

sion must evolve with the changing battlefield. Equipped with leading edge technology and manned by tough, well-trained, aggressive soldiers, the division will remain ready

NOTES

1. The Red Army pioneered airborne-warfare techniques, entering World War II with corps-size airborne formations. German *fallschirmjaeger* parachute units scored notable success while advancing across Belgium, storming Fort Eben Emael and taking Crete. To train, equip and develop doctrine for airborne forces, the US Provisional Parachute Group was formed in 1941, followed in 1942 by Airborne Command.

2. The First Allied Airborne Army consisted of the US 82d and the 101st Airborne Divisions; Britain's 1st Airborne Division; Poland's Parachute Brigade; and supporting troop-carrier units and corps-level support formations. All were deliverable by parachute or glider.

3. The 2d Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, set a world record in 1943 when it marched 118 miles in three days. See Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 26.

4. The 101st Airborne's performance at Bastogne and the 82d Airborne's actions at St. Vith during the Ardennes counteroffensive in December 1944 and January 1945 demonstrated conclusively that when fighting in restrictive terrain, airborne units could defend successfully against Germany's best armored units. Equipped with large numbers of captured German *panzerfaust* and *panzerschreck* handheld AT weapons, airborne units conducted a tenacious, persistent defense. Information provided to the author in 1980 by LTG James Gavin, US Army, Retired, former commander, 82d Airborne Division.

5. The 1/508th is in Italy, the 1/501st is in Alaska. Other airborne units include the 1/507th, the airborne training battalion at the Infantry Center; the 1/509th, the opposing force battalion at the Joint Readiness Training Center; and various corