula.

It was no longer a question of limited withdrawals. General Stewart had received his orders. He was to hold Wonju at all costs. That meant no retreat. Not a vehicle was to be set in motion, not even the quartermaster mess trucks. The men were so jumpy, those days, that grinding gears were tantamount to a signal for retreat. The only men authorized to move, that morning, were the ammo truck drivers and Graves Registration personnel.

The United Nations team was dug in on a tight horseshoe formation about Wonju. In the area running from the left calk-end of the horseshoe up through the oval arch, Stewart

placed the still groggy Netherlands detachment with a ROK Ranger Company in blocking defense. Completing the horseshoe to the north and down the right rim were the 2d Battalion of the 38th Infantry Regiment and the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 187th Airborne. The 18th ROK Regiment was holding the blocking defense to the east. Within the perimeter, sixty big-mouthed howitzers were ranged to roar at all tangents.

The hour was tense. The whole of the United Nations' central front was in extreme peril. Spotter planes were sent aloft to report the enemy's movements and the information the pilots relayed was enough to frazzle the nerves of the hardest commandos in the lines. The design was simple and stark. Thousands of Communist infantrymen, estimated by the spotter pilots to be two divisions strong, were slipping down along the left flank of the horseshoe. The Red hammer had struck at three-thirty that same morning, February 14th, trying to crush the forward northern toe of the iron shoe. Having failed, the hammer was now set to swing a side blow. The inverted U of the horseshoe was dangerously close to being smashed into a circular death clamp. As the long column filtered down off the left flank, elements would leave the main line and drive inward in separate, spaced jumping-off positions. The entire left rim of the horseshoe was on the anvil.

It was not a question of waiting long enough to see the whites of the enemy eyes that day. Artillery trajectory does not permit that much proximity. But the United Nations *did* wait. The big howitzers waited. The cannoneers waited. The frost-bitten chiefs of section waited. Then when the word buzzed from FDC, the muzzles of the arched guns roared and recoiled. The smell of smoke and powder was thick within the horseshoe. They cursed as they loaded that day. It was as close to double-quick as they had ever fired. When they were running ahead of their ammo pit supplies, Stewart called for no

letup. “If we’re out of rounds, we’ll get more rounds.” More than 290 trucks went into motion to feed General Haynes’ hot and smoking howitzers.

Red China, on this 15th of February, was literally red. Her commandeered sons, the ox boys and pony leaders, as well as her professional Manchurian shock troops were cut into such pitiable pieces that plane spotters reported from their altitude that the River of the Som Valley ran red.

It was finished.

The horseshoe was still intact. A demoralized and bleeding enemy staggered to the northwest, leaving behind more than 3,000 casualties. Wonju was saved by one of the most paralyzing blocks the United Nations had yet thrown against the marauding puppets of Moscow. Joop Goosens’ countrymen, battered and beaten in their Hoengsong effort, had rallied to Van Heutz’ screaming command for fixed bayonets below Hill 325. Soldiering and soldering the left flank of the iron rim, and with General Haynes’ artillery scorching the air over their heads, they had welded the name of their country into the steel of the United Nations’ most stubborn defense.

Back in a gloomy hut, one dying soldier is unaware that his comrades in arms have helped to make possible the journey back over the rough road to Hoengsong. For fourteen days, he shrinks under starvation. Then something attracts his attention. It is a sound that sends a flame of hope through him. Tanks! The big armored vehicles were rolling up from the south.

Struggling weakly into a sitting position beside the peephole, Joop Goosens began to laugh hysterically. The emblem on the tanks was the glorious white star of the United Nations. They had broken through. They would find him. His weak fingers scratched at the hole in the wall to make it larger. As the lead tank rumbled close, Joop twisted his hand through

the wall and signaled frantically. The tank was so near he could make out the features of the commander. The fellow had a beard. With all the strength Joop could command, he yelled to attract the man's attention; but the grinding of the tank swallowed up his voice and in a matter of seconds, the lead tank had wheeled past the hut. In desperation, Joop fumbled through the straw about him. He found a stick and, attaching a strip of the coat lining to it, he shoved it through the hole. Surely the next tank would be attracted by his waving signal.

Joop waited breathlessly when the second tank hove into sight. The clanking treads seemed directed toward the hut. For one awful moment, Joop feared that the cannons would open up on the mud walls. Jerking and waving the stick as best he could, he waited. But this tank also rumbled by . . . and the next . . . and the next. When the grinding and lurching sounds ceased, Joop fell back against the wall exhausted. Maybe they'll come back, he thought.

He waited long hours on that fourteenth day. Even through the night of the fourteenth he waited. Throughout the gray morning, noon, and evening of the fifteenth he still waited. Waiting was something you could get used to if you had even one small thread to hang a hope on. But the night of the sixteenth day was like the razoredge of doom. No one had come. The tanks had not returned. Already the thread that held life and hope was beginning to unravel. Joop Goosens, sprawled in a spineless heap, was beginning to gape like a madman.

"I'm losing my mind. O God, I'm becoming insane."

These were the slow steps he seemed to be taking into some strange and terrible darkness. Dryness was gathering inside his mouth and throat, and the dryness was the melancholia of despair. It was in his breathing; and even breathing, now, was a pain he had never before experienced. Despair was something you could taste and eat, and the eating of it was going to be death. This was food for his starvation, and Joop Goosens,

prostrate in what seemed his inevitable tomb of mud and straw, was tempted to eat.

There are those moments in the hospital wards of the world when old men, rattling in the last stupor of death, have been known to call from the depths of their unconsciousness the names of parents. Throughout the long seventeenth day and night, a single word kept pulling Joop back to consciousness. The word was “Mother.” He awoke screaming the name. At times, he awoke sobbing it, and this “Mother” accent, like a thin thread caught around the last lagging breath of his body, held him sustained over the brink of ultimate sleep. It held him through the seventeenth day and night. When the eighteenth day dawned, the shrunken body of the young Netherlander was lying very still in the straw.

The silence of the hut was shattered by rifle fire and flying mud. The walls were peppered with small arms. Bursts of sunlight shot through the bullet holes. Joop’s eyes flickered. His hand, still clutching the stick, was raised weakly. Outside, two GIs with cocked pistols approached the hut warily. There was another round of fire, and one of them entered.

“Don’t shoot . . . don’t shoot. I’m Dutch,” Joop cried in a broken voice. He waved what looked like a pitiable white flag of surrender.

“Take it easy, Mac,” the GI said. “We’re not going to hurt you.”

“I’m Dutch . . . I’m Dutch,” Joop repeated.

The other infantryman stepped into the hut. After one look at Joop, his face turned sober. “Looks like this guy’s been waiting too long.” The soldier reached out and held Joop’s thin wrist in his fingers. The starved Netherlander, down to about eighty pounds, bent toward the GI’s hands. His head was wobbling on his neck when he kissed the soldier’s fingers.

“We’ll take care of you, buddy. You got no more worry now,” one of them said. Joop laughed and cried alternately.

"You just wait here and we'll get you an ambulance."

"No, please don't leave me."

"But we mean it. We'll be right back."

"No . . . no. Don't leave me. Stay here." Joop's fingers were twisted about the man's hand.

The GI looked at his buddy, shrugged, and then sat down on the straw beside Joop. "I guess you better go for that ambulance. I'll stay here with him." When the soldier left the hut, Joop relaxed. The GI faced him. "How about a smoke? I'll bet you haven't had these for a long while."

Joop nodded.

They sat in silence for a few minutes. Joop never took his eyes from the soldier's face.

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes," Joop answered.

The hunger was there in his face. It was in his eyes. Hunger and thirst. But the real appetite was in the loneliness that had left a stamp sadder than all emaciation. With this GI sitting beside him, Joop Goosens had already begun to eat.

Joop Goosens was taken by ambulance to Wonju. From Wonju he went to Pusan and across the narrow sea to Tokyo. The early feathering of spring would not be long in coming to the willows that stood green in Hibiya Park the evening he arrived. Yellow and red neons, flashing their *Kenji and Kana* advertisements to the milling millions of Japanese, glowed with a homey business-as-usual warmth for the boy who was lifted in a stretcher. His frozen and crippled legs were ready for the surgeon's knife. After that it would be the long trip by troopship back to home and 's Hertogenbosch.

In the rooms that buzz with talk of press dispatches and deadlines in Seoul, Korea, a group of correspondents is gathered. Norman McBain is worrying about his early morning broad-

cast to Canada. Col. Pat Welch runs his fingers through his gray hair and sets the time of the briefing hour. George Movshon pounds into the room and in the purest South African asks if anyone has heard that another Near East potentate has been assassinated. Greg MacGregor is telling Betty Betts where she should go to get a story. Something simple and factual. Something like “NO ONE BUT THE GLOSTERS.” We have, also, Filipinos and Belgians fighting on this rugged peninsula, Greg emphasizes. These *plus* the British. Nor let us forget the Columbans or the Columbians. A voice is raised to the tune of a five-dollar bet that the man’s name is James *Alward* and not James *Alfred* Van Fleet. And so the talk goes on. The Dutchman, Van Sprang, repeats at the far edge of the conversation the name of the woman. Mary!

“You mean the Mother of Christ?”

“Yes. I mean the Mother of Jesus Christ. This Joop Goosens would have cracked if it had not been for his devotion to Mary.” Van Sprang speaks briskly. He is about to leave for Indochina.

There is a silence in the room, and the silence is taut and curious.

“This other thing about Joop. It was a promise he made. He did not know how much legs he would have left when he was pulled out of that hut, but he made a promise. He said he would go if he had to crawl on stumps to the shrine of what he calls his . . . ‘*Onze Lieve Vrouw van ’s Hertogenbosch.*’”

There was a deeper silence in the room.

[SEVEN]

• O'Reilly-san

“Put something in the pot, boy!”

Long before Jack Kirkwood made that line hilarious, Hughie O'Reilly was making a living on a variation of it. For Hughie, however, it was not a pot. “Put something in the slot, boy” was more like it. The slot belonged to the bus line that plies New York City's Lenox Avenue, and by the time Hughie rolled his lumbersome green coach to the upper reaches of Harlem, it was amazing what stacks of silver could accumulate in transit. This was due, as Hughie soon learned, to that simple yet astonishing formula: “Put something in the slot, boy.” Without that slot and what went into it, the bus wouldn't run, people couldn't ride, and Hughie would be out of a job.

Now, it never entered Hughie's head that this discovery would ever make headlines. Anyone with an ounce of sense

could tell you that two plus two is four. Plain addition! What captured Hughie's imagination was not mere addition but accumulation. Did you ever stop to think what would happen if you accumulated all the nickels and dimes that drop through New York's slots and turnstiles in a single day? A week? A year? Aside from the fairly large pile those nickels and dimes would make, each single coin in the aggregate—each single one—would be responsible for transporting a metropolis, putting bread and butter and meat on tables, and dollars in the pockets of thousands like himself. Not that a bus driver or a B.M.T. boy had many dollars left over when the bills were paid out, but this "Put something in the slot, boy" was a prescription for keeping many, many bodies and souls together with occasional leeway toward the fuller life, as far away as Rockaway anyhow. Amazing what a nickel can do if you can get enough of them.

At this point, lest the reader get the idea that Hughie is about to abscond with a bag of bus fares, it is best to state that no such temptation ever confronted the honorable O'Reilly. Weeks and months passed for him with the monotony of shifting gears until one day he found himself well off the beaten route of Lenox Avenue. The 25th Tropic Lightning Division was stationed in the Osaka-Kobe area, Japan, for occupation duties. Having collected in the Pacific war several titles to glory through Guadalcanal, Luzon, and Manila, the 25th Division finally turned up in central Honshu with O'Reilly. Ishibashi is a long way from Lenox Avenue and moreover the buses run in considerably opposite fashion, but the good old formula—the essence of it—was here. The twist was a bit Oriental, true; but in effect it had the same genuine ring. "Slap the yen on the tin, boy-san" was the Kansai variation of an old mazoola melody. O'Reilly suddenly got an idea one day. This is the way it happened.

There was just about enough to keep a sergeant first class occupied during those pre-Korean war days in Japan. Divisional duties included such harassing assignments as inspections, drills, running to the Osaka APO for the mail, and getting up at the ghastly hour of five in the morning to welcome a new batch of occupationnaires with a brass band. This last assignment usually took place on a drafty railroad platform, presided over by some major or lieutenant who struggled dutifully to combine grumpiness with military decorum. But there were other times when the pressure was off and a fellow could relax. Cowboy Clem's "Sagebrush Symphony" was a *must* before lunch hour. You had to be on your toes, too, to catch the lugubrious voice of the sergeant who announced, "This is your evening edition of date book." Otherwise, who was to know what dance, bingo, or sukiyaki party was being held at what club? Fatigued at the end of the day, a man turned into his bunk and the Armed Forces Radio Service wafted to his ears over the Far East Network the soothing vespers of "Words with Music." Times were rough and times were fair and O'Reilly, like the thousands of other Americans who were with him in Japan, was learning that one of the more pressing problems of an occupation was to keep occupied.

Then Hughie met a girl! It was love at first sight. One fleeting expression did it. That facial expression was burned in him as deeply as it is possible to brand a memory on a man. Sergeant First Class O'Reilly had lost his heart to a nine-year-old orphan lass.

Her name was Yokosan. He found her where the gray rubble of war had herded her and one hundred fifty others like her. At first he did not see Yokosan. She was merely another anonymous dark head that lifted curious eyes at the American Heitai-san. O'Reilly moved slowly outside this place they called home. It was a low desolate structure that had served as a temporary barracks for Japanese soldiers. Tiny

youngsters stared out at him through windows. When O'Reilly touched the wooden sills, they crumbled under his fingers. It made quite a portrait, this—babies in open winter pictured in a window frame of weather rot.

The nun with the Scotch accent was almost apologetic. "It's the only thing we have, Sergeant. It's the best we can do for the little things."

"And you have no heat either, Sister?"

"Only a lump of charcoal here and there, sir."

"What about the eats? Where do you get the food?"

Sister Genevieve smiled. "We are still praying for our daily bread and the good Lord manages to get it here somehow. Rice, of course, is what they like, too." She laughed and turned flashing blue eyes on O'Reilly. "There's always something to put in the pot, sir."

Shades of Lenox Avenue!

Then O'Reilly spied Yokosan. A wispy, shy little thing, she averted her eyes when he approached her. She was standing apart in the field apparently conscious of her age. At nine she was practically a woman compared to the orphans about her. She was wearing a black skirt with shoulder straps. O'Reilly took her hand and squeezed it. Then and there, he saw an expression he would never forget.

At the pressure of O'Reilly's hand, Yokosan's face twisted in instant agony. She uttered a muffled scream. Then, with tears smarting her eyes, she tried to blink a smile up at him. For a moment O'Reilly was dumbfounded. Then the truth flashed on him. The girl's hand was severely frostbitten. She stood now fingering it gingerly. At this time and in this place O'Reilly knew that he would never be quite the same again. He was seeing now as he had never seen before the most poignant bravado the heart is capable of—the human countenance in a crisscross—the look of a wounded thing smiling to hide a hurt.

O'Reilly walked out of the Minami Tanabe section of Osaka

late that afternoon; buses were honking on the road that runs to Camp Sakai. He might have gone quickly back to the office and scribbled out a few paragraphs for the PIO; but for the present he walked slowly, thinking. Wooden *getas* clacked along the narrow streets. A vivid splash of orange where persimmons clustered against the brown slats of a house brightened the drab haze of winter. Daikons, the giant white horse-radishes of Japan, went scooting by on the piled rear rack of a bicycle. From the open front of a market, crates of seabeam, shrimp, squid, and the blackened hard slabs of bonito threw out the mingled odors of fish.

O'Reilly was getting acquainted gradually with Japan and the Japanese. These hundreds of bronze-faced Orientals in the streets were doing just about what most New Yorkers would be doing at this time of day: rushing out of offices and factories, picking up food in local shops; piling into streetcars, trains, and buses; going home. There were differences to be sure. Some of the stouter lads in the Transport Workers Union would find it difficult to kneel on a tatami mat in Brooklyn; and the ham hocks of Wilson's and Otto Stahl's are of a cut and thickness beyond the grasp of chopsticks. But the evening theme was the same. An old "mama-san" returning now with green peas wrapped in the folds of the *Asahi Shimbun* was a bargain-hunting sister to Mrs. O'Reilly. All the roads at this time of evening were turning home. Then the name came back.

"Yokosan."

Home!

"Yokosan." The little kid without a home. Her name, her dress, her bare legs, and the smarting dark eyes trying to smile—all of these were a pain that gathered somewhere in O'Reilly's throat. Walking toward Camp Sakai, the Sergeant was thinking hard. The words of the nun came back. "There's always something to put in the pot, sir."

O'Reilly squared his chin. A sudden kind of glad music full of honking horns and clinking silver started to swell above the roar of Osaka's metropolitan traffic. "Something in the pot, boy." O'Reilly began to whistle a variation on an old melody.

"Hey, Schapp!" The man O'Reilly was speaking.

"Yeah."

"What did you think of those kids we had in the Den at the NCO Christmas party the other day?"

Pfc. Russell Schapp, a heavy-set veteran of the last war, sat up in the bunk. "Say, you know that's positively the first time in my life I ever got that close to real orphans."

"What's the matter? Haven't you got any orphans in Minnesota?" O'Reilly asked. He failed to add that he himself at no time in his life had ever been inside an orphanage until that day not long ago when he visited Tanabe. "I'm surprised at you, Schapp."

"They're cute little kids, no doubt about that. I wish I could help them."

O'Reilly fixed Schapp with calculating appraisal. "Do you mean that?"

"Sure, I mean it. I like kids."

"Okay, let's get going on some sort of a program. A long-range program."

"Wait a minute, O'Reilly. That long-range idea is out. I'm shipping home in a few days."

"There you go!" O'Reilly threw his hands up in mock despair. "The guy says he likes kids and now he wants to run all the way home to St. Paul." O'Reilly paced up and down the floor of the barracks. "Tell you what I'll do, Schapp—"

"What?"

"If you want to help those kids, really help them, I'll fix it up for you."

"Oh, yeah! You, Kean, MacArthur, and who else?"

"I mean it. I can work it so you'll get a six months' extension."

Schapp studied O'Reilly's face. "If I thought you were really serious about this thing, O'Reilly . . ." Schapp hesitated.

"What do you say?"

The look in Schapp's eyes was answer enough for O'Reilly. He had a recruit. "We'll try to collect a little from each man, Schapp, and you can start off right in Baker Company."

"Right. Payday's the 31st of December."

Payday came and 143 men were in the line. They were to be paid in the orderly room at the first sergeant's desk. O'Reilly fidgeted at a respectful distance from the company commander. Good old Schapp was clearing his throat in preparation for the "pitch" as O'Reilly explained it.

The line began to move.

"Okay, fellows," Schapp began with his eyes riveted on the crisp bills, "we're collecting for Japanese orphans that need help badly."

O'Reilly held his breath. He wanted to make a speech—say things like . . . now look, guys . . . it's for little children . . . if you only saw them . . . if you could get close enough to them . . . why, you'd dig down . . . and one little kid in particular . . . Yokosan . . . if you only knew *her*, fellows . . .

"Yokosan!"

O'Reilly was biting his lips as the first man approached Schapp.

One buck!

Two bucks!

Three bucks!

The accumulation of it! O'Reilly's music was coming back. Payday. Thirty-first of December. New Year's Eve. All over Osaka town the zinc and copper bells were beating out 108

booms. According to one interpretation of this Japanese custom, each boom dispels one earthly concern, the number of which throughout the old year add mysteriously to 108. O'Reilly and Schapp were putting no particular interpretation on the booms, but there was a rhythm to their counting that was dispelling earthly concerns considerably upwards of 108. "We collected at least a dollar from every man in the company, O'Reilly," Schapp shouted. "Even the company commander shelled in!"

The next day, January 1st, anybody who had eyes to see with as early as nine o'clock in the morning might have spied a young soldier walking and whistling down the narrow lanes of Tanabe.

Sister Genevieve met him at the door. "Oh, 'tis you, sir." A bonny bluebell was in her accent.

"Just a little present for the kids and—Yokosan."

"You know, sir, you're the first visitor of the year. Back in Scotland we had a superstition about the first visitor. 'Twas an omen."

"Well, this is from the men of the 27th. I suppose you could call all of them visitors this morning."

The nun's face took on a look of pleasurable disbelief when she accepted the stack that amounted to more than 40,000 yen. "'Tis yen!"

"That's right."

"Well, sir, I should say we've a very delightful superstition in Scotland." Her fingers tapped the money. "It's a good omen, isn't it?"

It *was*.

Now, the usual and human thing would have been to let it all go at that. But not for O'Reilly. He breezed over to Headquarters Company. "You fellows heard what Schapp did last payday over at Baker Company. How about a little coopera-

tion? Of course, we don't say that you have to contribute as much as Baker Company did," O'Reilly baited them, "but as I told Schapp, 'Heck, Headquarters Company for my money is just as good, if not better, than Baker.'" While he left some of the boys pondering these last words, Hughie hustled up to Medical Company. From there he went to the Mortar Company. ". . . and I told Schapp, sure, sure Baker Company came through in a pinch, but in my opinion Mortar's got it all over Baker any time in the week." Before anyone could agree, O'Reilly marched straight to the printing shop and cajoled some of the press boys. "You get the idea? Once a week we can run a special page on these kids. Just a simple little page for a bunch of the swellest little Japanese tykes you ever laid eyes on. Of course, I was thinking of a lithograph job," he added in a wistful can-you-really-do-it-fellows kind of way.

By the time January payday rolled around, the man they were now calling O'Reilly-san had collared anybody and everybody who could put in a plug for "his kids" at the orphanage. Slowly but surely interest began to snowball at the insistent pressure of the Sergeant.

"Hello, is this you, O'Reilly?"

"Right."

"This is McKitty down in the mess."

O'Reilly made it a point to be especially nice these days to mess sergeants. "Why, how are you, old man? How are things going?"

"Fine. Say . . . er," McKitty dropped his voice to a confidential level, "I heard you got a bunch of orphans around here."

"That's right."

"Well, it's this way. I've got some cereal down here . . ."

"Fine, fine. Cereal is just what I've been looking for."

"It's been piling up. The fellows don't go in for it, you see,

so I figure by this time the stuff is full of worms anyway.”

“Worms!” O'Reilly had visions of a coroner's inquest at the orphanage.

“Look, anything that we can't use has got worms.” The mess sergeant's accent had the comforting note of clarity if not veracity.

“I get you, McKitty. Thanks a million. The kids will never forget you.”

Hughie was not the man to let a McKitty episode go by without capitalizing on it. He cornered a few more likely contributors. “Now, figure it for yourselves, men. There's McKitty for you, an ordinary hard-working honest mess sergeant. He had a brother in the Bataan death march. McKitty's brother was a prisoner of war right here in Japan.” O'Reilly pounded his hands for emphasis. “Right here in Japan. And what does McKitty do? He calls me up on the phone and he's worried, positively worried about our little Japanese orphans.” Here Hughie's voice dropped to a sober slow note. “When a fellow like McKitty can do that, sometimes you wonder what the rest of us are doing.” O'Reilly would then impart the final shot, “Yup, McKitty's from Easy Company. Don't know what I'd do without good old Easy Company.”

Talk of this sort began to spread throughout the entire regiment. Servicemen who had never been within shouting distance of an orphanage began to drop down Tanabe way and circulate among the youngsters. From different quarters soap, powdered milk, and candy started to trickle in.

One day a lieutenant approached O'Reilly. The man's voice was strained. “I'd like to help those children, Sergeant.”

“Anything at all is appreciated, sir.”

“I have a special reason for doing so.” The lieutenant paused. “It was a jeep accident. The child died.”

"I understand, sir."

"I'll write to everyone I know back in the States for help." The officer then placed a large bill in O'Reilly's hand.

"Thank you, sir."

There was the mutual salute and O'Reilly watched a hurt man walk away.

When payday in January arrived, every company in the regiment contributed; and this continued every month up to and including that fateful June. The North Koreans swept over the parallel. The 25th Tropic Lightning Division with elements practicing war games around the base of Mount Fuji was alerted for action; the southward trek to Moji and across the Japan Sea followed; they were at war. O'Reilly fumed. Such a complicated and unnecessary thing as war was going to interfere with "his kids."

"You go away, O'Reilly-san?" the little girl asked.

"Yes . . . Ha, we all go, Minasan," O'Reilly answered.

There was an unusual silence in the orphanage yard. The Sisters had arranged the children in the stiff and formal formation for the "*sayonara*," which means good-by in Japanese. Some of the brightness that had come so recently into their lives had already started to fade.

O'Reilly spoke to one of the Sisters. "You translate it, Sister. Tell them the regiment, all of the men of the 27th, won't be around for a while."

The Sister translated.

"And tell them this—war or no war the Wolfhounds will take care of them."

"Wolfhound," a small child shouted. The name of the regiment was a password among the children, for it was in the NCO Wolfhound Den that they had their first Christmas party.

O'Reilly waved back to them from the gate. He spotted Yokosan at the edge of the crowd. She was waving the head

scarf he had given her. Then quite abruptly she stopped waving. She was crying into O'Reilly-san's presento.

"Sayonara."

"Sayonara."

Wolfhounds! The name to most Americans is synonymous with the famed fighting regiment that came like a scourge of tropic lightning into the war. It is synonymous with the bowling alley north of Taegu and the rugged leadership of the man they call "Mike" Michaelis. "Fire-fight-fire" was the order of those perilous days when the United Nations defense was being singed on the hot and smoking toe of the peninsula; and in its dashes across the flaming perimeter, the 27th gained for itself the title of "Fire Brigade." A regiment that went from the comparative peacetime atmosphere of Japan into a conflict that surpassed in savagery anything the American soldier had ever faced, whipped the enemy to a standstill. To this day, the Wolfhounds boast that they have never withdrawn without orders.

Back in Japan the name of Wolfhounds has another significance—the hands of the American soldier stretched out to weakness and pain. The hands they extend are human. We knew the hands and the men who were fitted to them . . . the soldiers . . . the happy-go-lucky paraders of Ishibashi . . . the sight-seers, camera-slung . . . the eaters of popcorn . . . drinkers of coke and beer . . . reckless spenders of affection . . . gentlemen . . . scrappers . . . warriors abroad.

Abroad! O'Reilly had wondered and fretted about this war in Korea.

Within echo of the front-line guns the commander of Mike Company, Third Battalion, faced O'Reilly. Captain Cribb, six feet two inches and thinning at the top, seemed interested.

"Of course," O'Reilly began, "your Third Battalion never

had a chance to see the orphanage in Osaka, so naturally we don't expect too much."

"You say these are the Wolfhound kids?"

"That's right, *Japanese kids*," O'Reilly qualified.

"Okay, what's the most any company ever gave?"

"Headquarters, nine hundred dollars."

"Mike Company will take care of it." And they did, on the battlefield. Mike Company scraped together \$1,244.

Then there is the fellow they call Mr. Wolfhound. A member of the 27th Regiment in the last war, John Cloninger worked himself from private through master sergeant and was finally commissioned first lieutenant. In World War II he picked up five Purple Hearts, was wounded three times in Korean battles, tried twice to go AWOL from a hospital back to his fighting group, and was finally awarded the Silver Star. It may be hard to believe anyone as tough as "Gunner John" was the kind of fellow who called his wife, Mildred, on the phone every night from the battle games around Fujiyama to hear her recite her prayers, but it is a fact. The orphans of Osaka had brought a brand of happiness to both of them that the Gunner will always treasure. When Cloninger got word of what Mike Company did in the field, he was tremendously curious.

"How much did those gents give you?" he asked O'Reilly.

Hughie told him.

"Twelve hundred dollars, huh? Why, I'll get more than that out of my platoon!"

The Wolfhounds trickled back in singles and pairs from the fighting front. An officer on crutches hobbles among them. Lieutenant Rollier has to see the children again. He stays for a time, then goes to the gate and drives away. In a matter of minutes he's back again with a carload of watermelons.

He is one of the many merchants of good will who have

hauled candy, powdered milk, tangerines, jam, soap, and (through the courtesy of Sergeant Meegan, who insisted twice monthly that the dependents "get in on the thing, too") socks, shoes, and old clothing.

Today, in place of the old weatherbeaten shambles that used to be home to these homeless, there rises a beautiful institution. White-walled and roofed in red tile, the Holy Family Orphanage stands as the concrete expression of a soldier's heart for little children. O'Reilly's music that tinkled in the slot of a Lenox Avenue bus has since reached quite a crescendo. "It's the small stuff, little by little, that does the trick. It's the accumulation," O'Reilly explains. The accumulation to date has reached more than \$70,000.

When Brig. Gen. John "Mike" Michaelis was about to leave the Wolfhounds for ultimate assignment to General Eisenhower's staff in Europe, he felt like crying. "Bawling" is the word he used. He had reason, too, for he was leaving one of the greatest fighting machines ever assembled for battle.

"I can't take the Wolfhounds with me, Hughie, but what about you?" Michaelis asked.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I'd like to take you with me if I can arrange it."

The man O'Reilly coughed, "Well, sir, you see, it's this way . . ."

Michaelis grinned, "I know. Our kids. Is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well," the General continued, "I'll never be able to tell you how much I appreciate all that you've accomplished for the Wolfhounds and for me, Hughie. Your work was invaluable, and though you may feel you have received little personal compensation for your efforts, I can assure you that you in a large measure were responsible for the fighting ability of the 27th."

And the General will go on record for O'Reilly. He'll tell anybody that it was Hughie's untiring work in promoting the regiment's sponsorship of the Holy Family Orphanage in Osaka, Honshu, Japan, that has greatly abetted the Japanese people's friendliness toward the United States soldiers, and at the same time that he has undoubtedly helped build good will between the United States and Japan.

So O'Reilly stays on to remind the boys, over field telephones at times, that he'll be "up to collect." He has actually collected during a fire fight. When I saw him a few days ago, he said: "And don't think it doesn't pay off. The reason why we've had the best outfit over here is that we had all those little people back there praying for us right from the start."

Over in Tanabe these days children are scampering about a yard with GI hats. Some of them barely lisp, but if you get close enough, more likely than not you'll hear either "Wolfhounds" or "O'Reilly-san." And as long as these youngsters live, those are names that will be hard to erase from the vocabulary of their Japanese hearts.

[EIGHT]

• The Chaplain Bears a Cross

The man least attuned to what Bernhardt has called "the biological necessity" of war, and than whom there is none deeper enmeshed in it, is the chaplain. By vocation he is committed to an optimism of the spirit which believes and preaches that a man is capable of settling his differences by means other than war. Yet he accepts the commission to walk in the midst of it, to work in the thick of it, and to pray for the successful prosecution of it. By any other standard than that of the spirit—which is to say, the immortal soul of a man—a chaplain's work becomes little more than "morale building"—a factor that is generally translated in terms of chewing gum, writing paper, magazines, and shaving cream (brushless and lather). These simple things are important to the soldier in the field and if there is any doubt about it, all one needs to do is to consult the

catalogued "gripe" chart of a regiment. It lands on the chaplain's desk.

Nor is this a negligible business—looking after the few material needs of servicemen. There was a preacher in a broadcast from Seventh Street, Washington, D.C., who summarized for his audience what he called the trinity of essentials: "Soup, Soap, Salvation." Theologians may argue over the succession of this trinity, but in their categories they are a fairly comprehensive listing of what a man needs. It is not the procuring of soap, therefore, that makes a chaplain's work tedious; it is rather the situation which at ten o'clock leaves him writing a memorandum to do something about razor blades, and sends him rushing at eleven o'clock to the side of the dying boy whose jeep tripped a mine. His life at the battle scene seems an unending duel of cross-purposes. Perhaps the only man who can properly sympathize with him is the combat engineer who digs with a carbine and shoots with a shovel.

But though the chaplain is enmeshed, he is not confused. Because he is not confused (his eye by vocation is single), he is often called upon to carry a cross other than the insignia he wears on his lapel. Consider Chaplain Joe. We shall call him, as he is often called by the men who know him, "Padre." The Padre is one of your sons. He left some parish back in the States to be with others of your sons. After going through a course in Chaplain Training School (an innovation which some of the more ancient brethren consider with a cold and dubious eye), he proceeds to take a unique place on the rungs of the military ladder. Though he mingles with rank, he is the only officer who feels free to sit down at a private's mess. He himself may be only a lieutenant but his single bar does not preclude him from being the general's counselor. He is accepted with mingled feelings of deference, affection, and, not unusually, fright among his fellow officers. An American instinct for respect treats him to

privileges which sometimes are denied his superiors, though it is not advisable for any cleric less than a colonel to try to make reservations at the Imperial Hotel. In this atmosphere of general friendliness, the Padre moves about easily, and life, especially if he is young, takes on the flavor of "fitting" into the big picture. He has no doubts about it. He has the verbal and written word of all concerned that as far as Padre's position in their midst, he shall have utmost cooperation.

The world that the Padre has attached himself to in the service reveals itself as essentially not too different from the world he left. There are the same generousities, jealousies, bickerings, sacrifices, and passions in the suburbs of civilian life as there are in a barracks. With this difference: The barracks by reason of its artificial stricture not only concentrates; it magnifies. The stricture of a barracks is not to be confused with its structure (though this physical fencing in has in no little measure contributed to tempers and vocabulary). The stricture is a funneling of young blood. It is the enlistment of all the Joes, Jacks, and Harrys, and the throwing of them together in an atmosphere which is, from the start, abnormal. The atmosphere must admittedly be abnormal unless, like Bernhardt, we are ready to concede that war is a "biological necessity." Man is no more necessitated to wage war than he is biologically compelled to live in a suburb. The veteran who faces housing shortages, however, may have other ideas about this. From these abnormal pressures which surround Joe, Jack, and Harry, there follows something that cannot be described either as Army life or Navy life; nor can it be called Marine or Air Force life. It is rather an attitude which expresses itself in that swashbuckling generality called "The Military." At first sight The Military looks like a machine. It is. It is a highly technical operation geared for the special functions of offense and defense, and it moves with the inexorable *modus operandi* of the robot—impersonal, cold,

professionally devoid of sentiment. But it is more than a machine. The Military is a way of life. A good many of the Joes, Jacks, and Harrys, stripped of the normal associations of home and thrown in upon themselves, begin gradually to take on "the attitude." They are now a part of The Military, and to imagine that the dour duty of the Army is confined merely to multiplying "taxes, widows, and wooden legs" is not to get the complete picture. As a matter of fact, Jack might tell you that the way he personally sees it is this: The Military is nothing more than a conscripted bull session that takes time out occasionally for wars.

The attitude is not always but often definitely bullish. It is in the stance and the phrase of the recruit lately turned man of war. Despite the Character Guidance and the Truth and Information series, a fair number of Joes, Jacks, and Harrys feel that they are now heirs to a rip-roaring heritage. That heritage, from different administrative quarters, is in turn frowned upon, cajoled against, cautioned against, and finally yielded to with *precautions*. War, whatever be its necessity, has at least its necessities and, since Jack is a man, they are biological.

Where now does the Padre fit into the picture?

Chaplain Joe knows all the facts of this story. He made it a point to inquire about them. It happened this way.

The boy's name is Eddie. He is stationed in the Far East and, like the rest of the boys who have sailed into these parts before and during the Korean action, he is a bit puzzled at first by the strangeness of the people and customs. Before Eddie came, he wondered how these Orientals would take to him.

"The reason why I wonder is, after all, we *did* beat them. I figure that when you go to a country that is conquered . . . well, the feeling won't be so good there."

Eddie had been in Japan only two days when he landed some-

where south of Yokohama. He had come down by train and among the first people he looked up was the Padre. The above is what he said to open the conversation. He was fiddling with his GI cap in apparent nervousness.

"As far as I know, Eddie, the people over here don't seem to mind us too much," the Padre began. "We've been pretty kind to them and they are smart enough to see it."

The boy seemed to weigh these words. "I'll be stationed here for a while at least and I just wanted to know."

"Well, there's nothing to worry about. You'll get along all right, Ed." The Padre thought the conversation was at an end.

But Eddie continued, "Maybe I should have told you the real reason why I came to see you. Something happened in a train since I landed. A couple of the fellows were feeling pretty high. We were in a Japanese car and they began raising a little rumpus. One of the fellows even took a swipe at a Japanese." Eddie buckled his lips. His eyes had a look of remembering something harsh and painful. "I had a sort of a feeling right then that they all hated us."

"Just a minute, Ed. How many fellows do you think are going around swinging at Japanese in railroad cars?"

"I don't know. I don't know what really goes on over here, whether the people hate us or we like them or what . . . that's why I came to see you."

The Padre then told Eddie about the brighter side—the many kindnesses of ordinary GIs and the heartfelt gratitude of poor people. Certainly there were abuses cropping up here and there. They would probably continue to happen. What mattered most was decency and ordinary human respect. Treat these people as you would expect to be treated yourself and you would have no worries.

This seemed to satisfy Eddie. When he left, the Padre made a mental note. Here was a boy, young, sensitive, typical of the

American youngster who likes to get along well with people. Eddie would be all right.

Then something happened. The shocking and unforeseen climax for Eddie!

The Padre sat at his desk that night putting together all the pieces that made the picture. He had all the pieces except one, and because he was a Padre the missing fragment was starting even then to take on the dimensions of a cross.

Eddie's story is of a pattern. Watch him go through the motions. He is sitting on his bunk shining his shoes. The time is about seven-thirty in the evening when the door slams at the far end of the barracks. A corporal pounds his way down the wooden floor, strips down to his skivvies, and throws a towel around his neck.

"Hi, Ed."

"Hello, Sam. Getting ready to go to town?"

"Yes. Want to come along? There's a swell joint we ran into the other night, me, Fritz, and the gang."

"You mean another one?"

"Yeah, that old place was too slow. How about coming along?"

"Naw, not tonight. I think I'll sit tight."

The corporal continues on his way to the shower while Eddie shines his shoes. Seven-thirty. Still early. A few more dabs of polish, a letter to Carol, and he'll take a stroll over to the gym. They were shooting baskets the last few nights getting ready for the camp tryouts. Eddie has an idea he can make the team. He was pretty good at home.

The shoes are polished; the letter is written; and Ed walks across the quiet grounds. It is October and dark. He is conscious of the quiet. It's a funny thing, Eddie muses, how empty and still everything seems around this camp at eight o'clock. Everybody who was going anywhere had just about gone.

That was understandable, naturally; with an eleven o'clock curfew and those MPs waiting to welcome you at the gate, you had to move fast if you wanted the shank of the evening.

Eddie had already gone to town himself a couple of times so far. It was one of those approved servicemen's clubs with a big sign on it saying "Welcome American Boy." Ed had a few beers with some of the fellows. Kirin was the name of the stuff and according to everybody except Fritz it was as good if not better than American beer. Fritz, who is one gent who seems to know what he's talking about, said they were all wet. Fritz said the reason why Kirin beer tasted better than American beer was because the American beer that they sold at camps was not real genuine American beer, but that lousy 3.2 that a bunch of old women made Congress put into cans for the GIs. Someone told Fritz that he was all wet and that 3.2 was the beer in Roosevelt's or Hoover's time. Then Fritz got a little hot under the collar and said he was not only willing to bet five bucks that it was 3.2 but that it was also a lousy green grade of 3.2; only Fritz used more than the word "lousy" to describe it.

Then what made Eddie sit up and take notice was the way Fritz could change his mood. Just like a flash! The Japanese girl sitting next to Fritz said something like, "You so excited. Why you so excited?" Her hand was holding Fritz by the wrist and Fritz smiled at her and said, "Who, me? Me get excited?" and Fritz kept smiling and looking at her. Her name was Kimiko. Eddie remembered her name because whenever they went back there they asked especially for Kimiko. She always seemed glad to sit at the table, too. Her hair was as black as coal and it made her skin look as white as Carol's. She was always wearing the same dress and Eddie found out later from Fritz why this was so. All the girls around Japan who work in places like Welcome American Boy get their dresses

supplied to them by the boss. She could dance well, too, Kimiko could, and no matter how long you danced with her she would come back to the table without puffing and sit down and hand you those little brown crackers with the black seaweed band around them. Then she would pour you another glass of beer. She poured them just as fast as you could drink them. She always said, "*Dozo*" as she tipped the bottle. Eddie didn't mind because he knew she had orders to keep the stuff flowing. Kimiko was a nice girl. When Fritz asked her to leave the place one night, she said she wasn't allowed to stop her work. She had to stay until eleven o'clock; and since eleven was curfew, that was that.

By the time Eddie gets through thinking about all these things—Kimiko, Fritz, and the rest of them—he reaches the gym. He realizes tonight as he takes off his shoes and slips into sneakers that for two or three nights consecutively just at around eight o'clock, his thinking has always drifted back to Welcome American Boy.

That was one of the fragments that fitted into the Padre's picture. Eddie's words when he spoke them in a choked voice were, "*At first I went out a few times with the fellows . . . you know them. It wasn't much . . . just small talk with once in a while a few arguments about Japanese and American beer. And this girl, Kimiko, that is where I first met her . . . If I had made the basketball team those nights . . .*" Eddie did not make the basketball team. He was actually surprised at how easily he had accepted the news. Long before the coach had told him, he had suspected it.

"I'm sorry, Ed. I appreciated your cooperation, coming here every night," the lieutenant said.

"That's all right, sir."

"We've got a fairly good bunch of boys—some of the best

they've had in the schools back in the States. But I tell you what you might do," the lieutenant suggested.

"Yes, sir?"

"During the season we usually lose a couple of men. Injuries and so forth. Why don't you stick with it? I may give you a call one of these nights."

Eddie remembered the lieutenant's words. For the remainder of October and well into the middle of November he went to the gym with a sergeant he nicknamed Atlas. The sergeant was a hairy stack of muscles and spent most of his time weight-lifting. The gym those nights was a semilighted cavern, empty of all sound except the monotonous bouncing of a ball against a backboard and the clanging of Atlas near the wall. Eddie could stand about a half hour of this at most and then he would sit on a bench and watch the sergeant.

One night the sergeant asked him, "Do you want to be a weight-lifter or a basketball player?"

"I'm not sure."

"Go on, keep shooting."

Eddie sat and stared at him.

"What's eating you, Ed?" Atlas asked.

"I don't know."

That was when Eddie punched the basketball with his fist, jumped from the seat, and took off his sneakers. He never went into the gym again.

For the Padre the fragments were there—the blurted phrases of a boy's defeats and restlessness and mostly loneliness. *If I had made the basketball team those nights, or if I had stayed with Atlas, it might have been different. That was when Carol for some reason started sounding funny in her letters. It really knocked me. I guess I sort of went to pieces between worrying about Carol and listening to some of the talk. There was one*

night in particular after listening to the fellows that I decided to do something.

The talk was rough that night. Eddie had reason to remember it. Someone had brought in a few bags of popcorn from the theater and a session was going on around Sam's bunk. Eddie had listened to this kind of talk before and it neither disgusted nor interested him. It was the same old stuff. He was lying across his bunk with his clothes still on; a magazine lay across his chest; he was falling into a half-doze when the name aroused him. Kimiko! His eyes opened and stared at the ceiling. He was listening. It was all about Kimiko, the lurid adjective and verb, the barracks version of the chase, the hunt, and the kill. Then the laughter and more popcorn, followed by the inevitable, "Listen, you ain't heard nothing yet!"

Eddie closed the magazine and sat up in bed. His eyes were riveted on the proud possessor of Kimiko. He lit a cigarette and waited. About twenty or thirty minutes afterward, the session broke up and Eddie followed his man out into the wash-room. The fellow was drinking a glass of water when Eddie stepped to the next sink.

"That was quite a line you had tonight, Mac."

"What do you mean?"

"About you and Kimiko."

"Heck, that was nothing."

"I don't believe you. I happen to know Kimiko. She's not that kind of a girl."

"Brother, you've got another guess coming. They're all alike." Mac turned away and walked back to the barracks. When he left, Fritz tapped Eddie on the shoulder.

"I just heard what you said to Mac, Ed." Fritz was grinning. "You got him all wrong. You don't know the Kimiko he's talking about. There are a million Kimikos in this town."

"Oh, I see," Eddie said with something like relief in his voice.

That night as he was getting undressed he had a sudden urge to speak to Mac. He walked in his bare feet between the beds. Three or four of the fellows heard him when he spoke.

"Did you ever go into the Welcome American Boy?"

"That joint! That's nothing but a teahouse," Mac laughed.

From halfway up the barracks Fritz called out, "Didn't I tell you, Eddie, didn't I tell you, hah?"

Eddie pulled the blankets up around him that night and for the first time in days he had a warm sensation of feeling good. The radiators were whistling and hissing steam and the barracks creaked against the November wind. As far as Eddie would remember, this was the night he went to sleep with the decision that "he had to see Kimiko." A new avenue was opening up and it was definitely away from gyms and basketball and all the senseless rut he had gotten himself into. Carol from that night onward was no longer an aching presence. He wondered if he cared for Carol any more.

The Padre listened to Eddie as the boy revealed the story. The tremor had gone out of his voice now. He was speaking the plain speech of remembered incidents—the time, the place, and the girl. *"I decided to see Kimiko and I did. That's how it all began. It seemed all right at first, Padre. I figured there was nothing to worry about until . . . well, there was that funny angle on it over here . . . maybe you've heard about that stuff anyway."*

Eddie was spruced up that Sunday evening when he climbed the stairs of the Welcome. This was the first time he had "lone-wolfed" it to town. The usual noisy chatter hit his ear as he stepped into the smoke-filled room. On the bandstand a small orchestra was tuning up and from every direction of the hall girls were rushing about in threes and fours, swirling in flurries of color and perfume. Two MPs, stolid and authoritative, rested against the bar at the rear. They were surveying the

scene with the cool, roving eyes of watchdogs alerted to maintain the peace. A young Japanese boy rushed past with a tray full of empties. Everything had the makings of a good evening, Eddie thought. He took a cigarette from his case and presto! Two powdered, lily-white hands of two hovering and obliging maidens held a pair of flaming matches. Service! You couldn't beat it here in the Orient. Eddie, so as not to show any favoritism, lit his cigarette from both.

"Obeeru?" one of them asked.

"Yes, I'll have a beer," Eddie answered. And so the evening was on.

They sat beside him and put him through the ritual that never varies in the Far East. His name? Their names. Did he like Japan? He had been here before, yes? (*Dozo*—the glass is filled again.) Did he like Japanese beer? They liked American beer. Very tasty. Oishii! How old was he? No, don't tell them, let them guess. (*Dozo*—another glass of beer.) He was a nice boy. How old did he think they were? Guess. *Fifteen years old?* American boy say Japanese girl is only *fifteen?* You make joke, you! Shrieks of laughter. American garls, they are very pretty. Did he think so? They thought so. Blond hair. Blue eyes. Very *utsukishii, ne?* Did he like black hair? He did. Ah, so. Did he have *okusan?* Wife? No, he was not married. Ah so. (*Dozo.*) But he must have a girlfriend in States, *ne?* Maybe many girlfriends, *ne?* He was a handsome boy. (At this point the ritual called for a quick interchange of unintelligible Japanese remarks between them, during which they nodded heartily and darted quick, confirming glances at the various features which made Ed handsome.) Would he like another bottle of obeeru? Yes, he would.

Eddie, like all the Joes, Jacks, and Harrys, expanded happily under this beautiful barrage. There was something about these Orientals that made guns and graphite a distant and unpleas-

ant dream. Then he saw her! She was wearing the same dress. It might have been the beer that put roses in the air but from across the room came the fragrance of the flower she was wearing in her hair.

"Kimiko," he shouted.

A flashing look of pleasure radiated out to him across the dance floor. Kimiko walked slowly to the table and sat down. "Good evening," she said. Her voice had vibrant assurance. There was a fluttering of unrest in the other two girls and, with the perception of ladies in waiting who had seen the queen arrive, they edged politely away from the presence.

Ed and Kimiko were alone.

For the next three weeks Welcome American Boy, including all the personnel from Papa-san, the boss, to the youngest busboy, developed a wonderfully warm welcome for Eddie. He was one of the most consistent and consuming customers. There was, moreover, a tacit understanding existing between the boss and Ed that Kimiko be allowed to start work at seven-thirty which was just about the earliest Eddie could arrive. A well-timed carton of cigarettes worked wonders with Papa-san.

One night shortly before Christmas, Eddie sat at the table opposite Kimiko. He was trying to talk above the blare of the band.

"I've got something for you tonight, Kimiko," he said.

Her eyes smiled lazily at him. This was the third presento he had bought her. When she opened the small wooden box and looked at the contents, she raised her eyes.

"That's a genuine damascene set, Kimiko, earrings, bracelet, and all."

"Thank you very much, Eddie."

The expression on her face and the tone of her voice puz-

zled Eddie. He poured himself another glass of beer. "You don't seem very happy tonight, Kimiko."

"I happy," the girl said.

"Are you tired?"

"No."

"Do you like working in this place?"

"Yes."

Eddie drank his beer and studied the texture of her skin. It was clean cream bronze under the yellow lights. Purple shadows were misting her hair. Her eyes studying him in an unblinking stare were black liquid. "Maybe, Kimiko, I'm taking up too much of your time," he faltered. Eddie was sure she was bored.

"Never happen," she said. Her fingers reached out and gripped his. The hold was fiercely strong for a girl. "Never, never happen, Eddie." She continued holding his hands until suddenly the breath went out of her in a sigh. She relaxed, settled back in the chair, and continued to stare at him. It was then that Eddie thought she looked haggard.

He left her about ten o'clock that night. She always came down to the entrance to see him off.

"*Sayonara*, Kimiko."

"*Sayonara*." She waved at him from under the big rose neon that said, "Welcome American Boy."

. . . there was that funny angle on it over here. Maybe you've heard about that stuff anyway.

After giving Sam the three dollars he had borrowed for Kimiko's present, Eddie piled into bed quickly that night. He had been getting to bed earlier than usual. It was three nights since he had last seen Kimiko. The stare that she had given him, the way she had held his hand, the sound of her voice, all of it came back in a puzzle he was trying to solve.

There was a curious, gnawing restlessness in his thinking. It was not unpleasant.

Voices drifted to him down the barracks. The pros and cons of Japanese womanhood were getting an airing.

"Why do you think they call them butterflies?" the voice asked. "I'll tell you. It's because they fly all over the place. They're out for only one thing and that's your bank roll."

"Okay, what about that master sergeant who married one of them?"

"What about him?"

"That don't look like a butterfly setup to me. He's got a Japanese wife and a kid and that master sergeant ain't nobody's fool."

"One master sergeant he argues about. How many master sergeants, corporals, and privates are there who haven't married Japanese, answer me that? They're too smart for these dames. And furthermore who wants to *marry* them anyway?"

"You're nuts. They're the same kind of dames as anybody else. It stands to reason."

"Okay, you know so much, figure this one out. Down town there's a girl in one of these joints. Her name is Akiko or Michiko or something. She's got a nice face, see, a regular butterfly. So this sergeant, he dates her. He takes her out and brings her to the 321 Club, shows, dances, dinners, the whole works. Nothing's too good for the little butterfly. You want to know what this guy buys her? He buys her a fifty-dollar coat from Sears Roebuck. He buys her shoes and the whole outfit, head to toe. He even goes to the PX and loads up on a stack of evaporated milk for her old lady. He's all out for this girl one hundred per cent."

"Well, so what? That's his privilege."

"So what, he says. Look, this same dame—you know what she's got?"

"She's got *something*, no doubt about it."

"You bet your sweet life she's got something. She's got three more Sears Roebuck coats from three other stupid dopes who couldn't give you the time of day. *That* dame! She's got more evaporated milk in her cellar than Murder Incorporated."

"The Japanese, if you want to know, don't have cellars."

"Okay, you know it all. I'm stupid. But take it from me, they're all the same—cheap, money-grabbing butterflies."

"You're nuts."

Eddie listened. He had heard this same argument dozens of times. It went on in all the barracks and at all the bars. Yet, for some reason, the gnawing seemed to sharpen inside him. What was he to Kimiko and she to him? He thought about the damascene he had given her. It wasn't much, but was he being taken in by some pretty-faced hostess? Or was it a question of being taken in? Somewhere in the stream of his thoughts it came to him that a new and fresh ache was starting. He found himself thinking of Kimiko as he had thought about Carol. Was he beginning to fall for an Oriental? Or was it just plain excitement he had experienced in her presence? He had never dated her. He had thought about it but there was always her job, seven nights a week. Maybe she *was* a butterfly. The thought began to worry him, anger him.

The next day Eddie decided to bring the subject up casually. Sam was a fellow who had a lot of sense. He could trust Sam's opinion. They were coming off inspection when Eddie sidled up to him. For a while they walked along the gravel road discussing the ups and downs of the new first sergeant.

"When was the last time you've been down to the Welcome, Sam?"

"Let me see. Tuesday night I think it was."

"What do you think of the place?"

"The Welcome? Oh, it's okay, Ed, but they don't have the

bands. That's a ham-and-egg outfit they've got down there."

Eddie offered Sam a cigarette. "You know, Sam, sometimes I wonder about the girls that hang around there."

"What do you mean?"

"They're out for nothing but your money." Eddie was a mild echo of last night's orator.

"Well, what do you expect, Ed? Figure it out this way. They got no jobs. They got practically nothing after this war. So naturally they're looking for yen. Can you blame them?"

"Well . . . ?"

"So let them get all the money they can, is what I say. If a guy wants to be a sucker, that's his own bad luck. Sure, they'll rope you for everything you've got if you *want* to be roped. That's the way it is with all these dames in joints like that. They're all the same."

"Yeah, I suppose." Eddie thought it was time to get to the point. "Take that girl, Kimiko, for instance. She's a sort of a cheap little tramp."

"Kimiko?"

"You know, the one with the blue and white dress all the time?"

"Oh, yeah, Kimiko." Sam frowned and thought. "You know, Ed, that's one kid who's pretty nice."

"Aw, she's like all the rest of them."

"I don't know about that," Sam said. "If you notice, nobody ever gets too smart with Kimiko. She don't go for that stuff. Kimiko, I'd say, is one of the nicest dames you'll find in these joints."

"You think so?"

"Well, it's only my opinion. But ask some of the other fellows. They'll tell you the same thing. Kimiko is a girl who's got . . . maybe you'd call it class."

Eddie was satisfied. Something like elation was bubbling

in his voice. "You know I think I'll drop down there tonight. Haven't seen the place for ages."

Six hours later that evening Eddie was riding the train back to camp. He rehearsed the happenings of the night. Up until the time Kimiko had made that remark it had been much like any other evening. They had danced and sat and joked. But after he had ordered the second bottle of beer, he noticed how quickly her mood changed. There was that dark stare back in her eyes.

"What's troubling you, Kimiko?"

"I think you foolish, Eddie."

"Me?"

"You drink too much."

"Aw, just a few beers. They'll never hurt you."

"You spend too much money. You foolish."

Eddie twisted the glass in his fingers. He smiled at her then. "You think so?"

"Yes."

Eddie reached for her hands. Her fingers seemed to have the strength of a man's.

The train rocked and lurched forward in the night. A few of the boys were singing a parody about the Air Force and the teensy-weensy bombs. Eddie, as he sat with his head against the window, was off in the wild blue yonder of his own dreams. He was sure tonight that he loved Kimiko.

About a week later Eddie had what he thought was the angle on the problem. The discovery had been thumping in his chest since eight-thirty that morning when they piled out of the lecture room. The officer had been frank. Straight from the shoulder. No beating around the bush. He went over big with the fellows, Eddie thought. Throughout the day the angle kept crowding his thoughts. There was something breathless and exciting about it. Shortly before five that evening he

stopped off at the snack bar for coffee. Sam was sitting at one of the tables alone.

"I was thinking about that lecture we had this morning, Sam."

Sam stirred his coffee slowly. He was frowning. "Aw, that stuff. It's the same old malarkey."

"No, I mean the way he put it."

"Sure, you know why they keep hitting on that stuff? Because all some CO is worrying about is his reports. That's the only reason. Disease don't look too good on the CO's reports."

"I wasn't thinking about that. It's what he said about the one-woman angle. That's the first time I ever heard it in a lecture."

"Oh, that one-woman angle. You need money for that. That's practically setting up house and home."

"But I thought they'd give you a DR on that business."

"Heck, no. You heard what he said. It's safer that way." Sam got up from the table. "Well, I got to get going, Ed. I'll be seeing you."

Eddie finished his coffee in silence. He needed time to think about the angle.

Three weeks later Eddie had had enough time to think about it. He had the angle in his sights. He knew the oblique and the obtuse. In less than a month he had grown old with the knowledge of knowing. A girl called Kimiko had taken a flower out of her hair and set up house. That was the angle.

One by one the Padre pieced together the fragments. In retrospect, it was an easy matter to see the outline taking shape, slowly and ominously. To a point it had held none of these foreshadowings. Eddie had been another Joe, Jack, or Harry. He might have come away with the normal number of scars, if evil can ever be computed by any number called normal. Where now was the fault? Who ultimately was to blame? To level

the finger of reproach at this one or that one now was to exercise the vulgar and indiscreet tactics of the *ad hominem*. Besides the Padre could never be sure. There was the present and latent fear that the finger might curl and point to himself. Where had *he* been lax? What effort should *he* have made? Where and what was the grappling line *he* might have tossed to catch that which was already spinning downward in the vortex?

Then came that night when he found Eddie in the chapel. The Padre had gone back for no apparent reason that he could now remember. The hour was some time after ten. Eddie had been kneeling in the darkness. He did not move when the lights were snapped on. The Padre walked down the aisle and turned into the office at the right. After a few minutes he came out of the office. Eddie had left the chapel.

As the Padre descended the chapel steps and walked to his jeep, he heard a voice from the dark. "Oh, it's you, Eddie."

"Yes."

"Where have you been? I haven't seen you for months."

"I'd like to talk to you if you have the time, out here."

Eddie talked for more than twenty minutes. It was a story of human weakness, anguish, and repentance. Told with the blunt sincerity that is the mark of a man, it carried no evasions, no self-justifications, no excuses.

"It seemed all right, at first, Padre. I figured there was nothing to worry about until, well, there was that funny angle on it over here. Maybe you've heard about that stuff already anyway. Some of the fellows go in for it. I must have been crazy to think about it, but that is what I did, after listening to some of those lectures and the talk that goes around."

The Padre felt humbled and unworthy in the presence of this humility. He took a deep breath. "All right, Eddie, I'm glad I had a chance to talk with you tonight. What's done is

done and God in his mercy has given you the grace to see where and how you were wrong.”

“I know it.”

“What about Kimiko?”

“I’ve told her already. She knows all about Carol now. That’s where I made my first mistake, thinking the way I did about Carol.” Eddie sighed before he continued. “Maybe I never really cared for Kimiko. I don’t know. You get all tangled up in one of these affairs and before you know it, you go haywire. Anyway, I’ve made up my mind. I’m seeing Kimiko soon for the last time. That will be the end of it.”

In the quiet of the night two figures walked back into the chapel.

And in the quiet of the night the Padre saw it all again in retrospect. He made it a point to gather the few remaining fragments.

Eddie walked with a quick and resolute step up the hill from the station that day. He went by the fruit shops and the florist where he had stopped so often, past the triangle where the *geta* and umbrella stands joined with the photographer. He mounted the winding pathway that curled behind a fine hedge-lacing of clipped pine.

“Mama-san,” Eddie called.

The old lady pushed back the sliding door.

“*Yoku irrashaimase,*” she greeted. Then lifting her voice she called, “Kimiko-san.”

Eddie removed his shoes at the entrance, put on the familiar slippers. He shuffled down the smooth corridor until he came to the room. The door was slid back. Kimiko was kneeling on a pillow facing him. Her face was expressionless this morning. Only her eyes, dark and lustrous, flashed any sign of recognition. They seemed fever bright. Mama-san came shuffling in behind Eddie.

"Hello," Kimiko said.

"Hi." Eddie removed his slippers and stepped onto the *tatami*.

"You came early."

"Yes, I've got some business back at camp this afternoon." Eddie sat down on one of the pillows and faced her. He was going through the efforts of a smile.

"*Ocha, dozo*," the old lady said, passing a cup of green tea to Eddie. She handed the kettle to Kimiko, who replaced it on the charcoal griddle. A series of awkward silences followed during which Kimiko never averted her gaze from Eddie's face.

Eddie was startled by her next request, "Please, I see your wallet?"

"My wallet?"

"The picture of Carol."

Eddie fumbled for the wallet and finally opened it to the leaf where he had inserted the photograph. Kimiko reached for it and for a long time held it before her. Then she passed the wallet to *mama-san*.

"Carol is very pretty girl," Kimiko said.

"Very pretty *desu, ne?*" the old woman agreed.

Eddie lit a cigarette. He fingered the lighter nervously. "Come on, Kimiko, cheer up," he said. Ever since he had entered the house he was aware of the cool and forced tone of the conversation.

"I happy, Eddie," Kimiko affirmed. Her voice was colorless. "I very happy this morning."

Then Kimiko arose from the pillow and stood erect. Her black hair fell in braids over her shoulders. "In Japan sometime people die. Sometime they make *knifu* go here." Kimiko pointed to her stomach.

Mama-san was laughing nervously. Eddie puffed on his cigarette and watched Kimiko closely.

"But that is not good, Eddie. Is that? Painful, *ne*? Where is good place to die?"

The smoke curled from Eddie's lips. This evidently was a game she was playing. He would play it, too. "Sure the stomach is too painful. Right here," Eddie smiled and pointed at his temple. "Here is a good place to die, if you want to die."

Kimiko was laughing softly. Then she stopped suddenly and her face was an expressionless mask. "You say *sayonara* now?"

"Yes, Kimiko, I have got to be getting back."

"Please, you have a handkerchief? We make a game for last time."

"What kind of a game?"

"I be bride. I put veil on my head like bride." Her fingers were reaching into his pocket for the handkerchief.

"Okay, okay. Here it is." Eddie unfolded the handkerchief and gave it to her. Her hands reached down to his and she pulled him to his feet.

"What kind of a game is this?" Eddie asked.

"*Chotto matte kudasai*. You see." Kimiko placed the handkerchief over her head. "I now a bride, *ne*?"

Eddie tried to laugh.

Kimiko took him by the hand. She led him slowly as in a wedding march across the *tatami*, out of the room and down the corridor. Then she began singing a strange unearthly chant. Her voice rang clear. It was the wedding song of old Japan. Slowly she led him along the corridor until they reached the last room. Mama-san stood watching them with a puzzled look in her eyes as they entered the room.

Strange people, these youngsters, *ne*? *Sukoshi kichigai*—a little queer—mama-san was thinking. She was lifting the kettle from the *habachi* when Eddie's voice shouted loudly, "Stop . . . stop." Then the shot rang out. Mama-san saw Eddie

stumble out of the room holding his chest. Blood was making his uniform dark. "Help me, mama-san," he cried. Eddie staggered for a moment against the wall, then turning around he lurched back into the room. Kimiko's voice was not distinguishable but mama-san heard it. There was another shot. Then stillness.

The fragments—the tragic incidentals: a cigarette lighter on the *tatami* straw, the presento, a wrist watch lying flat with its band arched like the wings of some small bird grounded, the .45-caliber automatic with the hammer still in firing position, a bullet imbedded in soft pine, and the gaping hole in the pillow where the pattern was once a flower. The medical corpsman declared Eddie dead unofficially. It was official after the major made the pronouncement. They lifted the limp body of Kimiko and put her in an ambulance. Life still flickered within her but it was not for long. The frail butterfly—if that be the beautiful and poignantly sorrowful name they give to such as she—the butterfly was carried down the hill and the gunpowder residue that smeared her sweater was the black pollen of death.

They reported the news of it in a seven- or eight-line article in the Japanese press. Charitably the identity of neither was mentioned; and mercifully enigmatic was the report that went back to those who knew and loved Eddie. The service has its ways. The names of all concerned in this story have been changed. The incidents, even down to the pitiful detail of the bridal song Kimiko sang, are true. The characters were real. They were your sons.

The Padre has all the pieces of the picture tonight except one. Slowly this final fragment emerges. It takes shape and form. And the form is the cruciform of passion and sorrow. It spreads its arms out and around the picture, and it cries with

anguished pleading for the bright faces, the laughing, whirling searchers of joy and fun. The sound of this crying is louder than all the trumpets of the dance, sharper than the sirens of war or the bursts of automatics marked caliber .45. The cry is a great wail that rolls in the night, echoing and reechoing long after the last bugle has called the tired world to taps. There are words in the crying: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." The crying knows no boundaries. It reaches into the high towers of administration. It rolls up and over a pine ledge and into the very doors of a house on a hill.

[NINE]

• Fishing's Good

If it were possible for you to ride, jeep-fashion, along the poplar-lined roads that flank the Pukkan River these days, you might like to get out and sit down beside one of the great torrents that are so numerous throughout Korea. These are the cool mountain-fed streams that go by the Korean word-affix *gang*. Happily there are *gangs* rippling through almost every section of Korea. Nan-gang, Han-gang, Taedong-gang—all of them are alike. Rounded stones and pebbles are thick along the banks; swirling foam marks the spots where hidden boulders are washed by the rushing water; and the sun glint is always bright because the water of Korea's *gangs* is rarely deep. They are broad versions of what an American angler would call streams, and they are inviting enough to tempt anyone with boots. Sitting here on the bank of the Pukkan-gang you would

see, as I see this afternoon, the bronzed bodies of GIs, lively, splashing, and full of the fun that is part of all swimming holes. There is an unrehearsed act of delightful deviltry going on right now. Two soldiers, stark naked, are standing about six feet apart, taking turns pelting each other with mud. They are splattered from head to feet and roaring with laughter at every new pasting they take from each other. Slinging mud for this brief moment of recreation is their idea of a wonderful time, and for one with a jaundiced eye, who has looked too long at darker things, this is a sight that tickles the ribs. Mud and dirt are such paltry factors when there is a clean tide running to your feet.

Sitting here along the banks of the river, you would be able to relax. You could think a number of easy and unrelated thoughts. You would be given a quick, though limited, glimpse at a few of the things that are implied in the name this bruised country bears. The name is Chosen. "Land that sees the first light of the rising sun." This water that runs by is frozen-fresh from the mountain steeps. It is the water to which the women of Korea have brought their laundry for centuries, hammering it clean in the ritual of stick against stone. It is the water that their oxen have drunk, around which their children have played, and in which the modesty of an Oriental race did not allow its daughters to bathe until the sun had set. This Pukkan-gang, eddying down from Hwachon, is a clean and bubbling reality that pulls with it the faded memories of little families that lived once along its shores—fathers and mothers and small slant-eyed babies, who have been cast adrift, as is the floating faggot, to wander aimlessly and homelessly in the mud-spewed delta of war.

The sun is bright here along the Pukkan-gang. It is actually warm. Just the other day as I was returning from the Hwachon Reservoir area, a GI pointed to this same river. "Can you

imagine ten years from now? They'll have a four-lane highway along here and hot-dog stands. If we weren't fighting, this place would really be a paradise."

So, sometimes you ask yourself what *is* paradise? The average GI over here detests the landscape. Hills that roll into other hills are a diet that is hard to stomach. Yet, in the quieter moments, when the battalion is back in reserve, when the pressure is off and there's a breather, these who are your sons sit back and point to the purpling mountains. "You know this place wouldn't be half bad if they'd only let it." From a GI, that's a rare compliment. He's not one for superlatives or wordy appreciation. For these few moments when he swims in the Pukkan-gang, or sits on the bank with water rolling over his toes, he is lifted out of the harsh picture of battle, and he is once more as young and carefree as the little kid who used to romp around the swimming holes of home. Paradise, what slight earthly variation we have had of it, was something tinged with hills, and splashings, and fun. Here beside the Pukkan-gang, I heard such talk as only field and stream can stir up in the heart of an American boy. Trout for example. "Take a dry cedar shingle," the blond soldier suggested. His name is Jim Crow and he comes from Oroville, California.

"Oroville?"

"Yes, that's above Sacramento."

"So what were you saying about a cedar shingle?"

"Well, you take a cedar shingle. A dry one. Then you take your trout and plank him. Cut the backbone out. You take a couple of bacon strips . . . good fatty ones. You put that trout on the cedar shingle, and you tack the bacon."

"Tack the bacon?"

"Right. You tack it. You put that trout flat against the shingle, put the bacon over it and tack it."

"And then?"

"And then you let the shingle lay at about 45 degrees to the fire. You jam the shingle into the ground like this . . . See? Leave it there at a 45-degree angle in front of that fire, and boy have you got a dish!"

The sandbags are thick about the Command Post. The terrible poise of quiet artillery, rearing not far behind this young soldier's head, is a reminder that talk of trout on a cedar shingle is an irrelevant parenthesis in the day's business. But the river flows on, inches away from you. And a lone GI with a helmet-scoop of water douses himself. Already the shower unit, lodged off the bank, is going into operation. They are about to pump a fine spray of the Pukkan-gang. It will be a hot shower for the messmen, the cannoneers, the truck drivers, the lowliest little fellow in the battalion, and the commanding officer himself. Water is for everyone.

"And something else," continues the blond soldier. "I've fished a lot of rivers and lakes. For my money, if a guy really wants to fish, it's the Dolores River."

"Where's that?"

"Dolores River, Colorado. Or if you want bass, crappie, or perch—and let me tell you something, they're good eating too—go to Elephant Butte Dam, New Mexico. You want to know why they call it Elephant? It's a funny thing, but there's a rocky island in the dam that looks just like an elephant. Boy, that's a place for bass!"

This is some of the talk that goes on along the edges of the Pukkan-gang.

Continue to sit here beside this flowing river and watch a star start to shimmer in the early evening sky. Forget, if you can, all the vexations of life, the hate, pride, avarice, contention, and anger which are the priming pins of all war. Relax by a river. Even here in this battle-scorched land, your memory fills with the pictures of tenuous tranquilities you have already

seen around its lakes and roads—four or five young pheasants sitting on a mountain bend south of Yanngu—black and white magpies near Chunchon, chattering over a newly turned field—snipe, darting and twisting above the mud flats about Inchon—all these and the poplar trees. And the little children. And the old men. The old men will come out in the evening time with long fishing poles. They will sit on their heels and talk among themselves, and flick a thin fishing line in a whistling arc over their heads. The patience of old age breathes out of them as they squat beside the water, waiting for something no bigger than a sardine to strike and run. These are the people, wrinkled, old Orientals whom you would like to borrow a match from, and talk with; but talking is bad business near fishing grounds. There is peace, little bits of it, shining in spots throughout Korea, as brightly as does this evening star.

Then as you sit here you will see again in memory a scene that is viciously out of sorts for June and fishing rods. War brings a peculiar touch to a river.

It is called the Taedong-gang. It pours through the eastern flatlands, north of the parallel, and rolls westward into the bay above the Yellow Sea. Here you can stand and trail a fingerling off your hook. Or you can take a *toami* net, balance it on your elbow, and fling it out over the rushing stream to catch the fleeting shadows that are *aiyu*—tasty stream trout. Or you can “beat” them, these trout, with the help of a few old men. You set up a line of rocks in a semicircle to make a dam, and then you wade slowly through the torrent to push the fish into the area. The net is easier to handle in these quarters. The old men, barelegged and keen with the spirit of the hunt, squint their eyes and roar unintelligible sounds at the merest thing that looks like a fish. In the meantime you stand, very much a Westerner, with a net that you can never hurl as they are hurled in the

travel folders. Those great circular sweeps that make "atmosphere" pictures of Oriental fishermen are a thing of muscle and art.

Here in the shallow waters of the Taedong-gang a young American lad drifted one evening in June. The net of war circled him. He was, as the saying goes, and as he must have thought, a pretty dead fish. Stewart was his name.

Capt. Kenneth Stewart wasn't thinking of anything like a river that evening. He climbed into his Mustang as number-two man on a road-cutting mission. The target lay deep in enemy territory. Bombs and rockets were heavy on the racks when Major MacGregor, leader of flight Mint Julep King, roared off.

There is only one word that describes the F-51. It roars. It is a cocky, thin-nosed powerhouse; and when you see it come whizzing off a runway you get the impression that it is bristling. The nose appears to be tilted upward, sniffing belligerently for squalls, blood, and thunder. Pilots, who like to sit around and talk air business, will tell you that it is hot. You do not dawdle with a Mustang. Even the prosaic matter of putting one down on a landing strip takes on a touch of woolly-west rodeo. She is so heavy in the neck and shoulders that anything less than a rip-roaring gallop will throw her into a power stall. The Mustang doesn't land. She slams in, full of the quivering and bridled fury that has given her a name. Mustang is what she is.

Capt. Kenny Stewart lifted his plane and pointed her north. In this four-ship flight, MacGregor soared ahead; Lt. Vernon Burke and Captain Alexander trailed Kenny in numbers three and four. A road strip between Hwangiu and Chungwa was the target. Solid overcast necessitated a steep climb. Slanting sheets of rain lay directly ahead, so they circumnavigated. The target area, when they found it, was clear. They came in and Kenny Stewart saw the flak-murderous little puffs to the right and left. The road below was a thin vein. This was the enemy

lifeline out of Pyongyang, northern and puppet capital of a land that has only one city bearing the language tag of "capital"—Seoul. The Mustang turned, climbed to 5,000 feet. Stewart was now ready to release his rockets.

Then it happened. It came with the sudden and surprising shock of an engine gone wild. Captain Stewart's plane had been hit. The propeller governor was shot out and the blade was whipping up to 4,500 revolutions per minute. Oil was now clouding the windshield and canopy. Kenny Stewart was aloft on a Mustang that would rip herself apart in a matter of minutes.

MacGregor saw Stewart's plane streaming coolant. His advice was blunt and urgent. "Kenny, take a west heading for the coast. You're pretty well beat up. We'll cover you."

Stewart pulled his stricken ship in a turn to the west. But he knew he would never make the coast. The racing engine was too hot. He salvoed the rockets. He cranked the canopy full back and jettisoned it. Then he saw the river, an emerald finger pointing southwestward to the sea. This was the Taedong-gang.

Stewart pulled himself to the right side of the cockpit, dipped the Mustang into a slant and bailed out. His jump-off was uncomfortably low—somewhere between 700 and 900 feet. The plane continued its downward slice and plunged several hundred yards ahead into the river. MacGregor, who had trailed the damaged Mustang, saw Stewart hit the water. The time was eight o'clock in the evening; the area slightly north and west of Kyomipo. Circling over the spot, MacGregor fixed his coordinates. He requested Lieutenant Burke to climb for altitude and relay the information.

In the river, Stewart inflated his Mae West and rubber dinghy. The current pulled him along in view of both banks, and considering the depth of penetration into enemy territory, those banks looked anything but friendly. Nothing had hap-

pened as yet, so he climbed into the dinghy. He paddled it well to midstream. Over his head the Mustang buzzed protectingly in tight circles. It would be a race against time. Already the sky was darkening in the west, and without light his chances of being picked up would be slim.

Suddenly, what he had feared finally happened. The whining of bullets passed over his head. He could see the enemy now, alert stalking figures on both shores. They were creeping from cover to cover, keeping pace with his drift. The dinghy and his exposed position offered too much of a target, so Stewart rolled back into the water and kicked the raft away. Again the whine of bullets sounded above his head. Then, with a sickening sensation he saw the fishing boats. They would be manned and pointed for him as darkness settled. Stewart bobbed along in the slow tide. Had he known then that there was no helicopter available, he would have written his chances down to zero. The Captain was very much a marked fish awaiting the gaff.

"Still alive," were the words that Lt. John Najarian remembered most. It is strange how the humdrum of routine is instantly sparked by those words in the briefing rooms of rescue squadrons. Maj. John E. McLure was pointedly brief. Helicopters were weathered in. An F-51 pilot was "still alive" and in the river south of Kyomipo. Fighter pilots who were capping the downed crewman had reported flak and automatic rifle fire from moderate to intense. Flak analysis charts indicated the area surrounding Chinnampo to be thickly emplaced with anti-aircraft weapons.

All this was routine. What worried Johnny Najarian was that single sentence the Major spoke at the close of flight orders. "You are to use your own judgment as to attempting a water landing after dark."

The plane that Najarian was piloting was an SA-ly. It is a capital ship, designed for the amphibious duties of land and water. To watch the big aircraft come sloshing in over the waves is to see a broad-beamed thing that was designed principally to come home to the sea. On land, it has the squat and hampered appearance of a duck. Duckwise, it was now winging with a sister ship up the seacoast where it would turn at the Chinnampo estuary, and follow the water of the Taedong-gang. Najarian had plenty to worry him. Bringing a ship in upon a river at night was going to be dangerous business. Logs, tree stumps, sandbars, rocks, and shallows—any of these might possibly wreck the plane. Nowhere in the history of aviation had such an attempt, under these circumstances, ever been made. Not only his own life, but the lives of the co-pilot, navigator, radar operator, flight mechanic—all of them were endangered. The ship also was at stake. But in the throbbing of the engine as the plane moved up the coast, those words came back to Johnny Najarian. "Still alive." Somewhere ahead in the gathering darkness, a fellow's life was hanging on another fellow's judgment.

There was more to worry about that night. Navigator Capt. Morris Elias reported that the area where Stewart was down was throwing up heavy antiaircraft fire. The flashes from the flak emplacements were visible 15 miles away. Having joined up now with fighter pilots, Najarian was further told that electric power lines were slung across the river above and below the place where Stewart was swimming. Najarian, watching the last glow of day going down on the horizon, had much reason to sweat.

It was shortly before ten o'clock that night when the huge flying boat approached the area. Far below him Najarian saw the river trailing like an inky track in the night. With the sister ship rising to orbit, and the fighter escorts thrusting stabs along

the length of the river to discourage any fisherman's boat from venturing into the water, Najarian finally reached his decision. He called for Stewart's approximate position in the river, and waited while a speeding Mustang streaked low over the water. The landing lights of the little fighter plane flashed out brazenly brilliant. Down there, where the finger of light indicated, a man was "still alive."

"Here goes, fellows, we're dropping in." Najarian, turning the ship in a easy bank, lined it up with the river. He had decided on a northeast approach. The descent was slow and tense. With no horizon to point to, the plane was coming down on instruments. Two hundred feet a minute was the indication.

"We've got a 5-foot draft," Najarian said. The implication was clear. Every man in the crew, standing at rigid attention, was praying for 5 feet and more in the Taedong-gang. The seconds peeled off in tantalizing suspense. Then while they held their breath . . . slosh! The big duck had settled cleanly so far. She churned forward, swung, and taxied back. The search was on.

A man's head bobbing on dark water is not the easiest object to locate. To throw a beam of light over the area would have pulled pin-point fire from the shore. Even now the flash of rifle fire was visible. A sweeping barrage was also opening up from a refinery along the bank. The anxious eyes of the crew strained ahead for some shadow that might be Captain Stewart.

Then they saw it. It was a tiny flicker.

"Pen-light flash ahead," a voice announced.

Najarian eased the ship forward while Harry Fitzgibbons, the flight mechanic, waited by the door.

"There he is! We're rolling past him."

There was a quick swish as the lifeline was flung through the door. The rope was fed out. Fitzgibbons crouched like an eager angler, waiting for the pull. Then somewhere out there in the

dark there was a tug. Fitzgibbons had snared his "fish." Kenny Stewart, still very much alive, was reeled in.

With his lights still out, Najarian pointed his ship south. Her great engines pulled her in a white trough. Skimming she went, with her broad breast awash above the rocky bed of the river. Then she was up and winging like a bird to the sea. Below and far to the left, flak emplacements were spitting, out of range fortunately, along the Pyongyang-Sariwon railroad sector. Najarian and the men of the Third Air Rescue Squadron would make it home with their dripping "catch."

Fishing was good tonight along the Taedong-gang.

Back here by the Pukkan-gang you rest this evening, remembering the other *gangs* that have been bloodied by the touch of war. The sibilant sound of this stream is ironically quieter now because of the violence that has been dedicated to undo violence. How practical or possible a four-lane highway may ever be in these gorges that run through Korea is something for the planners to dream about, if there is time for dreaming; and it may be that even hot-dog stands, if ever given a chance to flourish, might take only half root. The boy they call Kim is strictly for *kimchi*. Whether or not East will ever meet West on a matter of roads and roadstands is incidental. But sitting by the river tonight there is a scene that all the world would recognize as full of the highest hopes ever uttered in the assemblies of nations. A lanky, tousled-headed soldier sits on a rock beside a small Korean boy. The little lad is one of the many mascots who have tagged along all over the length and breadth of Korea. The two of them are eating beans from their mess kits. What they are saying, you cannot hear. It is probably nothing very much. For this time and place, beside a rolling stream, they know companionship and peace. Here East meets West and they are content to get along literally on something that does not amount to much

more than a row of beans. Yet a great and valuable truth shines around them. The ultimate coercions that will drive strangers together are not differences but unity—the hungering for something that was tragically lost in some ancient and outdoor thing like a garden. In a little while the shadows of evening will settle over the Pukkan-gang. The star that hangs tremulously in the western sky glows brighter as the darkness gathers. From where you sit, the shadows of a man and boy, sitting on a rock, begin to grow indistinct. By any visual standard it would be impossible to designate the shadows as specifically American or Korean. They would, by the silhouettes that human bodies throw against the backdrop of life, be called brothers. Nor is it possible now to localize the scene. The identical star that glitters at this moment over the Pukkan-gang is the one that shines in the early evening above the Dolores River in Colorado.

Sitting by a river it is easy to dream not that East meets West, but that East is West, for “the earth is the Lord’s,” and brothers weep for the parallels that brothers have flung between them.

[TEN]

• Look Out, Lieutenant!

Herbie Littleton is a Private in the United States Marines. Physically, he is not big. He is a medium-sized kid from Nampa, Idaho. He sits, tonight, in a shallow foxhole which he shares with his buddy, Bill "Gunner" Greenwood.

"Do you think Lieutenant Donovan will recommend me for corporal?" Herbie asks.

"Naw," Greenwood answers. "You're on a dead end as far as Donovan is concerned." Greenwood enjoys getting Herbie's goat.

"I don't know about that, Gunner. I think I get along okay with Donovan. I'm slated to be forward observer on his team."

"Where will that get you?"

"It puts me right up there with Donovan, and let me tell you,

they need more than knuckle-heads these days to handle radios on the line."

"What do *you* know about radios?"

"Gunner, I'm an old Bell Telephone lineman. The Marines were lucky to get a guy like me," Herbie laughs.

The moon circles lazily over the Korean hills. April, cool and full of the promise of spring, settles on the land. It creeps into a man's thinking in a dozen subtle ways.

"Gunner, this war can't last forever," Herbie says. "There's going to come the day when we pack gear and head back for Idaho."

"Bonner's Ferry, here I come."

"I've got a girl in Idaho."

"Are you going to talk about Barbara again? You've got a one-track mind, Littleton."

"No fooling, Gunner. I'm serious." Herbie faces Greenwood and his expression is almost wistful. "There are a lot of guys in this outfit I'd give my right arm for—Babe Holden, Patts, Bill Donovan, you of course, and a lot of other guys. But I'm not going to marry the Marine Corps. I've got plans of my own."

"Sure, I know. You're going to marry Barbara Sawyer."

"That's right. But first of all, Gunner, a fellow's got to amount to something these days," Herbie continues. "I didn't tell you this before, Gunner. I never graduated from high school. I was wondering if you'd . . ." Herbie kicks the dirt with his shoes.

"Wondering if I'd what?"

"Well, when I go back to the States, I'd like to enter the University of Idaho. I'd need a lot of credits and stuff."

Gunner Greenwood is interested. "So the little boy is going in for caps and gowns."

"No fooling, Gunner."

"All right, Herbie. I'll help you as much as I can to get

through this Marine Corps Institute. I'm no brain, but I'll try to polish up your English, too."

"Thanks, Gunner."

Herbie Littleton sits back in the foxhole and in his eyes is a distant dream. Practically everybody in the outfit is acquainted with Herbie's dream—Barbara Sawyer. Herbie has at least twenty snapshots of Barbara. These are passed out regularly for company inspection. Everybody in Charley Company knows that Herbie first met Barbara at a dance in Nampa, that she worked in a grocery store, and that now she is a student nurse at the Mercy Nurses Home in Nampa. Even the Chaplain was briefed on Herbie's dream.

"It's hard to explain her, Chaplain, but she's one of those girls that makes you want to go out and make a success out of yourself." Herbie was emphatically earnest. "That's why I'm going to get myself a college education."

Chaplain Joe Fitzgerald appreciated this ambition.

"Furthermore," Herbie continued, "she's a good girl. She's got plenty on the ball when it comes to religion. I was wondering if you could sort of set me straight on some things so as I'll be squared away when I see her again."

The Chaplain, even now, was in the process of squaring Herbie away.

The moon is high over the Korean hills and Herbie continues to weave dreams for the Gunner. "I've got fifty-six bucks that I'm sending to Barbara for a wedding dress. That ought to buy a pretty decent outfit, don't you think, Gunner?"

"The prices are murder back home, Herb. I wouldn't know."

"Yeah, that's right. Money is always a problem." Herbie begins to frown. "If I could only make corporal, I'd have twelve extra bucks a month. No insurance, no income tax overseas."

"Donovan'll recommend you, don't worry, Herbie."

"You really think so, Gunner?"

"Sure."

"I'm going to try hard as a forward observer. I don't mind telling you that, Greenwood. I was never an apple polisher, but I know that a guy don't amount to much if he doesn't try. Lieutenant Donovan is a good Joe. He's jumpy at times. Three packs of cigarettes a day he smokes. That's a lot of responsibility he's got up there on the ridge line."

"So you're going to walk out on us rear echelon birds?"

"You know how it is, Gunner."

It is still April. It is, to be exact, April 22, 1951. Herbie Littleton, with a 65-pound radio strapped to his back, is forward observer for Item Battery, 3d Battalion of the 11th Marines. Lt. Bill Donovan and Sgt. Babe Holden are sharing one bunker. Herbie and Jimmy Patts, his wireman, occupy a foxhole close to Lieutenant Donovan.

It has been a hard day. Hard, exciting, bruising. Herbie, with all the burning enthusiasm of a novice, feels like a tremendous cog in the United Nations machinery. He has called in with his own voice the big and shattering blasts of the 105s. Far behind them he knows what his communications on the 619 radio meant. *His voice* was the signal that put the gunners on the sights. He was the guy who started the cannoneers and the chiefs of section shouting. The smell of smoke and powder and the whistle of the shell were *his*, Herbie's doings. On this 22d day of April, the breeches of the big guns were closed, the projectiles were sealed in the chambers, the primers were set, and "ready" was the cry when number one pulled the lanyard: all this was done at Herbie's bidding. Oh, naturally, there were a few technical assistances. Donovan and Holden plotted the azimuth. Back at Fire Direction Center, the S-3 board was broken into exact coordinates, and the horizontal and vertical control operators had to compute range and deflection. But

Herbie's was the voice that put the machinery into motion. Today on the Quantico line, central Korea, Herbie Littleton was the big gun.

The April moon rides late in the sky.

"Hey, Patts," Herbie speaks to his wireman.

"Yeah?"

"I think I'll give my old pal, Gunner Greenwood, a buzz on this radio."

"Go ahead, but take it easy. We have a hundred per cent watch tonight."

"I know it. You can hear the Chinese talking over there."

Herbie spends the next few minutes joking with the Gunner. "Go on, you dope," he says over the radio, "why don't you come here on the front lines? What are you looking for—a soft berth, Gunner?"

"Hey, Herbie, did you hear the news?"

"What news?"

"Machine gun Kelly Higgins was killed today. A short round from Item Battery at about seven-thirty did it. The whole observer team was wounded."

Herbie becomes very solemn at this news. "Okay, Gunner, I guess we'd better call it off."

The crunch of gravel sounds in the night. Lieutenant Donovan stares down at Herbie. "Littleton, you know you're not supposed to use a radio for private calls."

"Yes, sir."

"What do you think we're running up here? A picnic?"

"Sir . . . I . . ."

Lt. Bill Donovan, in choice, clipped phrases, proceeded to dress down Littleton on radio procedure. When the Lieutenant left, Herbie stared dismally at Jimmy Patts.

"Well, I guess that's it, Jimmy."

"Don't worry about Donovan. He barks a lot."

Littleton leans against the edge of the foxhole. He does not say much more. The clean light of the moon shows dejection on his face. It is the dejection of a boy who tries to put on a good show and who realizes that somewhere along the line he has "goofed off."

"Look at that moon, Herbie," Patts says.

"Do you think Donovan will keep me on as a forward observer?"

"Forget about Donovan. You're doing a good job, Herbie."

This is about the time the firing starts. It is one-thirty in the morning. Out of the dark shadows that the moon spills, the Chinese rush up Hill 44. All along the ridge linemen leap to life and shoulder carbines.

Lt. Bill Donovan is calling for counterfire. He shouts an order to get the radio off the hill. The antenna, thin as it is, can be seen under the bright moon. The radio and the man shouldering it are the lifeline in this emergency.

"Littleton," Donovan shouts, "Littleton."

"Yes, sir."

"Take care of that radio."

"Yes, sir."

Then the dark, small object comes rolling over the top of the hill. It is a grenade. It comes slithering into their midst. Death is a black shadow no larger than a small turnip.

"Watch that grenade," Donovan yells.

How fast does a man act?

There are those who knew Herbie Littleton—the boys who lived with him—Lieutenant Donovan, Jimmy Patts, Miller, Gunner Greenwood, and the others. These men will tell you, as they told me, how fast one man can act. In a flash, Herbie Littleton slipped out of his radio harness. He made a flying leap on the grenade.

"Look out, Lieutenant!" he cried as he sailed through the air.

It lifted him off the ground. His chest had covered the grenade squarely. It tossed him about five yards down the hill against a tree. Blood trickled out of Herbie's mouth when he was rolled over. His neck was broken. He died, roughly, in ten minutes.

Herbie Littleton is still a Private in the United States Marines. He never made corporal. "I chewed him out only a couple of minutes before he died," Donovan said. The Lieutenant's lips trembled. His voice was hoarse as he fingered a piece of shrapnel in the calf of his leg. "I chewed the little fellow out royally. Yet, he saved my life, he saved his radio, and he saved Charley Company. We would have been overrun if it wasn't for that piece of equipment that Herbie shook off his back. His last words were, 'Look out, Lieutenant.' "

Here tonight in Korea where Marines sit around and talk, they remember the Private who never had time to make corporal. But tonight, there is never a mention of rank or rating. Five stars on a man's shoulder could not have been more gallantly graced than the single stripe Herbie wore on his jacket. In life he was Private First Class. In death, he went down as a *man* first class.

[ELEVEN]

• “Like a Thief . . .”

One night not so long ago, a young chaplain, Gerald Clune, and I were sitting in a tent. About fifteen hundred yards to the north of us, the Communists' guns were trading harassing fire with the artillery and mortar of our own lines. It does not take long for your ear to get attuned to enemy fire. It is not only your ear but your entire body that senses the physical shock of earth rocking under you. Usually you say nothing. Sometimes you say, “That was a close one.” You are grateful that they don't fall closer or more often.

So we are sitting there in the tent under the yellow haze of an oil lamp. The purring of the lamp and the snug, rainproofed enclosure of the tent seem to distil an atmosphere of security. Sentries are alert and silent above you on the hill. Theirs is the dirty and dangerous job; and for some reason you think of them

tonight in terms of policemen keeping a prowling murderer from the porch of your house which is mud, and from the door of your home which is a canvas flap.

Not too far from your location is a small bridge constructed in honor of a great soldier, "Chesty" Puller of the Marines. A few words about "Chesty" are in order, and this by some gymnastics of association leads to the subject of beer. The night is humid, and since a consignment of fruit juices and soft drinks purported to be in transit to the troops at the request of some society in the Zone of the Interior has not as yet reached these parts, there is the alternative of water or Pabst Blue Ribbon. Water conservation can be a pleasant duty on occasion. The can makes a slight hiss as the opener describes the inverted triangles—a pattern which is the proud Hourglass patch of the 7th Division. If I am to die tonight, it may as well be a matter of record, following the example of one who would not interrupt his chess game, that the dark angel should find me with at least one hearty toast to the giver of all good gifts, the Lord of wheat and grapes, and the broth of men—beer.

Time slips by this night on the purring song of the lamp. The occasional boom of artillery pulls you back to quick tensions. A game of cribbage is suggested and Gerry deals the cards with the enthusiasm that shines in the faces of men who are hungry for these brief interludes in the drab protraction of war.

It is now past ten o'clock and the cards are put away. The upturned helmet standing in the shell case serves as your wash basin. Gerry is already asleep. You get up to turn off the lamp and stand for a moment in the dark. The whisper of rain is up here where you hear it close to the tent roof. When you settle beneath the blankets your thinking runs up little twisted avenues of memory. Only this afternoon you were able to follow with your eyes the flight of white phosphorus into the air.

It shot up lazily over your head, paused for a second at the peak of its propulsion, and nosed over in a plunge. When it landed, it was not more than forty yards down the hill from where you stood. This seemed strange to you. Why were your own troops dropping them so close to your own lines? Was there something wrong with the angle of the mortar tube? Later you learned the explanation. They were lining up their sights for tonight—for this very hour and the dark hours to follow. Last night the enemy was reported so close on the other side of the hill that the click of his rifle hammer could be heard.

While the rain begins to pelt harder against the canvas, it seems almost unbelievable that anyone should want to be out on a night like this with killing for a business. It is unbelievable because, as yet, you are not used to being so near actual warfare. You are thinking that it would not be an unwelcome idea to call it quits from sundown to sunup so that people could, if they chose, play cribbage by the light of oil lamps. Or if there must be a continuation of hostilities at night, why not restrict them only to moonlit nights? Anyone who stalks and hunts in the night rain has too serious an intention. It is as if you had an appointment with the wet muzzle of an animal that is abroad sniffing the wind for the smell of you. From far back in the hills, the night is thumped with the occasional insolence of your own artillery. Harassing is the word they use to describe this kind of fire. It comes as a reminder to you that your own United Nations gun crews are also committed to this dark assignment of interrupting a man's sleep.

Silence now except for the wash of the rain over your head. Silence for long moments. Perhaps the night will smooth and taper off into an undeclared armistice. Wrap the mouths of the howitzers in a canvas blanket and let them rest in the rain. Let there be silence. Let both sides sleep for these few hours. Boom! Your muzzle of your own howitzer speaks with a muf-

fled roar. High above your head, the invisible steel sucks scoops of sound from off the hills as it speeds outward. There is no armistice in the night rain.

So you stretch under the blankets feeling an unaccountable chill. Perhaps it is the realization that you are one lone observer with little to observe in the dark. You know little or nothing about war's behavior. You would not know, never having been trained, what to do with a single platoon. The vast sweep of modern military operations; the electric crackling of communications; the grinding tonnage of machinery that is brought over roads where you hesitate to drive a jeep, so narrow is the turn and so steep the precipice; the intricate and careful planning that goes into a single box of rations, broken down to cocoa blocks, jelly, fruit, beef and noodles, cigarettes, sugar, plastic spoons, gum, matches, and toilet paper—all this is but a blurred and partial picture of operations. Boom! The howitzer sounds again. There is no surcease in the night rain.

Then you drop off to sleep.

At first I thought I was dreaming. But the voice was there, guarded and insistent. "Better get your running shoes on," the voice said.

Gerry stirred on his cot. "Who's that?"

"Captain Constantine. A party of Reds has infiltrated the line." The Captain was about to leave then. He hesitated for an instant. "The password is 'Polo Pony' in case you forgot." Then he was gone.

I looked at my watch. It was two-thirty in the morning. So this was how it could happen. The tent was pitch-black, yet in a matter of seconds I had located my clothing. When I reached for the boots, I found myself trying to put the left one on the right foot. My notebook was somewhere in the tent, but at this moment notes were a negligible item. It is odd what thoughts were racing through my head at this moment.

These were the thoughts:

It was in a wall tent such as this that it happened just a few weeks ago. It was approximately at the same time of the morning. And it was raining then as it is raining now. It wasn't a dream, nor was it one of those mysterious psychological twists that swing somewhere between memory and imagination, telling you that sometime and in some place you have already had a vision, a preview of everything that is about to happen. It had happened. It had happened to Chaplain Frank Coppens.

Frank was asleep on his cot that night. Across from him slept Chaplain Maj. John Barney Young. An improvised dresser, much like the one in this tent, was between them. Outside, the hills and paddies were being drenched by the night rain.

The spot was near Sahanjong-ri. Forward elements of the 21st Infantry Regiment had swung in a right arc to join up with units of the 7th Division. The pincer moment was completed and Headquarters, Headquarters Company, and Medical Company set up a defensive perimeter behind the forward wall of the advance troops. The procedure for Chaplains Young and Coppens had been very much the same routine that all the Padres follow when they bed down in a new area. They are never too far from the aid station. Birbeck and Harvey pounded the tent pegs into the earth. Nakpo Sung and the fourteen-year-old Shim Yung-il pulled the cots into shape and spread the muddy earth with fiber mats. Then came the night and the rain, and the sleep-time talk, and the joking. Father Frank and Chaplain Barney Young had “hit it off” together. Then lights out and the distant punctuation of artillery. Then sleep.

There was a movement at the tent flap. Lt. Fred Blair rushed in and gave the warning. “Get up. There's been an infiltration through the lines.” As Blair started to leave the tent, he knocked off his helmet, found it, and raced out into the dark.

Chaplain Young sprang from his cot. "Let's go, Frank," he said. The big chaplain dressed hurriedly, dashed through the tent flaps, and slid under a jeep nearby. Coppens was about to follow him. He took two or three quick strides, and then stopped suddenly. In that sharp moment, Frank Coppens was made to realize the full reality of a phrase he had been commissioned to preach. "Like a thief in the night . . ."

How do chaplains die? Like that: on the point of taking a step; in the hesitation of flesh as it feels bullets pierce the tenderness of heart and spleen; in the settling slowly to earth, brushing open the tent flap as he falls. The night rain was cold on his young face when they found him.

Trying to lace my boots at this late hour, these were the thoughts that went buzzing through my head. My memory went back to Frank—back to his tent. Just the other night I had sat inside it. The story was written there in the drab olive canvas. I saw the holes the bullets left—more than thirty of them. They were patched now with adhesive tape. Sitting there that rainy night in Frank's tent, it was hard to believe that this was the canvas that had been the shroud of one who had once been a classmate. I reached out and fingered the canvas.

These were my thoughts as I fumbled with the boots, and because my mother used to say, every time lightning flashed and thunder rumbled, "God bless us and save us," I said the words deep inside me. I had a sudden distaste for canvas.

"Gerry."

"Yes?"

"How's it coming over there?"

"Okay. Only we'd better not talk too loud."

"I don't like this tent," I whispered. "It stands out like an elephant."

Chaplain Gerry Clune edged cautiously to the tent door. He opened it carefully and peered into the dark. Rain was dribbling in on light gusts of wind. For about five minutes he

maintained a motionless kneeling position. I got off my cot slowly and walked up behind Gerry. He evidently did not hear me, for as soon as I tried to push the flap open above his head, he leaped back like a man who had been stung by a scorpion. The sudden movement startled me so much, I was sure Gerry had come face to face with a Communist regiment on the other side of the flap. Then the comedy of the situation struck me, and I had to tiptoe back to the cot and laugh with my head buried in the blankets. There will always be something hilarious when two friendly elements, as they are described in the field, innocently scare the living daylights out of each other.

You continue to wait in the dark tent, listening. A rattle of machine gun fire nearby runs a new prickle of suspense up your back. Then silence again. You wait for what seems an hour. Imperceptibly, exhaustion settles over you.

“What do you think, Gerry?”

“I don’t know.”

That really summed it up, too. Neither the day nor the hour does any man know. “Like a thief in the night . . .” it can come. How do chaplains die? Physically, as others die. In the field, between the cot and the open door, or even in the cot, in the twinkling of an eye!

I closed my eyes and when I opened them again dawn was already making all things bright and visible. The colonel was abroad and furious, shouting at the boy who opened up with the machine gun during the night. “That’s what they wanted you to do. They wanted you to reveal your position. Throw grenades. Use small arms fire. But until you line them in your sights, don’t reveal your machine gun position.” After such a night, even the frenzy of a colonel was comforting.

In a very little measure, it has been a kind of harrowing privilege for me to sense but a few of the hazards that have cost the lives of some of our Padres. What little contact I have

had with these hazards serves all the more to make me appreciate what it means to be dedicated, as they are, to the daily routine of danger. There are chaplains like Martin Hoen and Carl Spohrer who have faced barrages as withering as any man in the front line has ever encountered. Chaplains Connie Griffin, Joe Dunne, and Carl Oberleiter have come out of this war with wounds that the years may never heal. There are chaplains like James Carroll, Arthur Sokol, and Joseph Scully, who for plain and rugged leadership among men stand toe to toe and heads above some of the hardest sergeants who ever sparked discipline into these boys who are your sons. There are also those who, by orders, are assigned to the more normal and monotonous duties of administration, which turn out, at times, to be anything but normal.

Consider the Chaplain who is taking a flight from Korea to Japan. The plane lifts off the runway and climbs over the hills of Korea. Safety belts are unbuckled at cruising altitude. If you desire to smoke you may do so. Waves of heat begin to circulate out of the spiral vents, for you need warmth at this elevation. Northeastward, the aircraft slices a path above the Japan Sea and if you care to follow this flight out of the Korean "King" traffic, you can sit in your room beside a Zenith overseas radio and listen to the words that flash from pilot to tower to pilot—the crisp jargon of the airways, seasoned with Texan or New England variations on such Japanese relay stations as Itazuki and Fajuoka. A tail wind is invariably blowing out of Korea and in a few hours the plane will be well within the Nagoya range. Tokyo control will then acknowledge and shift it over to Tachikawa.

The Chaplain sits with the other passengers. Some of them he knows. As a matter of fact, a few of them are his closest friends.

The Chaplain told them a story. He said he had found it in

the clipping of a newspaper. Somewhere in the Midwest, a plane went up for a trial run. One of the engines had been replaced, and before putting the aircraft back into regular service, the pilot was ordered to test it. What happened, happened quickly. A farmer in a field saw a black wisp of smoke trailing from one of the engines. Then the plane burst into flame as it swung downward to the earth. The farmer ran to the burning wreck. The pilot was pinned under the twisted metal when he arrived. “Get me out, mister,” the man screamed. “Get me out of here.” The farmer gripped the pilot’s arm and pulled. A sheet of flame shot into his face. It was no use. The pilot was doomed. He could not be budged. Then backing away from the blistering heat the farmer heard the voice of the pilot scream two agonizing words: “Jesus Christ.”

The Chaplain always paused when he came to that part of the story. It was a true story, the Chaplain said. The whole point of the story was those two words: Jesus Christ. How does a man ordinarily use those words? Does he spit them around the barracks, the BOQ, the club? Or does he reverence them? Then the Chaplain’s face would turn grave. “Some day, men, there will come a moment in your life when you are going to call on the holy name of Jesus Christ. You may whisper or shout that name and it can be blasphemy. You may whisper or shout that name and it can be a prayer.” That was the Chaplain’s story.

The plane was about twenty minutes from home base that day when something happened. As I write these words tonight at an air base in Japan there is no way of knowing exactly how it happened. Down drafts, a faulty altimeter gauge, or any one of a dozen technical or human failures might have explained it.

Like a thief in the evening . . .

John Maher was the Padre’s name. He died as the others about him died in the twinkling of an eye, in the sudden sear-

ing of metal upon a mountainside. He died in that instantaneous roaring jolt that catches the soul and flesh of a man and leaves him only time to shout, "Jesus."

You may whisper or shout that name and it can be a prayer.

Like a thief in the evening death came to John Maher; and like a thief in the morning, noon, and night death has come to others of your sons.

To the families and friends of the chaplains who serve the armed forces of our country, America owes an everlasting debt. The heroism and sacrifice of Chaplain Kenneth C. Hyslop, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, Baptist; Chaplain Emil J. Kapaun, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Roman Catholic; Chaplain James W. Conner, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, Episcopalian; Chaplain Wayne H. Burdue, 2d Engineer Combat Battalion, 2d Infantry Division, Disciples of Christ; and Lawrence F. Brunert, 32d Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, Roman Catholic—the courage of all these men, who are still listed as missing in action, will long remain an inspiration among the troops they loved and served.

Taps have sounded and the Requiem has already been sung for the others. Chaplain Samuel R. Simpson, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2d Infantry Division, Methodist; Chaplain Byron D. Lee, Headquarters, 25th Infantry Division, Nazarene; Herman G. Felhoelter, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, Roman Catholic; Chaplain Leo P. Craig, Headquarters, Division Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division, Roman Catholic; Chaplain Francis X. Coppens, 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, Roman Catholic; Chaplain John Maher.

These are men who have made the supreme sacrifice. To their families, relatives, and friends goes the sincere sympathy of all who ever had the privilege of knowing them. They met

death in different ways: in infested mine fields, trying to lift the wounded; at aid stations where they were shot while pleading for the lives of the crippled and maimed; on a plane returning from an errand of mercy for prisoners of war in Korea; on a straw-matted floor between a cot and an open flap. No finer tribute could be paid the chaplains of the United States than that delivered by a sharp-eyed soldier I have the privilege of knowing. He honored the 176th anniversary of the United States Army Chaplaincy with the following words:

For 176 years as the fighting forces of this nation have moved into garrison, bivouac or onto the field of battle, the church has provided priests, rabbis and ministers as chaplains to go with them. In barrack or in field these chaplains have kept us mindful of and sensitive to the obligations of our humanity to God and our dependence upon Him.

This day we dedicate our observance of the 176th Anniversary of the United States Army Chaplains to those ten chaplains who in death or a missing in action status bespeak the devotion and extent of faith of those who bear arms in defense of home and country. We need not eulogize the chaplain alone except to give thanks for his presence. These gallant men of God live by our sides. They bear our common sacrifices. They are a part of our team and we know them. They have our respect, our admiration and our affection.

*I have eaten your bread and salt,
I have drunk your water and wine.
The deaths ye died I watched beside,
And the lives which ye led were mine.*

We here and now give thanks to this great nation of ours, which not only calls us to bear arms in her behalf but sees fit to send with us the man of God to keep us ever mindful

of the Eternal God from whom shall come our continued strength and the success of our endeavors.

These were the words spoken from the sincerity of a great soldier's heart—General Matthew B. Ridgway.

And who shall say how death is to come, in what fashion or from what quarter it shall strike? Are there dramatic ways of dying? Physically, and for the eyes of the world that probe hungrily for the gallant gesture, there are several ways. These we have had in this Korean wasteland. The last moments of some of our intrepid Padres who have died shall some day be recorded by pens more sensitive than the pencil with which I now write. But the essential sorrow and tragedy are there wherever the warm life spills out of the fellow you knew. Whole, human blood here in the Orient is packaged in cool fiber cartons. It comes also in warm human flesh. Wherever it appears over here, it is on the line, willing to be spent. It has been spent. And you want to cry because you realize that if the things these men once lived for were lived up to, there might never have been for them a Korean calvary.

[TWELVE]

• What They Remember

The Captain is in Tokyo tonight, standing in the lobby of the Dai Ichi Hotel. He bears his bars and the Indianhead patch on his arm with apparent ease. He moves, tonight, in an atmosphere that is, on the surface, socially gay, even brilliant. Colonels and majors swirl about him over the tiled floor in a seemingly endless flow to elevators, cocktail lounge, restaurant, or snack bar. If the Captain wishes, he may step out into the witching spring air, hail a cab, and lose himself in any of the hundred Oriental attractions that lie within the Tokyo perimeter. A GI in Korea contemplating the Captain's happy plight would say, "He's got it made." To the curious Japanese eye, the Captain is but another of the species—formal, groomed, attached to that branch of the military hierarchy that has access to the finest facilities his capital city has to offer.

What is the Captain's desire this beautiful spring night?

The Captain walks to a chair beside you, sits down, and says, "Hello, how are you?"

And you say, "Fine, thank you. It's a pleasant evening, isn't it?"

"It really is." He pauses and you notice at this distance that his shoulders sag a bit; his eyes are sunk in blue hollows of weariness.

After you have introduced yourself and told him that you have an assignment to get stories of the men of this war, he turns and faces you. "I can tell you stories of this war. They may not be big stories, but they're the ones I know, and the ones I'll always remember." And this is what you hear as you listen to Capt. Niles McIntyre of the 23d Infantry Regiment, 2d Infantry Division.

"You can write about this war from a lot of angles, but until you have lived it and fought it side by side with the kids who make companies and platoons, you'll never begin to realize what war is. Your fire team leader is your littlest general and when you're close enough to see him and appreciate his generalship, then you're getting close enough to war. You can't get any closer. You're in it.

"Maybe you've heard some people tell you what I'm telling you now—that you'll find this thing they call *esprit* mostly in companies. That's the truth. Sure, you'll find it in regiments as such. You'll find it in divisions, too. But it all goes back to individual companies where men live with each other, fight, and sometimes die with and for each other. You may not believe this, but there is pride of ancestry in companies. I'm talking about fathers, grandfathers, and great-great-grandfathers who all belong to, let's say, Charley Company of some regiment of some division. It's Charley Company they'll talk about and argue about. Or maybe Fox, or George. It's these

small groups that make guys shout and claim that 'Baker Company was the best shootin' outfit in the entire war.'

"That's good. That's what we need; that's what we've got. So what am I getting at? I just hope you understand before you do any writing about this war, that the ones you should appreciate above all others are the fellows in the little setups. When you know what a company is, then you're ready to get down to platoons, squads, right down to the individual kid."

You listen to the Captain. You copy on your pad the things he is telling you. Because you cannot write shorthand, you ask him to speak a little more slowly. He does so. He even repeats phrases to make sure you get it all.

Somewhere behind you music is playing. Officers are still walking through the lobby. Keys rattle at the desk. Japanese girls in kimonos flit by on velvet-thonged *zori*. Important civilian friends of the upper echelon stand in knots: Chinese, Indians, DACs, traders, wives of officers, children, a little boy in a Hopalong Cassidy suit complete with twin pistols, waving them in front of a showcase of Mikimoto pearls. The atmosphere is downtownish cosmopolitan in the Dai Ichi tonight. But the Captain sitting beside you has a faraway look in his eyes.

Then he tells you the story hesitantly, almost reverently. It's about a Sergeant, John E. Johnson by name. He tells you that it is possible to come out of a war, remembering it mostly in terms of a single man.

Early in August of 1950, Capt. Niles McIntyre spotted Johnnie Johnson on the deck of a ship that was hauling them into Pusan. He was a stocky five feet ten, with sandy, bristling hair, square jaw, and a stance that spelled aggressiveness. The immediate impression that one got while looking at him was:

here is a sergeant. "Not that all the boys with square jaws and shoulders are any better than anyone else," McIntyre interjected. "I'm only telling you about my first impression of Johnson. He was a fellow that had confidence in himself. He was also one in whom you knew you could place your own confidence."

Later that day on the deck, McIntyre was suddenly aware that Johnson was standing off to the side watching him. He had a feeling he was being surveyed, scrutinized, weighed. Johnson's eyes, when you looked into them, were the coolest and most calculating gimlets you had ever seen.

"How're you making it, Sergeant?"

"Very good, sir," Johnson snapped to attention.

"First time overseas?"

"No, sir. I was a tankman in the last war. Served in the occupation of Trieste."

"Where are you from?"

"Texas, sir." Johnson's answers had the crisp formality of the noncom in the presence of a superior officer.

"Are you married?"

"Yes, sir." The faintest trace of a smile flickered in Johnson's face.

That was McIntyre's first meeting with Sgt. Johnnie Johnson. Apparently there wasn't much significance attached to the conversation except for one thing: that question about his marriage.

Weeks later, toward the end of that August in 1950, after the North Koreans had committed several divisions in an all-out drive to reach the city of Changyung, they were stopped. The 1st Battalion of the 23d, however, was cut off. The message came to Captain McIntyre to take a patrol and break through to the trapped battalion. If a wedge could be inserted, a bigger column would follow to set up a transverse artery from front to rear.

"Johnson," McIntyre announced, "we have a rough job ahead. I'll need some volunteers."

"Yes, sir. I'll volunteer and I'll get you volunteers. Where are we going?"

"We're going to contact the 1st Battalion."

Johnson hesitated for a moment. His face was grave. "My God, sir, we'll never make it."

"Well, it's a volunteer mission. You don't have to go."

"Who said anything about not going, sir? I just said we weren't going to make it."

Captain McIntyre sitting in the lobby of the Dai Ichi buckled his lips when he remembered Johnson. "You see, that's the kind of kid he was. Did you ever see those ads in the magazines with the sketches of that Tenth Avenue 'tough-but-oh-so-gentle' fellow? That was Johnson. I really learned about him shortly before we went out on that patrol."

"When do we jump off, sir?" Johnson asked that day.

"In about ten minutes."

"Mind if I say something to you, sir?"

"Not at all."

"The first day I ever talked to you you asked me if I was married. I am. I married a girl in Washington State shortly before I left. We didn't even have time to set up house before I came over here."

"You'll have plenty time for that, Johnnie."

The Sergeant smiled strangely. "Captain, this may sound funny to you, but it's something I've been wanting to say. The happiest time of my life was those few days I spent with my wife. I've been trying to tell her that in letters but she'll never know. I was wondering . . . just say I never get around to it, if you'll be able to tell her that? Coming from somebody else, she probably might understand."

"Now, look, Johnson, if you're worrying about this patrol . . ."

"No, sir. The patrol doesn't worry me a bit," Johnson said. His rigid jaw confirmed the fact.

Shortly afterward, the patrol edged forward along a ditch. Blistering crossfire kept the party pinned low. In order to inch forward they had to decide whether to crawl over the bodies of dead Americans or lift them out of the ditch. "I threw one poor kid out," McIntyre said. "He was about seventeen years old. A little slender kid. No whiskers. Johnson was covering me. We finally found two other kids who had been captured by the Koreans. They were so young and scared they scarcely made sense."

"Did the Koreans release them?" I asked.

"No, we shot the Koreans. Near a cluster of houses we saw two more Americans. They were on the right of the road. One was dead; the other wounded. We went up to see them. I poured some water for the fellow who was alive. He asked me to see about his buddy. He didn't know that his buddy, lying alongside him, was dead. I said, 'Okay, I'll take care of your buddy.' Then I gave him a shot of morphine and lifted him into my radio jeep. Next, Johnson and I placed his buddy in beside him. The kid smiled when he saw the face of his buddy. Then just like that, he died in the jeep."

The Captain's voice trailed off in a memory. "He passed away just as easily as Bobby Gill did, later. You'd have to know Bobby. He was assigned as a runner to carry messages. In practice fire one day, he came tearing up to me and said, 'I can't stand it. I can't stand it.' He was shaking. Only a youngster, Bobby was. I put my arms around him and told him to take it easy. A few days later, all hell broke loose around us. I was acting as company commander of Headquarters Company of the regiment. I told Bobby to take a message to a platoon nearby. It was at night and he was standing in the foxhole with me. I could almost see the reluctance in his face when

he looked out into the dark. In my mind, I promised myself that if it was the last thing I'd do, I'd take Bobby home alive. You see, I'm a pretty old buck myself. Forty-two years old. I've got kids—a son just about the same age as Bobby. That's why I feel so strongly about our boys. I used to pray at night to be good enough to command them."

The memory creeps back into McIntyre's voice again and he continues slowly. "So Bobby Gill held the message in his hand. I can still see his face—white in the moonlight. His rifle was lying against the foxhole. 'Okay, Bobby?' I asked him. And he said, 'Okay.' Then he slipped out of the foxhole. He delivered the message. He came back into the foxhole with me and he had a look of boyish pride I'll never forget. Two days later Bobby died in my arms."

The Captain shifts in his chair. He bends over the notebook that I balance on my knee. His lips buckle again.

"Things like that you can never forget. Bobby caught a piece of shrapnel behind the ear while he was manning an observation post. I bent over him while he was still alive. He looked up at me and, though the kid was dying, he had that same look of pride . . . a kid's pride. I looked at his dog tag. Then I folded his arms while the Chaplain said the prayers." Captain McIntyre's eyes began to fill as he sat in the hotel lobby. His voice was choked up when he tried to continue. "It was so much harder . . . it took so much more courage for Bobby than the rest of us, if you know what I mean."

The Captain is weary tonight. A few personal questions and answers give you the reason why. A decorated veteran of two wars, holder of the Purple Heart with clusters, the Silver Star, and the Combat Infantry Badge, he tells you that Korea isn't exactly the best place to go for your health. Haggard after a loss of twenty pounds (those 500-meter hills do it to

you) and still weak after battle wounds, he is not the type of man whose time you would like to monopolize.

"But maybe I won't be seeing you again, and I still haven't told you about Johnnie Johnson," he said. "I'll make it short. Maybe you won't think too much of this story, but it's something I'll always remember. It was like this:

"We got through on that patrol mission with flying colors. Got ourselves fairly covered with glory. Then on the following Sunday we had another job to do. We had to clean out the village behind us. The Koreans were infiltrating, cutting our supply lines, and shooting at our ambulances. It was a bad job. There weren't many of us. Just two squads, twenty-eight men—long squads. Every man went to church that Sunday. Father Frank Wood said the Mass that morning. He gave us a nice holiday. No sermon—just a little talk. The Protestant Chaplain had his service, too. Johnnie Johnson was baptized that morning by the Protestant Chaplain, a fellow by the name of Bucklin, a Lutheran, and a swell fellow from somewhere in the Midwest.

"We were moving into this area which was being heavily shelled. There was a machine gun nest six hundred yards to the left. We decided to clean it out. While we were talking about it—Johnnie and I—a mortar knocked both of us off the road. All I could remember was a terrific crash. I didn't know it was a mortar shell until later when I woke up in the aid station. What a feeling it is to open your eyes and see all those blanketed bodies around you. I had mortar fragments in my back, in my arms, and buttocks. It was more uncomfortable than anything else. I had a feeling I'd never be able to sit down for the rest of my life.

"Well, a few hours later, after I was able to get up, I asked for Johnnie. I found him. He was lying unconscious on one of the stretchers. The top of his head was bandaged and his face looked like it had been through a meat chopper. There

was nothing I could say to him, so I left the aid station pretty down in the dumps. I was remembering that message he wanted me to give to his wife. Johnnie would be evacuated but whether he would last or not I didn't know.

"I crawled into one of the Korean huts close by after checking. Security for the night was sound. I was as miserable as it's possible to feel that night. Bad dreams, nightmares, and pain had me about socked in. Then just about dawn I heard a sound. It was on top of me before I knew it. I opened my eyes. There bending over me was Johnnie. His face was still clotted with blood. The bandage was still tied around his head. One of his arms was in a sling, but in the good arm, in the good hand, was a cup of coffee. Johnnie was grinning at me."

"I went looking for you, Captain. I thought maybe you'd like this," Johnnie said.

Captain McIntyre turned to me and his face had an exultant light. "Johnnie was carrying chunks of lead in his body. He had to be evacuated the next day. Yet, that kid got out of his bed to bring me a cup of coffee." Then the Captain paused a moment and said a strange and wonderful thing. "To see Johnnie bending over you was like seeing the face of your own mother or father coming into your room when you were sick, with a cup of broth. Johnnie was always there bending over you—doing something for you. I'll never forget him."

Outside the hotel, taxi horns are honking. Spring, and the fragrance of it, comes swirling in at the doors. I asked Captain McIntyre another question then. "Where is Johnnie now?"

The Captain stared at his shoes. He spoke slowly. "Johnnie came back to the regiment as fast as he could. If he wanted to, he could have goofed off and said he was really hurt, but he didn't. Not too long afterward, up at Kunu-ri he was killed. He was killed on November the 26th, early in the morning."

"You remember the date?"

"You live a thousand years every day," the Captain said

slowly. "And do you know how he was killed? Some of our people were cut off. They couldn't withdraw with the rest of the company. It was very cold. One man froze to death that night. Johnnie volunteered to take a relief party to get those cut-off elements and bring them back to a safe place. There were no safe places those days. But the mission succeeded. Johnnie didn't come back, though. There was a man in a foxhole who was helpless. Johnnie bent over him to lift him out. He was killed instantly in that position—bending over somebody. It was the same old Johnnie—always there leaning down to you to give you a helping hand."

So now it was time to go. I thanked the Captain for his kindness but he shrugged it off easily.

"I could tell you lots more if it would help the fathers and mothers of these boys any, especially those who have lost their sons. I've got a boy, Charles is his name. He's a Navy medical corpsman. I can thank God he's still alive. And I can thank God for having had the opportunity to know some of these youngsters in Korea. I've seen them standing in the shower units. If you got close enough you could see their socks . . . matted with the blood and skin dug into the wool . . . and they laugh and joke in the showers. That's one of the things that keeps you going over there—the laughs. But the other things you can't forget. The courage, the absolute sacrifice that these boys have been willing to make and did make, these are the things you'll always remember."

As the Captain walks away, something of the luster and sparkle that abound in a hotel lobby has already faded. The air of spring has the faint chilled breath of faraway mountains in it; the rattling of room keys is the clinking of dog tags on the valiant shoulders of those who still fall in the night.

[THIRTEEN]

• Stinger

It was a Saturday evening. We were sitting in the Press Club in Tokyo. Ham Green, who illustrates for *Blue Book* and other publications, made the suggestion. "Let's take a B-29 flight," he said.

"Why?" I asked.

"Unless you experience the things these guys go through, you'll never get the real picture," Ham answered. He said the words with a frowning sincerity and he accented the word picture. For fellows like Ham the word has an apt meaning. Getting pictures is Ham's business.

"I think I can get the picture of the B-29 without riding in one," I said. Recent B-29 losses were not too much of an inducement for me to go near this sort of aircraft. In an age in which MIGs and Sabers streaked the sky, the B-29 had already been classified as obsolete.

"Okay, you make up your own mind," Ham said. "I'm going to phone Gen. Joe Kelly. Do you know him?"

"No."

"He's the big brass on all B-29s in the Far East," Ham informed me. "Joe and I are pals from the last war."

Ham walked over to the desk, picked up the phone, and in no time at all the flight was confirmed. "See what I mean? Joe Kelly and I are like that. Just like that!" Ham's fingers described the Ballantine symbol, which was reason enough to order one.

After Ham left that Saturday evening, I sat there in Shim-bun Alley Number 1, twiddling my thumbs and feeling very much like a poge. A poge, in case you are interested, is a word (rhymes with rogue) that correspondents use to describe a species of reporter. Jim Becker of AP volunteered to define a poge for me one night in Seoul. Jim prefaced his remarks by saying: "There are two kinds of reporters."

"Only two?"

"Two," Jim Becker affirmed. "The first is the poge. He's the gent who waits around Seoul and Taegu to give the world the big picture. This is the guy who never met a soldier in his life. He describes tanks as roaring, rolling, and plunging, and all that corn-ball stuff. Have you ever seen a tank in the field? It doesn't plunge. It comes up a road. It's part of a column. Fifteen in the column—five, five, five. The column moves two hundred yards. It *creeps!* It doesn't plunge and roll. It takes them four hours to creep fifteen miles with no opposition—four miles *with* opposition." Jim Becker was interestingly emphatic about this pace of tanks. "But the poge's version of it! The guy who doesn't even know what a tank looks like! Hah!"

Huh! Did I ever see a tank in the field? I was of a mind to tell Jim that I, too, was fed up with this poge slant. Didn't I see tanks moving in the draws right out there in Korea? Hadn't

I seen them waddle and creep for short distances, probing and poking their way like large, suspicious beetles. From a hill-top with my own eyes I had seen them.

As I say, I was ready to tell Jim Becker about my own observations on tank pace in war; but the fact that the only tanks I had ever seen in action were those which General Ferenbaugh had kindly put on display for me and hundreds of other spectators along the Kansas Line was an angle that had a bit of the poge in it. I said nothing about tanks to Jim Becker.

On consulting my notes now, I find that I do not have Becker's second category for correspondents. Either Jim forgot to mention it or I was too distracted by Ronnie Noble, a noble Englishman, who persisted in wanting to know why I was in favor of the dissolution of the Empire. Steve Barber, another Englishman, whose accent starts a chorus of "The Old Black and Tans" in one's blood, was also not too keen on the dissolution suggestion. Anyway, what I intended to say before I became enmeshed in Becker and tanks is this: I sat in the Press Club that Saturday evening feeling very much like a poge. Ham Green had already committed himself to the B-29 phase of this Korean war. And here I was sitting temporarily in luxury. Up to now, I had never seen a B-29, much less ridden in one. Should I? For the sake of the book? Maybe a new slant?

Dwight Martin, the close-cropped bureau chief of *Time* magazine, sat beside me. He's a nice fellow to know whenever you run short of chits. "Dwight," I asked, "did you ever ride a B-29?"

"Sure," he said. "I've been up in all of them." Dwight is crisp. His tweeds are crisp, bristling with the rough edge of world travel.

"I was thinking of taking a flight . . ."

"There's nothing to it," Dwight said.

So that was Saturday night. I made the decision then. Whether it was due to a pure and supererogatory urge to be heroic or a *casus conscientiae correspondentorum*, I am not sure. On the following afternoon, unbeknownst to Ham Green, I was riding in an olive-drab Chevrolet to an airport. I was going to board a B-29 if Gen. Joe Kelly permitted.

“General Kelly?”

“Yes. Pleased to meet you.” He was a fine specimen of lanky-thin command. He wasted no time. He was curious. I could have been a Red spy.

After the social preliminaries were finished I put it to the General straight from the shoulder.

“I was wondering if I could take a B-29 flight for some background material.”

An examination of credentials, cards, letters, and a lot of other details followed. This established my complete separation from Joe Stalin and all his pomps. “Besides, Ham Green is a friend of mine,” I said to the General.

“Ham!” the General shouted. “Well, why didn’t you say so in the first place?”

For the next five minutes the phone jangled. General Joe barked orders to some poor colonels. The colonels in turn got in touch with equally harassed majors. The flight was arranged. Would I make sure and report to the proper people for flying gear? Would I be down on the hard stand at least an hour before take-off? The flight was to be a Stinger. This Kelly man was almost too expedite. I walked from the General’s quarters with an old and haunting question in my mind: “Is this trip necessary?”

Three hours before my appointment with destiny, I sauntered, as is my habit, into the Officers’ Club. Not knowing a soul in the area and wondering when Ham would appear, I ordered a toasted cheese sandwich. A bevy of bantam-weight

Japanese girls, rigged out in South Sea Island outfits, was providing something soothing by way of stringed music. Wonderful! The atmosphere, if you had a mind to forget B-29s, was pleasantly "Stateside."

At this point, two officers walked to my table. They sat down and introduced themselves as Lt. Bob Patch and Capt. John Patrick Brennan.

"What are you doing here?" Brennan asked.

What was *I* doing here? With the air of a battle-scarred and slightly bored professional, I told them I had to do a little coverage on a Stinger over Korea.

"A Stinger?"

"That's right."

Capt. John Patrick Brennan fixed me with an interested eye. "Just a few weeks ago I had my last flight in a B-29. It was a Stinger and it was really something."

"Wait a minute," Lieutenant Patch interrupted. "You've got to admit that wasn't an ordinary flight."

"That's what I said," Brennan insisted. "This for a Stinger was unusual."

Unusual! What really did this Brennan man mean? He leaned over the table and his eyes had the look of drastic announcement. Then and there I was ready to break down and confess I had never in all my life laid eyes on a B-29. I had seen them only in magazine pictures. As for Stingers—the last time I had heard the word was with my cousin Mike McManus back in O'Donnell's restaurant in Washington, D.C., where they serve them.

"A B-29 is a big plane," Brennan began. "Just a few weeks ago I was starting out on my sixtieth mission. It was my last. Boy, it was really a Stinger."

What follows is Capt. Pat Brennan's story. It is not a pleasant story. It belies any of the facetious fright which you may

suspect in this chapter. In all truth, I do not frighten facetiously. This being a personal problem, it is mentioned merely to let you know that I sweated as I listen to John Patrick Brennan's story.

It is in the evening time. The plane rolls from the hard stand and poises at the head of the strip. She is ready to make her run. She is the long-swept powerhouse of the last war, the B-29. Loaded down with 38 general purpose bombs, she is ready for a mission that is called a Stinger. Each bomb weighs 500 pounds. When you add up the bomb poundage that is nestled in her bays, it amounts to 19,000 pounds. That's nine and a half tons of explosives. But this is only armament. She is gurgling in the tanks with 5,700 gallons of gasoline. That's more than a railroad tank car can carry. There is, also, the other cargo. Men. Ordinarily, you would think that an aircraft designed to carry 11 men would be roomy. The B-29 is not roomy. She houses her crew sparingly, hemming each man into a cell, confining him to a slot for a specific job.

For Captain Brennan this was an old story. One more mission over Korea and he had it made. On his right in the co-pilot's seat sat Lieutenant Colonel Wolfe, the Squadron Commander. Sergeant Baron was aboard as a flak observer for Air Intelligence. Forward, in the bombardier's spot, was Lt. Al Weiss.

The plane was ready. Her fat rubber wheels bulging under a gross weight of 68 tons rolled as she sang a loud roar into the take-off. When she gathered speed on the strip a loud whining noise was suddenly heard. The number-one outboard port engine had a propeller surge. It was running wild. The governor in the turbo supercharge had failed, causing the engine to overspeed. An unbalanced power condition was now dragging the plane to the right. To pull it back into the lane, Brennan threw his left rudder to full.

"Number-two engine is out," Brennan yelled. Power failure at this point threatened disaster. Sixty-eight tons were hurtling over concrete at 120 miles per hour, and there was no possible way to lift the plane into the air.

Wolfe chopped the throttles. They were now more than two-thirds down the runway. All that was left was a scant 3,500 feet in which to stop. Brennan threw everything he could into the braking action. He dumped his wing flaps, opened the cowl flaps, and jammed the emergency brakes hoping the tires would blow. The tires did not blow. An embankment loomed ahead of them. The crash was evident and imminent.

With a grinding and buckling, the forward wheel hit the embankment lifting the nose of the ship upward and over the bank. The propellers folded. The wing tanks were ripped open, and gasoline sprayed in all directions. Instantaneously, fire leaped along the entire span of the wings. Miyose, the Nisei radio operator sitting behind the forward turret, saw gallons of gas spilling into the forward bomb bay. With the main hatch jammed, the men forward scrambled to exit by the pilot's and co-pilot's windows.

"My foot is caught," a man screamed.

This was hysteria.

Sergeant Baron was momentarily dazed. "Get moving," the navigator shouted to him.

Plumly, the tail gunner, leaped from the plane. He heard the voice of a man in a state of shock. The man was crying. "Come on, you can get out. Come on," Plumly pleaded. The fellow finally leaped out of what was soon to become an inferno.

Up forward, Brennan, Wolfe, and Weiss had jumped from the nose of the ship. Baron also managed to get through the small window but he broke his arm in falling from the plane.

"Get down and get going, she's going to blow," Brennan yelled. Nine and a half tons of explosives were roasting.

Baron, in a state of shock, started to walk back to the plane. Brennan ran for him, tackled him, and pulled him into a ditch. "Stay here and keep your head low," Brennan shouted.

Sirens started to wail. Emergency fire-fighting crews were racing down the strip.

In the telling of this, I would like to pause parenthetically and call attention to one Japanese. He was what your sons call "boy-san," one of the Orientals who was at war with us not too long ago. General Willoughby recently stated that Japan, from all his observations, is wholehearted in her support of the ideals we are now fighting for in the Far East. He pointed to the cooperation we have received from a bruised and beaten nation. There were opportunities galore for sabotage, but the nation we had occupied went all-out to facilitate the movement of men and material during the Korean hostilities. From where I sleep at night, I have heard the constant steam of their locomotives. American citizens will never fully realize the pace these people kept by day and by night to keep the wheels rolling for that which the United Nations dream and bleed. I would like to add here what one Japanese offered on the night Brennan's B-29 was ablaze. Two minutes after the alert flash sounded, the first explosion roared from the doomed plane. Fire trucks, manned by American drivers and Japanese crews, rushed into position.

The man they call "boy-san" was just another member of the fire-fighting crew. He ran out from his truck. "*Hikoki no naka ni, Americajin imasu ka?*" The question was shouted to one of his fellow Japanese. Were there any Americans inside the plane, he wanted to know.

Nobody was sure.

"Boy-san" ran to the blazing ship. "*Bakudan!*" someone screamed. "More bombs!"

"Boy-san," with the agility of the Japanese, crawled into

the roaring trap. He never came out. The blast of the bombs was terrific. The turret, with the machine gun attached and still spraying bullets, was blown into a field about eighty yards away. In the base chapel where airmen were praying (as they have made it a practice to pray under Chaplains R. J. Shaefer and William E. Powers—praying against just such emergencies as this) the monstrance and crucifix were knocked down. Glass windows throughout the area were smashed and the houses of Japanese nearby were leveled. Fifteen thousand pounds of bombs exploding in this blast rocked the entire air base. The man nearest it, standing next to it, searching for an *Americajin*, was the one they call "boy-san."

Back near the blazing ship, Corporal Erickson, one of the crash-crew drivers, shouted orders. Erickson believed there were more airmen aboard. "Closer, pull the hoses closer," he ordered.

The Japanese crew behind him inched closer to the heat. There was another explosion. Erickson spun to the ground. One of his arms was completely saturated with flying fragments. Erickson would never use the arm again. Japanese firemen were strewn all over the area. The legs of a man, with the trunk torn from his hip sockets, were still stumbling toward the plane.

Col. Gordon Goyt picked up one of the Japanese. "My four babies," the Japanese said to Goyt. The man was dying in the Colonel's arms.

"For God's sake," Goyt cried, "pick up these Japanese."

A serviceman standing near refused to budge.

In the ditch Captain Brennan cradled Baron in his arms. Baron was crying, "It's awful, it's horrible."

"Let's say some prayers," Brennan said. "It's no use crying now."

"What do we pray?"

"Say it with me—Our Father . . . who art in Heaven . . ."

Baron repeated the words. "Our Father . . . who art in Heaven . . ."

The glow of the dying B-29 was lurid red in the sky. There was another explosion.

"Thy will be done on earth . . . as it is in Heaven . . ."

"Thy will be done . . ." Baron sobbed. His broken arm was hanging crazily.

"That was supposed to be my sixtieth and last mission," Captain Brennan said to me in the Officers' Club that evening. "Many times since, I have asked myself why was I saved. In the chapel that night the first decade of the rosary was being said for the safety of the personnel and the security of the base. That's my answer. Why were those firemen killed? The answer to that is something that Baron and I found out in the ditch that night. 'Thy will be done.'" Brennan paused before he continued: "They used to say there are no atheists in fox-holes. I can tell you there are no atheists in airplanes either."

Needless to say the atmosphere in the Officers' Club had lost much of its sparkle. "That sure *was* a Stinger," Brennan repeated.

Now that I was less than two hours away from one, I had even less taste for Stingers.

Preparation for take-off includes bundling into flying gear that makes you feel like a stodgy version of Flash Gordon. Helmet with earphones attached, a parachute that seems to weigh a hundred pounds, and large fleece-lined boots—all this paraphernalia leaves you with anything but an impression that you can run a dash. You are just about able to move.

Out on the hard stand where the B-29 "California Calling" sits in the shadows, a group of men gathers in a tent. The night is cold and they hover around the fire. This is the crew. There

is the usual joking. Someone wants to know whatever induced me to take a trip like this without flight pay. Money is an item that loses significance right now. As a matter of fact, all the members of the crew including myself are limited to carrying only five dollars on this flight, and what anyone can do even with that much money in a B-29 is a detail I never learned.

"Let's go," the Air Commander, Lt. John Stevens, announces.

The men scramble out of the tent and line up under the left wing. This is the crew inspection and the Commander places me at one end of the line. We face him as he shouts questions on emergency procedure. "How many and where are we loaded?" Stevens asks Lt. Norbert Robie, the bombardier.

Robie shouts back: "Twenty in the forward bomb bay and twenty in the rear. Five hundred pound g.p. instantaneous."

This is even a heavier Stinger than John Patrick Brennan's, I remind myself. We are loaded to capacity.

The Commander then asks about ditching, crash-landing, and bail-out from different members of the crew. "Pilot report."

"I bail out after the engineer. My primary exit is through the nose wheel, secondary through the forward bomb bay," Lt. Gary Richards answers.

"Right gunner report."

Sgt. James Sample speaks: "My primary exit is first man after passengers through aft bomb bay. My secondary is rear entrance door after passengers. I crash-land in my position, facing rear, and ditch in the tunnel with my feet braced against the forward turret. I exit through the astro-dome."

This preoccupation with how, when, and where to get out of a B-29 is not the pleasantest preparation for a flight. Just as I was wondering what turret or astro-dome I would be required to identify, the Air Commander announced to the crew

that I, the passenger, would be the first to go out via the main wheel well.

"The *first*?" I asked.

"Don't worry, you'll be first," Stevens laughed. "You'll be shoved out."

Next follows the checking of the parachutes. Every man inspects the chute of the one in front of him. I was wondering about the poor fellow who was at the end of the line. Who inspects his chute?

Fire extinguishers, gas and oil cups are spot-checked. The crew is aboard. These first few moments inside the forward section of a B-29 leave you with no doubt about the way the men are housed. Bombardier, pilot, co-pilot, engineer, and radar man occupy positions that seem functionally and primarily designed for robots. Plans to fit anything human into these slots would appear to have been an afterthought. Dials gleaming blue, indicating manifold pressure, rpm's, and oil pressure, fuel booster switches, throttles, and the whole confusing array of buttons and lights are stacked around, below, and above you. Sitting on the floor of the engineer's deck it would not be very hard for me to contract, if I am not already afflicted with them, ulcers.

We taxi now through a long lane of blue lights.

This is it!

But no, it wasn't it, for at least another fifteen minutes.

"Give her a full boost check, Fitz," the Air Commander requested of the engineer. Fitzwater pulled or pushed the throttles, and the big ship, with her brakes locked, began to rock like a Coney Island horse. Slowly she moves into a lane that runs in two parallels of white lights. At the far end of this lane, red lights are barely visible. They mark the end of the runway.

"Thirty-second warning," Stevens said.

Here we go. The engines are up in a full roar. With what appears to be lumbering slowness we start to move. Gradually the speed picks up. The red lights at the other end are something you don't care to watch, but they are there and they are coming closer and closer. The bombardier looks around quickly at the Air Commander.

Then we lift.

"Wow, John," Robie said, "you took that one low."

"We've got a load tonight, Robie," Stevens laughed. Then he turned to me. "No kidding, though, you *do* sweat these things off."

Sweat is a mild word for it.

There is no reason to relate this bombing flight over to Korea to you other than to attempt to describe in some limited way the day-to-day hazards that young men are going through for the ugly argument of war. Riding with the moon that night on the long haul over the mountains, and heading out over the sea on a trip long enough to carry you clean across the continental United States, there is not much a man cares to think or talk about. The dirty job lies ahead. You can see a faint premonition of it in the very hunch of the bombardier's shoulders. Cold and demoralizingly impersonal are the orders. The eleven men aboard the aircraft do not know what part of Korea they will bomb in the early hours of morning. That is information that will come over the radio. The flight will be guided in to the target, and there will be never a mention of towns where flesh and blood mingle. It will be the raw etiquette of war identifying itself with some such euphemism as Sugar Plum or Nancy Lou. Bearings will be transmitted. A target from then on is a problem of air-mile minutes and the proper vector.

When the bombardier pushed the button that night there was not even a lurch or a sound in the B-29 to indicate the

load had dropped. Three passes were made. Below, a red gleam was flickering viciously in the contours of a cloud.

The Air Commander turned sideways in the pilot's seat. He wanted to know what I was thinking. "Don't worry," he said, "those must be factories or bomb dumps we hit tonight." Stevens was trying to be kind. He did not know that I already knew what a Stinger was. It's close air support. Human flesh, whether it be of friends or enemies, finds its calvary in the sting that slips noiselessly through the bomb bay doors. There is a painful urge to look back on the fiery reflection and remember every unkind and evil thing you have ever done in your life; and a calvary prayer comes quickly: "Father, forgive us, for we know not what we do."

The moon still glides in the sky. Extinct volcanoes gleam with silver craters of snow as the plane picks her way home over the mountains of Japan. Weariness lines the faces of the crew as they near the base. They ride and will continue to ride on orders, executing commissioned wrath. War, even though it be insulated by the throbbing machinery of an aircraft, is still hell.

When the wheels touched down, I wanted very much to go to sleep and forget.

[FOURTEEN]

• The Chief

Sergeant Willy Rutherford, who claims all of New Jersey for his home town, saw the chickens walking about in a most disorderly fashion. As mess sergeant of Company E, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Division, it wounded his professional instincts to see so much poultry skittering about the countryside unattended.

"See those chickens, Fergie?" Rutherford passed the binoculars to Sergeant Ferguson. "There's a dozen of them at least, and sure as shootin' the Commies are going to liberate them."

"Aw, who cares about chickens?"

"Take a look at them. I'm pretty sure they're chickens."

Ferguson squinted through the binoculars. "That's away up in no man's land, Willy. They're chickens I'll admit, but I say to heck with them."

"Just a minute," Rutherford interrupted. "Our guys have been in the line ninety straight days. Ninety. They've been eating nothing but canned rations. It's about time they had a fricassee or something."

"Are you going away up *there* just for chickens?"

Willy Rutherford took another look through the binoculars. "Genuine Anju fryers, plump as butterballs. Fergie, we've got to do something."

"It's suicide."

"Are you game?"

"Okay."

Two GIs picked their way like foxes over the frozen November landscape. In less than an hour, ten squawking chickens were trussed and bundled in their arms. Then a series of rifle slugs began to sing over their heads.

"Duck, Fergie, they got us spotted."

"I told you this was suicide, Willy. Let's scam out of here."

"Wait. We came this far and nobody takes a chicken off me except over my dead body."

The two GIs and their ten chickens were pinned down for more than twenty minutes that November afternoon. When they finally made a dash with Willy in the lead, there was a moment of anguish.

"Did they hit you, Fergie?"

"No, it's only these lousy chickens. They're yelling blue murder."

Sgt. Willy Rutherford scurried about the mess tent that afternoon with a gleam in his eyes. "It's not much, but let's do it up right, fellows. I want to give the Chief a feed tonight."

A feed for the Chief!

The Chief, Cpl. Mitchell Red Cloud, was a full-blooded Indian. Willy and the Chief were friends from away back. They had come over on the ship together. This very evening, Willy might have been stationed with the Chief on Hill 123.

Willy Rutherford was, by rights, a rifleman. "But let me tell you something," Willy says, "after those first few raids here in Korea I let everybody know I was a good cook."

The Chief was a modest gent. He was quiet, serious, but sometimes full of the big talk about the way the war should end. "You want to know how I feel about this war? Okay, I'll tell you. It's like this. Let people share the land all over the world. Everywhere. That's the way to settle all these wars. I know. I know what my own people have suffered. If we had men in the different governments big enough to open up the land for anybody who wants to work it, we wouldn't have wars." The Chief's young face would always be serious when he spoke in this way. His dark eyes would blaze.

"Horses," says Willy Rutherford. "The Chief was crazy about horses and horse racing."

"I'll tell you about horses," the Chief once said. "They're the nicest animals on the whole earth. The nicest and the best. That includes dogs. A dog is smart and he knows how to follow you around. He's smart enough to bark when he wants to eat. But a horse is different. He's a quiet animal. He doesn't bark. He will carry you till his legs quit. A horse comes out of a barn when he's dying, and he still tries to pull a plow for you. I've seen them. There's nothing like a good horse."

The Chief was like that. He spoke quietly, but when he talked you felt the fellow had done a lot of thinking. That's the way Willy Rutherford explained the Chief.

"Open up those pineapple cans," Willy ordered. "We're making pineapple upside-down tonight."

"What is this? *Christmas?*"

"Pipe down and get moving." Rutherford waved a knife with all the verve of a Waldorf-Astoria chef. "Let's get on the ball, fellows. Up to now we've been just a stinking outfit with nothing but canned rations. Tonight we eat!"

Stinking outfit! In the easy sense of the word Willy Ruther-

ford was expressing the mood and thought of men who had been prosecuting a war with the tail ends of equipment and supplies. Willy was one small number in the 24th Regiment. He was attached to the first fighting unit that the United Nations and President Truman had committed to this Korean conflict.

Willy Rutherford bends over the chicken. He cleaves the bird at the knee joints. "For once in your life, guys, let's do it up right. Let's do it first class."

Far back in Willy's thinking is the unexpressed gripe about all the things that could have been done "first class"; but it was too late for that now. America had already made the mistake. Instead of three battalions, America had legislated only two to the glorious 24th. Each regiment had a heavy mortar company, but where were the tank companies? In the artillery sections, the 24th should have had eighteen guns. The 24th had only twelve. It was short six 155 howitzers. It was short eighteen 105 howitzers. It was short 7,000 men. "If 54,000 men, American fighting men, could have met the 70,000 that North Korea threw at us, we could have bottled up this stinking war in a month. We were short. We were tragically short. And did we bleed!" Captain Coombes speaks bitterly. He speaks on the memory of a courageous gentleman, Maj. Gen. William F. Dean, who brought into battle a division that was stripped in strength and organization. Who was to blame?

Ninety full days in the line and nothing but canned rations! That was the problem that Willy Rutherford was personally attending to this evening. "Giblet gravy goes with chicken, you guys. Here, let me show you how to do the job. You take these livers, hearts, and gizzards, see. You minch them like this if you want to make it a first-class job."

Willy Rutherford sat as proud as a prince on the seat of the jeep that rolled to Hill 123. Sergeant Ferrara was beside him.

Behind the jeep was a trailer, and in the trailer was Rutherford's version of a feed.

"Hello, Chief."

Red Cloud was smiling. "What have you got there?"

"I got a feed for you, Chief. Look!"

The Chief ate that night. The chicken was tender. The meal was first class. When the Chief finished, he pointed to some cigarettes that were lying in his gas mask. "See those cigarettes, Willy? Take them back with you."

"Why?"

"Give them to the fellows. I probably won't use them."

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

Willy stared at the Chief. "Maybe I'll stay up here with you tonight," Willy said. "Captain Conway doesn't want us to take any chances bringing back the jeep and trailer."

"That's Conway's word. Okay. Stay here. But when you do go back take those cigarettes with you. Also take this money." The chief threw some Army scrip to Willy.

"What am I supposed to do with this?"

"Keep it or give it to some guy."

"You're nuts, Chief."

"Okay. All I'm asking you to do is bring back my butts and my money."

"Okay, Chief. Don't get excited."

They have since written about the Chief. Something graphic captures the imagination of those who write about war and the men who act and die in it. The Chief, at six-thirty on the morning of November the 5th, jumped to his feet. He was the first to detect the approach of the enemy. He lifted his Browning, a heavy gun by any standards, and pointed it at the enemy who swarmed up Hill 123.

"They're coming in," the Chief screamed.

Then he sagged under the bullets that tore his flesh. The Chief was down. He was a dying man at six-thirty in the morning. Slowly he rose to his feet. He wrapped his arm around a tree. That is the picture we have of him—a dying Indian defiant in his last stand. Sergeant Malden, the platoon leader, saw the Chief weaving in the agony of death. The Chief wouldn't go down. One stout arm held the Browning. Devastating point-blank fire blazed from his gun. The Chief was gaining time for the company to consolidate its defense around the Command Post.

Then slowly, the Chief began to wilt. Inch by inch, still hugging the tree, he settled to earth.

The artist who could ever capture that picture would have to search long for paints that could catch the autumn blaze of America's forests, and the bronze-faced fury of a brave at bay. Cpl. Mitchell Red Cloud, American in every fiber of his young body, died with his arm locked about a tree.

I had a long talk with Willy Rutherford. He speaks with affection about the Chief. Awards and decorations are fine. They're the things the country gives you on paper. Sometimes you get them when you're alive. Sometimes you get them when you're dead. Whatever a grateful nation could give to the memory of the Chief is as nothing compared to what Willy gave him the night before he died. "I gave him a first-class feed," Willy says. "I gave him fried chicken, mashed potatoes, giblet gravy, buttered peas, coffee, and pineapple upside-down cake. That was the last thing he ever ate. I fed the Chief first class."

[F I F T E E N]

• Mona Lisa

Once upon a cold February day, several South Korean soldiers found a girl by the name of Chun Jea Lee wandering and crying along a road, approximately fifteen miles south of Sang Pong Nim. She was a very little girl. Her age was just about four. With something that sounded like a frightened whimper, she backed off into a thicket, holding her hands over her ears. These were the large strange men who made noise and fire. Where men like these passed, houses went down with a boom and something terrifying and lonesome as death was scattered everywhere. Chun Jea Lee stood there quivering and afraid, hoping the men would go away.

One of the ROK soldiers went into the thicket after her and lifted her in his arms. She shrieked in fright and tried to squirm away.

“What is your name, little one?”

The girl would not answer.

The soldiers walked three miles—six miles—with this small bundle of human misery. Her feet and hands showed the blue marks of weather blains. They began to sing. They asked her again, “What is your name, little one?”

Slowly, fear gave way to speech. She sniffed the answer, “Chun Jea Lee.”

Fifteen miles they carried Chun Jea Lee in their arms and when they finally reached Sang Pong Nim on the 8th of February, they contacted Maj. Louis N. Schaffer of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion. They told the Major about Chun Jea Lee, described her fright, requested that she be sent to some refugee camp farther south. She was, after all, “a many many little” refugee.

Major Schaffer looked at the tiny girl. Her hair was a dirty tangle. Yet beneath the crust that was smudged across her tear-stained face, he saw the features of a child who had once been beautiful. Something warm seemed to well up in the bare cold landscape of Korea.

“Hello, sis,” Major Schaffer said.

Chun Jea Lee stared at the Major with mistrusting eyes. The world was becoming a stranger and more mysterious circle of big men—men who spoke words she did not understand. “We’ll take care of her,” the Major said to the ROK soldiers.

And thereby begins the tale of Mona Lisa.

It was a long time since the Major had held in his arms anything as small and harmless as Chun Jea Lee. She turned her face away from him with that mixture of fright and mistrust which is called a child’s shyness. The face of a foreigner can send four-year-old Orientals into panic. But Chun Jea Lee, a half frozen kitten of a Korean, was too beaten to cry.

“Sis, we’re going to take care of you,” the Major repeated.

The men of Headquarters Battery poked their heads outside the tents as the Major walked by with Chun Jea Lee. Soldiers, sandbagging the area, paused open-mouthed. Schaffer reported to the Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Hurley W. Chase.

"I'd like to report a refugee, sir."

The officers who were present stared at the raggedy bundle the Major was holding. Chun Jea Lee's dark eyes flashed around the tent. She was still the kitten at bay.

"Yes, Major, what is it you wish?" Chase asked.

"Sir, I know it's against regulations to keep civilians on the post, but this girl is in tough shape."

"Yes, I see."

By this time the brass at Headquarters Battery had closed in on Chun Jea Lee. They stood in a circle surveying her. Chun Jea Lee stared back. In this first moment of liaison between men of war and a child, the problems of battle melted and quickly dissolved.

"It's a little girl!" one captain shouted.

"Well, what do you know!"

"Hi, honey."

Chun Jea Lee cringed under this talk and attention. She shrank under the touch of their reaching fingers. The little Korean was a captured thing.

"She'll need medical attention, Major."

"Yes, sir."

That was all Major Schaffer needed. Clearances! He hurried down to the battalion medical officer, Capt. Gus J. Furla.

"What've you got there, Major?" Gus asked.

"The sweetheart of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion, Gus. What can you do for her?"

They sat Chun Jea Lee on a table. The medical officer began to laugh. "She sure is a little peach, Major. Don't worry, we'll take care of her."

If you ride in a jeep along the roads of Korea in this time of war, you will find that the bond between battery and battery is mostly the cold convention of electric wire, the salute, the paint on vehicles and markers identifying the brotherhood of the battalion. Intimacy, socially speaking, is not on the TO&E. Yet by some wand of magic that a child waves over the rough exteriors of men, the 57th Field Artillery Battalion rubbed its eyes and woke up to find it had a baby. Grease-stained mechanics from Service Battery found numerous excuses to visit Chun Jea Lee. Cannoneers and enlisted men from Able, Baker, and Charley Batteries sat around tent stoves talking about her. By some unanimous consent, she was instantly named Mona Lisa. It was the song the soldiers sang. It was the appropriate name for this tiny replica of womanhood.

Capt. Gus Furla, down in the Medical Detachment tent, unlaced his boots. He was properly bogged out with the grind of work. The routine of medical charts and reports wears into a man's patience. But tonight, as he yawned, Gus was thinking about another routine:

- (1) Check special diet for Mona Lisa at Headquarters mess.
- (2) Consult regarding Mona Lisa's laundry.
- (3) Confirm daily warm water bath.

Furla smiled. The wasted face of a little girl was getting chubby again. She made a small bundle under the blankets down here in the Battalion aid station tent. There is a kind of peace that settles over a place where a child sleeps. Men tiptoed over the ground. "Shut up, you lug, Mona Lisa is sleeping," were the frequent warnings. The 57th Field Artillery Battalion was up at the front; but with Mona Lisa's small head on a pillow, a breath of home was breathing within the cold perimeter of war.

Very militarily precise it was, too—this care of Mona Lisa. It was scheduled on official memoranda:

- 0700: Mona Lisa awakened—face and hands washed—
dressed. (Pvt. Horton, Pvt. Walkup)
0745: Breakfast (Sgt. Martin D. Eishen, consult diet)
1200: Lunch (diet chart)
1300: Nap
1500: (Cpl. John D. Petrea take over)
1800: Supper (diet chart)
2000: Warm bath and bed

Cpl. John (Uncle) Roach was the lucky gent. After breakfast he had the privilege of sitting around the stove with Mona Lisa until it was warm enough to take her walking about the Battalion area. Everybody envied "Uncle" Roach.

And so this is the way it happened that a rare sparkle of content settled for a time on a fighting battalion in Korea. Miss Pin-up of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion was no higher than a tall sergeant's knee, but one smile from Mona Lisa could capture a platoon. The small lassie was now at home with anything that walked in fatigues.

"Let's do something special for Mona Lisa," Sgt. Paul Bledsoe said.

"She's got to have an outfit," Sgt. Norman Perry affirmed.

Said Lt. Homer Brown, "An outfit is not the right word. We have a lady here. What a lady needs is a wardrobe."

"Right. Let's chip in for a wardrobe," Sgts. Hays and Rector agreed. Someone looked at Mona Lisa's feet. "What size shoes does a four-year-old kid take?"

From the back of the tent a voice coughed. "She takes a 7."

"Seven! My own shoes are 8½."

"A woman's shoe is different," the voice insisted. "She takes a 7. I know women's shoes."

"But this isn't a woman's shoe. It's a kid's shoe."

"She takes a 3½. I lay you ten to one she takes no more than 3½."

"Right, absolutely right. I got a niece just the same age as Mona Lisa. She takes a 3½."

"Okay, you got a niece four years old. But you're talking about American feet. This is a Korean kid and these Koreans are smaller."

"So, what's the difference? It's better to get a bigger shoe than a smaller one."

"Wait a minute," said Lieutenant Brown. "Let's plan on the wardrobe first."

So wardrobe it was!

*Medical Detachment
57th Field Artillery Battalion
APO 7, c/o Postmaster,
San Francisco*

19 February 1951

*Sales Manager,
Sears, Roebuck & Co.,
Los Angeles, 54, California*

Dear Sir:

Please find enclosed an order for a wardrobe for a child 4 years old which totals \$64.18. This order is for a Korean refugee. We found this child along the road here in Korea and with the permission of the Commanding Officer of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion, we have undertaken to adopt this child. We earnestly hope that we may be able to find the parents of this child or some relatives and would be very happy to

give the child over fully clothed immediately. Up to this moment, we have been unable to find these persons so we have been taking care of the child. We have been feeding, keeping clean, giving shelter and clothing the child with whatever garments could be found in the camp. We have been giving medical care to the child because when she was found she was suffering from frost-bitten hands and feet and malnutrition. The child now is improving rapidly and is very happy in her new surroundings even if we are located in the front here in Korea. We have nicknamed the child Mona Lisa because so many of us are fond of the popular song by that name.

The condition of the clothing of this child was deplorable. It was therefore decided that a small voluntary fund be taken up among those who were interested in order to buy clothes which the child so badly needs. This is the reason why we are asking that this order be sent air mail. Would you please pack the clothes in a suitcase which we have ordered. Part of the order is not complete as we do not know the exact size for a four-year-old child. Inclosed you will find a diagram of the child's feet. Please send us this order as soon as possible.

*Very truly yours,
Homer A. Brown
1st Lt. MSC
Med. Asst.*

3 Incls.

- 1. Money order*
- 2. Order blank*
- 3. Diagram of feet*

Mona Lisa was chic! In a plaid wool skirt sent from across the seas, she was as fashion-smart as anything that ever stepped into a Jacques Fath creation. Mona Lisa, dimpling into smiles with the self-conscious *savoir faire* of a four-year-old woman,

had toppled considerable elements of one Field Artillery Battalion head-over-heels in love.

Naturally, they could not keep her forever. Official correspondence continued. The following memorandum was sent to Chaplains Carl S. Hudson, Robert Herndon, and Attilio Ponsiglione.

(1) Korean Refugee: Approximate age—4 years old
Name: Chun Jea Lee (Mona Lisa)

(2) It seems that all the members of the Battalion have fallen in love with Chun Jea Lee and have accepted her as their pin-up girl of 1951. She is Miss 57th Field Artillery Battalion.

(3) She lived in our Battalion aid station tent. Her daily activities have been closely checked and looked after by assigned personnel.

(4) The enlisted men and officers of the Battalion are proud of Mona Lisa, and a voluntary fund started by Sgt. Paul Bledsoe has spread throughout the Battalion.

Service Battery	\$255.55
Baker Battery	93.60
Able Battery	71.00
Headquarters Battery	67.80
Charley Battery	16.00
3 Enlisted Men	113.00

There was no time to contact all the men but the enclosed is what they have offered. It was the wish of the enlisted men and the officers of the Battalion that we should keep Mona Lisa with us as long as we remained in Korea. This would be impossible. We have a far greater wish now. We wish that we may be able to locate Chun Jea Lee's father and mother and that they may soon be together again. We

wish that they will forget the horrors of war and what they have gone through. We pray that there will never be another Korean in the same situation that we found Mona Lisa. We know there are thousands of hungry and cold children everywhere and we hope something can be done for all these innocents of war.

Mona Lisa was going away. They lifted her into a jeep. The contributions of five Batteries, the whole Battalion, were riding with her. Chaplain A. Ponsiglione, the little Padre from New Jersey, lifted Mona Lisa in his arms. There was a roaring send-off as the men of the Battalion waved the jeep out of the area. Out of the life of the 57th Field Artillery Battalion went a small and wonderful lady.

Searching for stories in this hacked and desolate land, I became interested in Mona Lisa. I traced her down to Bo Yook Won Orphanage. The address is 930 Nam Song Dong Street, Taegu, Korea. Reverend Dun Bong Kim, a thin, gracious Protestant director, is in charge of the orphanage. Father Coffee, a Maryknoll priest, drove me over to see Mona Lisa. Chickens were walking in the yard. Children shouted and played with toys that had seen better days.

I found her in the yard. She is a beautiful child. You would like to put her into a duffel bag and smuggle her back to Japan. When she saw me, she came up and tugged at my coat. It was GI issue. In the mind of this small girl there has been stamped a lesson of kindness that will always be synonymous with the drab khaki of army fatigues. It was not myself she was tugging at. It was fellows like Bob Bollin, Billy Horton, Floyd Miller, Tony Cellimino, Frankie Shroyer, Bob Le Croix, Travis, Johnson, Baxter, and all the men of an artillery battalion she was reaching out for.

Before I close this chapter on a little girl, I would like to tell you people back home about another sidelight. That morning when I walked into the orphanage, Mona Lisa was climbing a small tree. Above her head was a boy hardly bigger than herself. He was the boy whom many of you read about in *Life* magazine. Mike Rogier wrote an article about "The Boy Who Would Not Smile." Many of you will remember the wizened face that filled a page of *Life*. The response from America was astounding. On my desk are the names of several Americans who flooded *Life's* offices with clothing, toys, medicines, books, and candies. Through Mike I was able to forward much of the goods that were sent.

The boy who "would not smile" is smiling now. His legs and arms are firm. It shall be to the lasting credit of the GIs and American citizens at home that this youngster was literally put back upon his feet.

Mona Lisa is happy with her playmates. When you wave good-by to her, she looks just a bit wistful. Her eyes are on the jeep. Her memory, you are sure, goes skipping back to where she left a battalion of big men somewhere over the hills.

[SIXTEEN]

• Combat Cruise

You have an invitation to take a cruise with Fast Carrier Task Force 77. The ship you will board is the Essex class aircraft carrier, the USS *Princeton*. Never having been on a carrier, you are curious about this naval air arm. As you approach the pier, you notice the congestion of aircraft lashed to the *Princeton's* flight deck. Even in port there is the look of war-watchfulness about the ship. Her radar antenna, searching with an alert circling movement, seems suspicious of all angles on the compass. After you walk up the ramp and step onto the hangar deck, the size of the ship strikes you for the first time. A number of men are playing basketball; others, expertly dodging the wires that clamp Panther jets to the steel deck, are riding on small folding bicycles. Off to the side, about a dozen officers are watching with profound interest a toy airplane that oper-

ates on a rubber band. They sell for a hundred yen, you remember, on the streets of Yokoshuka.

On the hangar deck you meet the Commanding Officer of the *Princeton*, Capt. William O. Gallery, brother of the famous "Clear the Decks" Dan. Before the cruise is over you will get to know the Captain real well. It is difficult in these first few moments to believe you can ever get orientated in this floating and complex city of three thousand men. Sailors, hammering the kinks out of a huge steel curtain on the starboard side, add a clang to the confusion. You walk with Comdr. Ray McManus and Lt. Comdr. Danny O'Neill to what will be your quarters.

"Watch your step!" Danny warns. He points to what on land would ordinarily be a door. At sea, however, you don't pass through doors; you walk through hatches; and if you don't hoist your leg high enough over the coaming, you'll come away with a skinned shin. Before the cruise is over these coamings as well as the cantankerous lashing wires that hold down the planes will leave many a bruise on you.

On the following morning you are ready to cast off. A Navy band is playing some peppy marches from the pier. On hand also are a half dozen Japanese girls, dressed in gay kimonos, who perform a dance to the beating of a three-stringed *shamisen*. The notes are lost in "Operation Pinwheel" that follows. Jets with their tail pipes jutting over the side blow their exhaust and help to ease the carrier away from the pier. As you pull out of the bay, ships to port and starboard are blinking messages of good luck. Sweeping near one of them, you can hear a band playing. It is a salute to the "Flag," Rear Adm. Ralph A. Oftsie, the Task Force Commander.

Standing on the deep end of the bow is a lone seaman with a pair of binoculars. From time to time he inspects the water lane. Frightened, clumsy sea birds scurry madly out of the path of the ship. There is nothing now but sea and sky around you.

When you look again, some time later, four destroyers have appeared magically from nowhere. The "bones" in their teeth are high as they keep fast escort pace. The Flagship and her tenacious guardians are on their way down to the sea, and some time tomorrow you will arrive in the theater of operations.

It doesn't take long before you begin to recognize faces. One of the first men you meet is a young Corsair pilot by the name of Albert Tiffany. During mess your seat in the wardroom is next to Tiffany's. He's young, blue-eyed, and full of quiet fun. Andy Stirnweiss, brother of baseball's George, is another you recognize. Both Tiffany and Stirnweiss are in Danny O'Neill's Night Fighter Squadron. Already your interest begins to sharpen along squadron family lines. Instead of what first appeared to be a large collection of aviators gathered together in one lump on one ship, you soon learn that they break down into families of Corsair Fighter, Sky Raider Attack, Panther Fighter, and Jet Photo Squadrons. Then there is the Guppy family—the lads whose planes carry under their wings what looks like a huge tumor, but what is really a very expensive piece of equipment in antisubmarine warfare. There are also the helicopter boys who go by the apt code-call of "Angel." Not least among all these is the Paddles family, the Landing Signal Officers who continue to face bravely the guns of irate pilots who have been waved off for the third time. Attached to these families are several cousins related in aeronautical affinity along the lines of engineering, electronics, and ordnance, as well as metalsmiths, electricians, and the line crews. The Chief Petty Officers serve as uncle to these last. Taking them all together—the aviators and crews—they form a clan which on the present cruise is designated Carrier Air Group Nineteen. These, depending upon the way you look at them, are the elite of the ship. A Snipe from the engine room, how-

ever, has his own terminology: all those in the air department are, as far as he's concerned, a species of personnel best described as "Airedale." From where he sees it, a metalsmith is nothing but a Tin-bender. The elite on a carrier depends on whether you view the picture from above or below deck.

The *Princeton* steams through the night with hardly a tremor in her structure. You are now in the theater of operations off the Korean coast. If you stand on deck tonight you will be able barely to make out the grim formation of the task force. It has grown larger. Off in the distance, forming an oval flank around you, are the destroyers. Within the oval is a sister carrier, the *Philippine Sea*. Dead in the center, between you and the *Philippine Sea*, is the cruiser *Manchester*. You may have wondered why they have called it "Fast" Carrier Task Force. Tonight with the wind whipping over the bow and the water slithering away in a quick wash you know the answer. There is no idling here in the Japan Sea. Within short bombing and torpedoing distance of Russia's planes and submarines, the pace is set to the fast maneuvering of a team. The Force is a flying wedge skirting the side lines of Asia, weaving, twisting, doubling back, synchronized in every revolution of the screw and in every degree of the bearing. The water, rising in black swells, is heavy with the mystery of night. Aloft on the superstructure, the incessant vigilance of electronics speaks to you in the circling, ever circling of the radar grids. These are the eyes that will watch tonight while you sleep.

Inside the ship where men gather in the wardroom tonight, all thoughts of war seem to slip from your mind. A movie, then hot coffee and a bull session are distractions that push aside the real business at hand. There is a trayful of oranges. You may have one if you wish. You may walk to the gleaming white dispenser and drop a nickel into it for a coke, cherry, or orange drink. Forward of the wardroom is the library where you may

either read or test your knowledge on a machine that spins for you the Navy's version of twenty questions. It is bright and pleasant here in the wardroom, and you would be prompted to forget the time and circumstance if it were not for the sheet of paper tacked to the board. You see it as you are about to go to bed.

"Predawn heckler flight."

The chart lists the armament loads and times of launching. There are other flights scheduled tomorrow. You take another look back at the men. Their elbows are on the table. They're smoking and laughing. They seem totally unconscious of the chart and the portent it may possibly contain. One man who sits here tonight will be down in the water tomorrow afternoon.

So you climb the ladder (stairs are *verboden*, Danny O'Neill says) and in a short time you are between sheets.

Ray McManus, your roommate, says, "Good night." Ray is a generous Commander. He'd give you the shirt off his back. He did. You wore it today.

"Good night, Ray."

Ray is off to dreams in no seconds flat; but because you are now in that well-defined area which they call "theater" you lie awake for some time hearing the hum of the ship and trying to make yourself realize that the comfortable mattress you lie on is actually posted on the sliding keel of war.

Then comes sleep.

Then comes wham-whoosh-whang! The noise lifts you straight up in bed. You do not know whether you have hit a mine or whether Russia has finally thrown her first atom bomb. Possibly one of the magazines in the *Princeton* has exploded.

"Hey, Ray, did you hear that?"

"Oh, that. I forgot to tell you, we're located right under the catapult slot. The first heckler just went off."

It is four-forty-five in the morning.

"You'll hear another one soon. You'll get used to them," Ray says. He is off to sleep immediately. Getting used to sleeping through a catapult shot over your head is like getting used to ten elephants, tusks attached, making a concerted charge against your bedroom door. You lie back slowly waiting to become unkinked. This time you brace yourself for the elephants. They sound a little different when you're awake. Roomph! You jump into your clothes quickly, slip out of the room, and climb ladders. You want to see this operation. Maybe you'll be in time to watch Tiffany, or Danny, or Andy Stirnweiss go off. When you reach the flight deck you are already too late. There is nothing but inky blackness surrounding the ship. You shiver for a moment in the stiff breeze as the carrier heels around out of the wind. Slowly you descend the ladder. You're back in your room sitting on the bed. It is comfortable and warm here. Yet you shiver again, remembering that somewhere out in that darkness the All Weather boys are winging their way over the waves.

After breakfast that same morning, you meet CAG. CAG sounds as if it should be an organization but he isn't. He's Commander of the Air Group, Richard C. Merrick, and he's a tall gentleman with gray-green eyes and a low senatorial voice. Dick Merrick shoves his coffee cup aside, tamps his tobacco thoughtfully into the bowl of his pipe, and leans back in the chair. "Do we lose pilots on every cruise? Sure we lose them," Dick answers.

"But it's possible, isn't it, that we might finish this particular cruise without losing anybody?"

Merrick puffs on his pipe slowly. His eyes circle the ward-room twinkling with amusement. "It's possible." Another puff on the pipe. A slow nod. Dick is very much CAG—the old man at forty. "But maybe you don't realize this about flying off carriers. At the rate we've been going here on the *Princeton*, and there's no indication that there's going to be any

slack-off, we stand to lose upwards of 15 per cent of the entire Air Group. Those are high casualties by any standards of combat.”

You sit there trying to subtract 15 per cent from 128 aviators, and while you were never any good at mathematics, you know that the answer is tragically high.

Dick is smiling again as he looks about the wardroom. “But it doesn’t do you any good to keep thinking about percentages. There’s another way of looking at it. Bert Simmons here can tell you about it.”

Lt. Bert Simmons can really tell you about it, too. For personal and proud reasons, this is one of Bert’s and Dick Merrick’s favorite stories. It’s all about a fellow by the name of George Logan Chapman. Merrick smokes his pipe while Bert leans over the table. The big Lieutenant tells the story:

“Chappie Chapman some of the boys called him. Those who really knew him called him Loge. He was a Sergeant in the Marines—young, handsome, and smart as a whip. He joined the Marines when he was seventeen and there wasn’t a thing he didn’t know about guns. He spent time in China, and I used to read some of the letters he’d send back to his folks. You know how a young kid is—full of surprise and wonder at the things he’d seen in China—bronze lions and Buddhas made of solid gold with pearls between their eyes as big as your finger.

“But George Chapman was a serious fellow. For his age, he had seen a lot and thought a lot. He had a policy on China that most of our statesmen didn’t understand. Strictly Marine, Loge was. It was either put up or shut up, and that’s the way he wrote about China to his folks. Either we should get after the Communists right up to the hilt or we should get out of China. That was Chapman’s solution away back in 1946.

“Well, Korea came and Loge was among the first Marines to land in that Provisional Brigade. But before he went into action, he wrote his folks a letter. He called his mother Shortie.

Her name is Catherine and she's a grand woman. I know the old man, too. Used to have plenty of swell times out at a ranch together. But that letter . . . wait, I'll get it for you."

This is the letter:

Dear Shortie and Pop,

We have been moving at a trot ever since I left Port Chicago. It is after taps now but this will be my last chance to get a letter off for awhile.

No use trying to minimize the situation in Korea. It doesn't look good, but look at it this way. People work at their trades every day. My trade is arms. That is what I've spent the last five years of my life preparing for. What's the difference? Now or later—either way, I am not worried and I wish you wouldn't.

This is a good outfit, Pop. There are a lot of older men in it who really know their stuff. If we have enough air support and ground support we can sure take care of the infantry. There's no outfit in the world, yes in the whole world, that can shoot with us. I'm assistant platoon Sergeant of the Third Rifle Platoon, First Provisional Marine Brigade.

No matter what happens, Shortie and Pop, remember this. This is the life I love. This is my outfit. This is what I have chosen for my occupation. I am proud to be a Marine and I would not change places with any man alive. I say this is the best bunch of fighting men that ever walked God's green earth.

Well, I'll close for now, and will write again as soon as I can. Give my love to all and say "See you soon" for me.

*Love and kisses,
Loge*

Bert Simmons sips his coffee. You know now the contents of a letter that one Marine sent home to his folks in San Lorenzo, California.

"It's the way Chapman put those words that hit every man on the ship. They all read his letter. And they all knew how Loge met his death. He was trying to save a buddy when a bullet caught him over the left eye." Bert Simmons looked over at Merrick. "He was only twenty-two years old, Loge was. He died on August the 8th, 1950."

Merrick is still puffing his pipe. "I never knew Chapman. But I felt I knew him. I wrote to his folks and told them what his letter meant to the Air Group. One of the first missions we ever flew off this carrier was up to the Chosen Reservoir when the Marines were cut off. Those strikes were dedicated to the memory of George Chapman." Commander Merrick smiles but there is a tightening in his jaw when he speaks. "No, you don't stop to think about percentages. That kid didn't. There are a lot of people back in America who won't understand that." Merrick pointed the stem of his pipe around the wardroom. "But these guys do, and I think I do, too. Chapman had everything, and the kid put it on paper for us."

There is a tone in Merrick's speech that you will not forget. You will remember it all too easily one day.

The combat cruise is still only a few hours old. Captain Gallery invites you up to Primary Flight to watch a launching. Through the glass panels you can observe for the first time the activity that is part of flattop operations.

"Pilots, man your planes." Commander Charley Iarrabino's voice on the bull horn carries over the flight deck.

The far end of the deck is smothered with Corsairs and Sky Raiders. Their folded wings are heavy with rockets and bombs. Forward, Panther Jets sitting at a slant to port and starboard are ready to roll into the catapult slots. A fire fighter, dressed in asbestos, ambles across the deck in things that look like a clown's shoes.

"Prop pilots, start engines," the bull horn barks.

When you witness this first launching at sea, you are sure you will never forget it. It is unlike any newsreel you have ever seen. The deck crew leaps to life. Plane captains, the kids who take personal pride in their ships, make rotating signals to their pilots. Primers and starters are pushed. Propellers begin to turn slowly. Engines cough, then catch. Mixture controls are thrown forward, and the deck gathers the roar of propellers spinning at 1,200 turns per minute. This is the warm-up. Plane handlers with their pants whipping against their legs in the backwash of the propellers hug the planes. One misstep and they can be blown back into the blades of the planes behind them. Then the roar mounts gradually to a crescendo as propellers are pushed up to 2,200 revolutions. The carrier is listing into the wind. Portside, the *Philippine Sea* is taking the same list. Captain Gallery turns to the wall and reads the dial indicating knot speed. The bomb loads are written in grease pencil on the glass panels. Wind speed is computed. "Twenty-five knots will do it, Charley," Gallery says to Iarrabino. The Panther Jets are now adding a weird whistle to this pandemonium. Small doors are flapping on their fuselages. For a second you are sure someone forgot to latch them. "Are those doors supposed to flap like that?" you ask Captain Gallery.

"Right. The jets are only idling. When they get ram air, they'll stop."

And now the *Princeton* is running at 25 knots. The helicopter is up and pacing the ship to starboard. Two of the jets are set over the catapult tracks.

"Watch this," Captain Gallery says.

"What?"

"Behind the jets."

Suddenly, two panels rise out of the deck. They are slatted, metal frames that screen the tail pipes of the jets.

"One of our *Princeton* innovations," Gallery says proudly. "Those are blast deflectors. The hot air of those jets was burning the tar off the deck."

"White flag, launch planes," Iarrabino announces.

What before was pandemonium is difficult now to describe. A catapult officer standing between the jets is whirling his arm in a rapid circle. The starboard jet pilot is looking at him. The ram air of the Panther shrieks through the deflector. You can feel the heat waves and smell the fumes. The sound builds and builds. Then the pilot nods. The catapult officer completes a few more circles and then drives his hand downward. For a split second, the jet seems to be pulled flat to the deck. In that fraction of a second she stands still; in the next fraction she is off instantaneously at 90 miles per hour, slung straight down the slot. Even while you watch the jet swing out and upward, the catapult officer is giving the turn-up signal to the port jet pilot. The jets are fed rapidly into the slot. No sooner are they catapulted than the Corsairs come rumbling up the deck. One by one they hurtle past Primary Flight. As they pass you look down at the pilots. Their white helmets are rigid. They seem to have lost all identity and personality in this posture. As the last of the Corsairs wheel up and off, the heavier Sky Raiders come charging past Primary Flight. Set far back, they need all the deck they can get to become airborne. The sky is now filled with orbiting aircraft as the pilots team up in flights. Then they streak shoreward to make rendezvous with such names as Hush Puppy, Ancient Age, and Peanut Brittle.

Captain Gallery, who follows every plane up the deck with an anxious eye, relaxes when the launching is done. "How about a cup of coffee?" he suggests.

You sit with the Skipper in his cabin and you notice blue circles of fatigue under his eyes. It's true what the pilots tell you. The Old Man sweats every pilot off the deck, and he

sweats them back on. He's a shy man of few words but his vocabulary is extensive and warm when faulty radio communications start gumming up operations.

A few hours later, down in the wardroom, the news is flashed. Tiffany, Andy Stirnweiss, and Danny O'Neill are batting the breeze when the word comes.

"One man's down in the water," is the announcement.

"Who?"

"Ruppenthal. Oil pressure failure out of Korea. He ditched his plane."

This is the first of what Dick Merrick called percentages. The conversation lags in the wardroom as you watch men calculating. You are not too sure of their thoughts. They are reticent about such matters. But there are calculations going on behind their eyes and you suspect they are measuring the chances of a pilot in freezing water.

Another report. "Rupp's down near an island. His wing man spotted him swimming towards the island. He didn't use his life raft. Must be a friendly island."

Good! That's different. Rupp will be all right.

"Rupp waved when Rasko flew over him so he must be okay."

The chatter comes back into the wardroom. Tiffany laughs softly. "I can see old Rupp walking out of the waves up the beach. With that moustache he's wearing, the natives will think he's Neptune." All of them laugh with Tiff.

Later another report. "A helicopter just reported spotting Ruppenthal. He was found floating face downward."

Silence again in the wardroom. Tiffany peels an orange and looks across at O'Neill. "What do you think it was, Danny?"

"Probably exhaustion. Probably the temperature of the water."

"He was a good swimmer, Danny."

"Yeah, but there are currents in this Sea of Japan."

The cruise is only a few hours old and the gray-green eyes of CAG come back to you. His drawling voice comes back also. "Sure, we lose pilots on every cruise."

That night, five or six pilots gather in O'Neill's room. Big Ace Parker is stretched out on his upper bunk reading letters. Tiffany walks into the room with Bob Mack. Both of them are juggling a dozen Dixie cups filled with Coca Cola.

Tonight they will speak about everything and anything but Ruppenthal. This is something that you will learn as the cruise continues: a lost pilot is discussed only for a short time after the news breaks; after that there is very little said about him. This is not to say he is forgotten. It is rather the tacit understanding that exists between men who face constant danger. Dick Merrick's words echo again in your thinking. "It doesn't do you any good to keep thinking about percentages."

You sit on Danny's bed and listen to the talk. Andy Stirnweiss, another pipe smoker, is speaking. "Ever since O'Neill sold an article to one of these aviation magazines, the whole ship wants to go literary. It's getting so bad that even Tiff and Bob Mack are carrying unfinished manuscripts on their heckler missions."

Bob Mack, who employs a Brooklyn accent at will, jibes, "G'wan, Stoinweiss, you're a bum and your brudder George was a bum."

"So he's a bum, huh? Who was the American League batting champion in 1945?"

"Ancient history this guy brings up. It happens that everybody in the American League is blind in 1945 and your brudder wins; so what, Stoinweiss?" Mack snorts.

"You're right, Mack. It was the lousiest record in forty-five years but George made five hundred bucks out of it and that's more than you're going to get with your True Confessions."

"Listen, Andy, if that stupid ass O'Neill can sell stuff, I'm practically in line for a Pulitzer prize."

Ace Parker sounds off from the upper bunk. "Ever hear this one, fellows? Question: Are you a college man? Answer: No. A horse stepped on my hat." The Ace has a fit of laughing.

"That's the trouble with you guys," Danny O'Neill observes. "You hop from one thing to another. Now if you're really serious about writing . . ."

Don Shelton adds a word. "Look at Tiff. First he's going to be a musician. Then he's going to go in for boat building. Now he's going to be an author."

Tiffany, who has a trumpet, a playback, and a stack of Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Ventura records, leans back against the wall. Tiff is amused. There are very few who know that he once had a tryout with Horace Heidt. "I'm going to be a musician, a boat builder, *and* an author," Tiff asserts. "You know *me*. Versatile!"

"Tiff, you'd be a good trumpet player if you didn't get ahead of yourself," Bob Mack counsels solemnly. "When you follow those records with your horn, occasionally you're *on* key."

Danny O'Neill jumps to his feet. "Mack, you don't know a thing about music. Those are riffs and breaks, you dummy." Danny starts to wiggle a hula-hula. "You wouldn't know about those things, Mack."

"Shelton and I are strictly Tchaikovsky."

Ace Parker sounds off again. "Hey, you guys, listen to this. There's only one way to bring this international crisis to a head. That's for Joe Stalin to write a review in *Pravda* criticizing Margaret Truman's singing. That'll bring action." The Ace shrieks with laughter.

"I've got an angle on a story, Danny . . ." Mack begins.

"I'm hungry," Stirnweiss interrupts. "Let's raid Kasten's kitchen. He's got Kobey's french fried onions, Franco-American macaroni, and licorice nibs."

"Laznabat is always good for some salami."

The Ace from the upper bunk: "There was a man who called a spade a spade until he stepped on one." The Ace howls with glee.

"Say, Parker, where're you getting all those bright tidbits up there?"

"My wife, Jeanne, sends them to me. Listen to this. Pass legislation to buy a muzzle for Truman before he bites himself."

"I like Truman."

"I like salami. Where's Laznabat?"

Tiff walks over to you. "How about another coke?"

"No, thanks, Tiff."

"Might as well," Tiff says to you. He walks all the way down to the wardroom and all the way back. Juggling coke over the coaming is a job. Tiff is a thoughtful, quiet fellow.

So you go to bed that night remembering the easy banter of men. At four o'clock the next morning, the catapult shoots a flight of Corsairs off the deck. At about six-thirty there is a knock on the door. It's Danny O'Neill. His voice is soft, solemn. "I just wanted to let you know Tiff is gone."

"What?"

"Yeah. Andy Stirnweiss saw it. Andy was his wing man. Tiff blew up and crashed on a close run."

"All right, Danny."

"Remember Tiff in your prayers," Danny says. Then he walks away.

You go to the sink and wash. You tell yourself that the man who sat next to you at mess, the pleasant, quiet fellow who just a few hours ago volunteered to get you a coke is now dead. The cruise is still only a few hours old. You knew Tiffany only for those few hours. Yet there's a sting that comes into your nose, and you are crying while you wash your face in the morning.

This scene, which is not an unusual one on a carrier, takes place a few hours later. These were Tiff's quarters. It's cabin 104 on the portside. Bob Mack stands over the desk collecting his roommate's belongings—letters, records, and clippings. "Tiff received the Air Medal for his work during the invasion of southern France," Mack says in a flat voice. "That was in 1944." Mack arranges the laundry in a neat stack. A box containing plastic chips is signed with a Christmas wish: "May the next one be enjoyed under much happier circumstances." The name attached reads "Sergun." There's a telegram that reads: "Roz and baby doing fine." Bob Mack lifts a newspaper clipping out of the stack and hands it to you. It's a special to the *Buffalo Evening Times*: "RED TRUCK CONVOY HEAVILY DAMAGED BY BUFFALO PILOT." "Danny was in on that raid with Tiff," Mack tells you. A toy motorboat that Tiff had bought in Japan and intended to take home rests on the dresser. Tiff's cap is draped over the prow. A *Saturday Evening Post* with a cover depicting George Washington crossing the Delaware lies on the bed. "Look at this," Mack says. It is a New Testament on the other side of Tiff's pillow. It is opened to page 50. The first words you read are: "And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind . . ." Then Bob points to the last recording Tiff ever played. It was still lying on the turntable. "That was Tiff's favorite record . . . 'Harbor Lights.'"

The days that follow are filled with the same close-packed schedule of air and ship operations. The job of replenishing and refueling at sea does not put a crimp in the pace of the Fast Task Force. Churning through the water, the carrier pulls alongside the supply ship. Lead slugs with strings attached are shot over the side. Ropes and pulleys go into play and before long, giant rubber hoses are feeding gas. Later, bombs will come

riding over in huge slings. Some idea of the tremendous war freight that is handled can be gained when you realize that the *Princeton*, during her cruise in the Far East, will drop more than 6,000 tons of bombs and 2,998 napalm tanks. More than 2,199,000 gallons of gas and 23,400 gallons of oil will be used.

You are getting more familiar with the men and the layout of the ship. In one of the ready rooms, the jet pilots insist that you get into flying gear so that you can appreciate what it feels like to be bottled up. Four of them are more than eager to strip the clothes off you, which they do. "This is from the skin out, and all according to regulations," one of them explains. When you are finally rigged out in the flying suit, safety vest, and parachute, they drape a one-inch wide elastic bandolier of ammunition over your shoulders, clamp a .38-caliber revolver in a holster under your armpit, snap a hunting knife to your side, and ram a crash helmet on your head. Then they tell you to sit down. You sit and somebody behind you who has the embrace of a bear circles your chest with his arms and squeezes you against the seat. "That's the way your safety belt feels on a take-off. Can you breathe?"

"Just about."

"Okay, you qualify."

Captain Gallery invites you to Primary Flight to call in the planes. You feel pretty important when you hear your voice go booming out on the bull horn: "White flag, land planes." The special barriers are up for the jets. A Panther comes streaking in with its tail hook pulling the arresting cable up the deck. Because the timing is pared down to seconds, there is a mad scramble to disengage the hook from the cable. Already the next Panther is getting set to land and you wonder if the first jet will be able to get out of the way. The barriers, flattened out to allow the plane to roll forward, no sooner snap back into

position when the wheels of the second jet are already scorching the deck. Then follow the Corsairs and Sky Raiders. One of the Sky Raiders has a hung rocket, Iarrabino informs Gallery. That will be the last ship to land. As the plane circles, you can see the rocket hanging in the rack. The Sky Raider comes drifting in, hits cleanly, and the rocket comes slithering up the deck with chips of metal flying from its tail fins. "Could that thing explode?" you ask Captain Gallery. "It could if it had enough time to arm itself. What are you waiting for?" It is then you realize that you were supposed to complete operations on the bull horn. The rocket had thrown you for a momentary loss. "Red flag, last plane landed. Prepare to land helicopter aft number two." Captain Gallery is smiling. "After this cruise, you ought to be able to get a commission," he says. "How about some coffee?"

Apart from all the smooth and rigidly timed operations of a carrier, there are the human elements that act and react on the tone of a word or the phrase of a letter. The young seaman stands in Ray McManus' room with a newspaper clipping in his hand. "It's the first I knew about it," he says, handing Ray the clipping. It is an account of divorce proceedings initiated by the wife. Letters and cablegrams reporting sickness, death, desertion, and hardship leave their mark. The grease-stained fingers tremble as they fold and pocket their individual share of sorrow. The daily sea routine will start at 0445. They will call the mess cooks, stewardsmen, police petty officers, boatswain's mate of the watch, and the bugler; but the reveille for many a man is another awakening to worries about the folks back home.

Sometimes his worries don't go that far. "It's my buddy I'm worried about. I had a fight with him," Philip (Frenchie) Lavoie says. Lavoie is a thickset, sturdy Damage Control man. "He's a fireman, my buddy is. When we first left Sasebo everybody is

on edge, see? Everybody's joking against the other. You see, everybody wants to find a sort of a niche. But this buddy of mine, he starts to bazz off. He was getting a little too smart for his own good. He was always wrestling and joking around. He beat the living daylights out of some guy in Pearl Harbor and from then on he thinks he's Joe Louis or somebody. He was becoming a real blowhard, a big wheel, and I don't like that. I never did have any intentions of getting into a fight with him. It seems funny to get into a fight and not think you're going to get into one, and all of a sudden it's a fight. I did some fighting when I was a kid. I never picked on a smaller kid though. But at the same time I don't want my buddy mouthing off to me. He gets nasty and makes remarks and so I let him have one. Both his eyes are puffed out like a panda bear."

Lavoie squirms as he continues. "He's down in sick bay. I offered my blood for a transfusion. I like my buddy. Right after the fight we both had our pictures taken together on the fantail. He put his arm around me and I put my arm around him. I like him and I hope to God he's all right down in sick bay. I know one thing, I'll jump off the fantail before I get into another fight. I'll never hit another man. Did you ever feel that way? When I see blood on another man I can't hit him any more."

Frenchie Lavoie leans over in the chair resting his elbows on his knees. The flexing of his fingers sends muscles rippling through his powerful arms. "You get down in the dumps once in a while on a ship. We're crammed together. Same old faces all the time. Some of these Southerners and Texans, you know how they brag. Whatever some other state's got, Texas always got more of. Some fellow is bragging about a woman he picked up and another guy is telling what a scrounge he is. Another thing, down in our compartment, we don't have a radio. About nineteen guys are jammed together in one room.

Still I suppose it's no excuse to fly off and lose your temper. I'm in Damage Control. That's an engineering gang—metal-smiths, pipe fitters, carpenters, firemen, and so forth. We got to shore bulkheads, and see that the hatches are watertight. We fight fires and take care of all emergencies. If anything happens we're the last ones off the ship. That's Damage Control." Lavoie begins to smile. "Funny thing, here I am trying to control damage and I got all I can do to control myself. Anyway, I like my buddy and I'd give every drop of blood I own to help him."

And so the *Princeton* plows the sea with its complement of troubles and worry above and below deck.

"Come one! Come all! Colossal bargains! Going at a sacrifice!"

Thus did Lt. Frank Metzner advertise a ship-store sale over the public address system. "This commercial's got everything in radio beat a mile," Metzner affirms. "It's one program you *can't* shut off. You can't even dodge it by going to the head. Those loud-speakers are everywhere—*everywhere!*"

Frank O'Malley, the bulky florid Irishman who directs Damage Control throughout the ship, is not quite the bull in a china shop that appearances might suggest. For a man who dabbles in foam generators and steel wedges, he moves with surprising ease among the dainty bargains. Behind him a group of open-mouthed officers, petty officers, and assorted personnel listen in awe as O'Malley pronounces on the merchandise. Cream linen punch work, organdy, Venetian lace, ecru needlepoint, and crash linen are expounded upon, recommended, or condemned in O'Malley's booming voice. Where O'Malley moves the crowd moves. "Now this organdy appliqué," says O'Malley holding it up, "it's okay, but I don't like these pastels." No sale on organdy appliqué. "Now here's something nice, this cream linen Chefoo embroidery." Eager eyes seek out what

O'Malley approves. Off in the corner, what appears to be a moldy stack of linen tablecloths catches O'Malley's eye. "What's this we got here?" he asks lifting up the goods, almost smelling it. The crowd gathers around him as he examines the stuff. Like a man who has suddenly stumbled upon a world-shaking discovery, O'Malley announces: "Think of it! Only fifty-four bucks. Why you couldn't touch this stuff in New York for less than a hundred and fifty. One of the finest pieces of linen I ever laid eyes on." This bundle of material, which looks as if it had been left toasting too long under the sun, is immediately gobbled up by everyone who listens to the seer. At least twenty sets are sold as O'Malley moves on to inspect the rose quartz, agate censer burners, and Soochow white jade.

Ed Legati, a little man with a dubious eye, picks up a lump of stone. He frowns as he tries to figure out just what kind of gadget it is. The price is \$62.00.

"Hey, O'Malley, look at this crazy thing, will you? They want sixty-two dollars for it."

O'Malley lifts the object in his hand and scrutinizes it with all the deliberation of a connoisseur. "It's tigereye, Ed."

"That could be elephant eye for all I care. It doesn't make sense to me. Sixty-two bucks! That's murder."

"Ed, this is *genuine* tigereye. The real thing," O'Malley emphasizes.

Ed Lagati is still dubious. "What the devil would I do with a thing like that?"

"As nice a piece of tigereye as I've ever laid eyes on," O'Malley declares.

"You know what you can do with stuff, O'Malley; I wouldn't waste my money on things like that," Legati says as he walks away. Five minutes later, Legati purchases this rock.

"For sixty-two bucks, Ed, you've got yourself a real bargain," O'Malley says.

"Yeah," Legati answers. "Genuine tigereye, huh?" Ed still frowns suspiciously at this lump of stone that O'Malley has recommended.

When you get back to your room you sit in a chair and start laughing. You realize you have witnessed a scene that for sheer and spontaneous comedy was better than most of the situations that come out of Hollywood. In your hands is an agate cigarette case. "It's a bargain," O'Malley said, and for reasons above and beyond discretion you found yourself buying it. Whether or not O'Malley will continue to stay in Damage Control after the cruise is a decision he himself will make; but if Macy's or Gimbel's want to up their sales a hundred per cent, all they need do is give O'Malley the floor for one afternoon.

Topside, launching and retrieving still dominate the mood of the ship. It is for these pilots who walk to their planes and for them alone that the *Princeton* and her crew operate. The very design of the ship, her broad apron, the 160,000 horsepower of her steam turbines (which is 50,000 more horsepower than the greatest luxury liners employ), the 600 pounds pressure she can build to the square inch, all this pulsing energy, and the sweat of the Black Gang, are the shoulders under the wings that take to the sky. When Mo Mosher or Ed McDonald start barking, when the burser barrels are feeding oil cones to the sprayer plates and the smoke is a good brown haze in the stack, when the claxon rings and 24,000 boiler tubes seethe with the flame of black fuel, when the engine room hums and the handrails get hot under your fingers, you know that the carrier is making her sprint into the wind.

Flight Orders!

Commander O'Neill and his composite squadron are going on a tunnel buster. Danny and the Skipper have talked it over for a long time. As a matter of fact, it was Gallery and himself

who cooked up the idea. Plain night heckling was getting tiresome for the Monterey clam digger.

"What exactly is a composite squadron supposed to do?" you ask Danny.

"My composite squadron?" Danny hesitates. "Well, I'll give you the schedule." His voice is serious as he begins to count operations off on his fingers. "On Monday we drop frags on orphans only. Tuesday, pregnant women. Wednesday, we napalm catechism classes. Thursday, we drop delayed-action bombs on interned bishops and clergymen. Friday we rocket the Children of Mary societies, and on Saturday, we strafe confessional lines." Danny grins impishly at you as he pulls on his helmet. "Wish me luck," he says as he scrambles out of the ready room.

Danny's Corsair, freighted with delayed-fused bombs, sits on the catapult track. Because you know him about as well as it is possible to know another man, you are aware of what is going through his mind at this moment. Far below him, the pressure is up to 3,500 pounds per square inch in the catapult accumulator. In a few seconds, at a signal from the deck-edge operator, Al Lynch will pull the firing handle; the hydraulic oil will thump the piston and drive the ram against the buffers. The crosshead shivs will initiate the ten-to-one ratio on a towing cable that can toss 18,000 pounds of dead-weight timber 100 yards into the sea.

Danny's heart is beating nervously. He told you it always did that before a catapult shot. Looking at his instrument panel, he feels slightly relaxed when he sees the manifold pressure gauge go up to 63 inches. He has full engine power. His tension increases again as he is about to nod to the catapult officer. This is the moment he dreads most of all. If the catapult fails, and it has already failed on this cruise, anything can happen. Then Danny gives the nod. He braces his legs against the rudder

pedals, tightens his hold on the static throttle grip, and presses his head back against the leather headrest. Then he begins to say the words that he always says in these fleeting seconds before the shot comes.

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the . . .”

The words are jerked in his throat as the catapult takes hold. He fights the pressure that clamps him against the seat. Then suddenly he is relaxed and airborne. His wheels and flaps are up. He completes his prayer, and as he climbs now, you know he is once again ashamed of the momentary chill that can grip a pilot. This he has told you. You know Danny very well.

Danny was worrying about the launching that day. What he really had to worry about was to be the retrieving. Flying under a 500-foot ceiling in Korea, O'Neill skip-rolled a 250 pounder into a tunnel. As he turned to observe the explosion, something like a fist hit him in the face. His canopy was shattered. A film of blood was running into his eyes. Danny tried to clear his vision, but embedded glass and steel splinters had left his face one open wound.

“Get hiking,” advised his wing man over the radio. “I’ll talk you back to the ship.”

Back in Primary Flight Captain Gallery’s face is grave. “What are the reports, Charley?”

“Danny can’t see. Lacerations and blood clots around the eyes.”

Captain Gallery turns and scans the horizon. He has begun to sweat-in one of his crippled pilots. The minutes drag by and you feel a mounting fear gathering inside you. It is reflected in and increased by the tension in Primary Flight. If there is one faculty a pilot needs for a carrier landing, it is perfect vision. The arms and paddles of the Landing Signal Officer are the wings of a pilot’s ship. You ask yourself, how does a blinded pilot bring his plane down on a carrier?

Danny's Corsair roars over your head. His wing man is talking him into the approach pattern. For about a mile and a half the two planes speed ahead of the *Princeton*; then their wings tilt and they come back down the portside. The deck edge is lined with the anxious faces of the gassing and arming crews. Fire fighters are nervous as they watch the plane come closer. Pilots are up in Vulture's Row but they are not joking now. There is silence in Flight Control. Away down the deck you notice for the first time that the screen which blocks the wind from the Landing Signal Officer is down. He is visible from Primary Flight. You notice also that alongside you in Primary Flight is another Landing Signal Officer. He has his eyes glued on the paddles down the deck. Then he begins to talk into a microphone. Every move that those paddles makes, he relays to the blinded pilot—the slant of the wing, the angle of approach, the altitude. This is teamwork as you have never seen it before. Danny's wings are paddles on the flight deck; his eyes are the eyes of a Landing Signal Officer in Primary Flight. Slowly he circles in behind the carrier. Captain Gallery jumps suddenly from his chair and hurries out of the room.

"Steady to the left . . . to the left . . . drop slow . . . slow . . . hold it . . . hold it." The breath of a hundred men seems suspended now.

The paddles flash down. "Cut."

Two puffs of friction smoke spurt out from under the rubber wheels. The landing hook catches the cable, and 220,000 pounds of tensile strength bring a blinded pilot to a quick stop.

Captain Gallery is out on the deck. When Danny finally gets out of the plane, the Skipper wraps his arms around him. Doc Thatcher is on hand, too. All along the deck edge men come to life. The landing signal officers smile. For a number of reasons, you feel good.

DIARY:

April 24th: There was intense aerial activity today to support land troops in Korea. We are running short of napalm tanks. Interview Ens. F. X. Neuman of Tulare, California. Neuman took off up the deck, coasted along "fat, dumb, but happy." Noticed he was running close to catwalk. His port wing wheel hit one of the AA guns and engine stalled. He lost helmet in the torque roll. Plane hit the water. Turned completely over. Neuman was facing oncoming ship. Stood up in the cockpit. Jumped into water. Inflated Mae West. Ship bore down on him. Ship rolled completely over him. Miraculously, Neuman escaped screws of ship.

Presentation of cakes to pilots of plane and helicopter for 6,000th and 1,000th landings. Pilots report killing hundreds of Chinese.

April 25th: I watch planes coming aboard, from LSO position. Scares the dickens out of you. I was ready to jump into net if anything went wrong. Larry Dewing, the LSO, says no matter how fast I would jump, he would beat me to net. Tug of war on flight deck between Ship Chiefs and Air Chiefs. Latter won.

April 26th: Heavy close air support launched throughout the day. Ad English describes firing on North Koreans and Chinese. Shells lift a man and knock him several yards backward. Real rough, but English assures he hits only men. Commander Van Meter belly-lands somewhere in Korea. Van's oil pressure went bad after being hit. Sandwiches with Ed Bryant. New plan set up for tomorrow. More men to be posted on ship's guns. Heavier Panther and Corsair close air patrol.

April 27th: Van Meter is safe. Belly-landed after being hit by enemy gun fire. Huge air strikes go out. Watch preparations for replenishment and refueling. Morphine supplied to all of-

ficers in view of mounting ack-ack, and Chinese preparation for all-out offense.

April 28th: Heavy fog and rain. All planes stay aboard. Coffee with Philbin and his plane handlers.

April 29th: Planes are off at 5:30 A.M. A TBM with three passengers aboard almost cracks up on landing. There were just inches to spare when the engine quit over the fantail. Nobody hurt. Parker, the LSO, dived into net when the crash occurred. George Barrett, a *New York Times* war correspondent, viewed crash from LSO position with Parker. Barrett was too surprised to jump into the net. He was feet away from a possible explosion.

Pilot Ens. Thomas C. Biesterveld downed in Korea. He was observed being captured after he parachuted to earth. Soldiers surrounded him near the wall of a building. Speculations by Ace Parker as to his safety: "If Chinese captured him, he has a chance. If North Koreans got him there's little hope," Ace says. Saw Van Meter tonight. Fellows kid him about desertion. He claims he belly-landed to go on an inspection tour of possible R & R sites in Korea.

April 30th: Continued heavy launchings from 4 A.M. and throughout the day. Bull session in wardroom. Play a clarinet with Bill Dozier accompanying on guitar. Hope we didn't wake up Tommy Christopher, the Executive Officer.

May 1st: Mayday for the Reds. Dick Merrick leads flight to torpedo gates of the Hwachon Reservoir. This is the first time aerial torpedoes are launched in the Korean war. We make history today. Dick and his boys score five hits out of eight drops. They breached the flood gates. Danny O'Neill may leave soon. Probably big business in Washington. Danny is advocating special carrier for night operations only.

May 2d: Fred Neuman's belly tank explodes over Wonsan.

He is picked up in Wonsan Bay by helicopter. Ens. Frank L. Siberski, Panther Jet pilot, is seriously wounded about face by flying lead and glass. Pat Murphy helps him home. Visited "Ski" in sick bay. Thought he was blind. Could only see the whites of his eyes.

May 3d: Ascension Thursday. Mass eight-forty-five on hangar deck. Watch planes take off, from port catwalk. Deck crews opposite are barely visible in the mist behind jet exhaust. Sky Raiders lug three 2,000-pound bombs. Can carry four tons. Visit radar room and watch planes, small blimps, coming out of Korea. Vladivostok was visible on the screen early this morning.

May 4th: News of Rear Adm. Ralph A. Oftsie's relief. Rear Adm. George R. Henderson will replace him.

May 5th: Admiral Henderson comes aboard this afternoon. Big celebration tonight in wardroom in honor of Admiral Oftsie's departure. Danny O'Neill leaves tomorrow. Hate to see him go. Van Meter goes with him as far as Tokyo at least. Danny gives me banged-up crash helmet as souvenir. Dick Merrick, Captain Gallery, and both Admirals give short speeches. Wonderful cake.

May 6th: Oftsie leaves ship. Henderson takes over. Danny leaves. Sits alongside Oftsie in the TBM. Morning bright and sunny, yet approximately this time Ens. Gerald J. Sullivan was killed in Panther Jet crash in Korea.

May 7th: Ens. Lowell R. Brewer killed when his jet crashes. Bob Belt is down in the dumps. His jet boys and his jets are taking a beating. Dick Merrick will talk to Air Group in wardroom tonight.

The wardroom is quiet when the tall Commander of the Air Group stands before the public address microphone. Admiral

Henderson and Captain Gallery are present. Dick's low, resonant voice begins:

"I think it's about time we started a recap on operations around here. For the past two weeks, some of you fellows have been bringing back planes that look like soup strainers. You're coming in with holes in your wings and fuselage. You're coming back with half your tails shot away. I'm ready to discount the normal damages a pilot sustains when under straight ack-ack fire. But you're flying too low on some of these missions. There's no reason for it.

"I'll admit I make the same mistake. We'd like to get this rotten action over with as fast as we can. But there's something else to remember. There's not one target over there right now that's worth the life of any pilot. There's not a target over there that's worth the loss of a single plane. I'll repeat that: Not one damnable target. In just a few days this Air Group will complete its tour here in the Far East. We've had more than our share of casualties already. We'll work straight up to the end. But for God's sake, heads up. We've got more than a cruise to live for. We've got all the future to live for, and just two seconds of carelessness can spoil it."

Commander Merrick spends the next several minutes refreshing their memories on proper flight-bombing procedure. The Admiral, the Skipper, and every man in the wardroom listen in absolute silence to a pilot who is a veteran of the carriers *Saratoga*, *Yorktown*, *Coaphee*, and *Lexington*.

The end of the cruise is in sight. Gala preparations are going on for the customary "Happy Hour." This is an entertainment put on by the members of the ship's crew as well as the air department. As the final day approaches when you will say good-by to all these fine fellows you have come to know,

you feel a bit lonesome. Last night when you walked into your room, Tommy Christopher, the Executive Officer, and about twelve men from the helicopter and hangar deck departments were sitting there. Chaplain Ray McManus had a grin all over his face. On the table was a huge cake with the carrier *Princeton* in green sugar decorating the top layer. "Just a little token of remembrance from the snipes and plane handlers," Bob Philbin said. Besides the cake, there were two pairs of pants, two shirts, a dozen T shirts, and a dozen skivvies. "You can probably use this, too," Jaybee Bennette of the fiery moustache added. It was a Tiny Tim rocket paperweight that some machinist had tooled. So you sat there with them, and jokes, stale and new, were traded. When you went to bed that night you wished you had known the phrase that could express adequately the gratitude you felt for the privilege of living with fellows like Pop Smith, Bower, Gates, Al Rouse, Scoop Weisman, Max Marsh, Chief Resh, Bob Sloan, and Bill Reason.

The day is sunny bright. A warm wind whistles over the flight deck. The TBMs with the new Air Group approach the *Princeton*. Spirits are high among the pilots. This is the first concrete evidence that they are to be replaced. Captain Gallery hands you the bull horn mike. "Go on," he says, "you're elected to welcome Air Group 19 aboard. A little speech." The suddenness of this invitation throws you for a loss. But since these pilots are new in the Far East, you decide to greet them in Japanese. Nobody understands Japanese anyway so you feel free to throw in some garbled padding to tide you over the rough spots. You were never too good on this extemporaneous speech making. The pilots, standing at rigid attention during this tirade (they must have thought a Japanese admiral was aboard) turned their faces upward toward Primary Flight. You do not know it now, but one of those faces looking up at

you, fresh and eager from the United States, will within a few hours be quite cold in death.

The cruise is over! A few hours ago we steamed out of the Task Force. The *Princeton*, with the cruiser *Helena* and three destroyers, is now heading back to Japan. Relaxation is the order of the evening. Dick Merrick is puffing his pipe as usual. He and Ace Parker are discussing ups and downs of the cruise. It is good to have it over with; it is pleasant to relax here and talk about the future, about home, and all the things a fellow lives for.

At about eleven o'clock that night while you are sitting in your room, Ed Bryant and Chaplain Enyeddi stick their heads in the door. "Did you hear the news?"

"What news?"

"We're heading back to the Force. An emergency communique from Eighth Army just came in. They want all the support they can get from the old 'Sweet Pea.'"

The "Sweet Pea" *Princeton* had already swung 180 degrees. When dawn came splurging up in gray turbulence, the carrier was in the slot between the *Boxer* and the *Philippine Sea*. Ordnance crews had worked through the night. The jets screamed on their pendants and went hurtling back to war. One of the planes that thundered up the deck that day was Commander Dick Merrick's Sky Raider. "We'll work straight up to the end," were Dick's words that night in the wardroom. These remaining emergency hours of the cruise were few but Merrick was still CAG—Commander of the Air Group.

The word is spoken to you in the wardroom a few hours later. It is a simple announcement made by a pilot who is about to walk past you. "Dick Merrick is gone."

Dick Merrick is gone!

Old pipe-smoking, soft-spoken CAG went in under the

cumulus. From 7,000 feet he angled in on a tunnel. A white puff danced along his left wing where he was hit. He cleared a ridge and then crashed to the earth with more than a ton and a half of explosives under his wings. A great and revered man died that day. And even while Dick, the veteran, was making the supreme sacrifice, young Lieutenant Hawkins who had lately come aboard was sitting lifeless in a cockpit among the Korean hills.

Standing on the pier this evening, you look back at the *Princeton*. In the weeks to come you will learn that the body of George Logan Chapman, the Marine whom Dick Merrick admired so much, will be placed in the soft earth of California. It will be coincidental also to learn that the mortal remains of Commander Richard Merrick will be laid to rest in the same plot of earth. You do not know these things now as you stand looking back at the *Princeton*. She is a capital ship with a capital crew—the first carrier in history ever to launch jets with bombs, the first to drop torpedoes from her Sky Raiders, the holder of all replenishment and refueling records on the high seas. There is a haze coming up in the bay; and though the evening is getting darker there is a kind of brilliance along the water front. It is then that you remember the boyish face of a fellow called Tiffany and the song he loved to listen to—"Harbor Lights."

The *Princeton* swings again to port. This time there is no turning back. Yokosuka looms ahead; warships blink greetings of welcome; the same band is beating out a lively tune. You walk with your duffel bag for the last time between the planes that are lashed to the hangar deck. Names like Magda, Paris, Scarsheim, Harris, Merner, Cook, Trolle, and Patton are sacred among these engines of war and the men who fly them. These are the pilots who never made it back to port—these are your sons.

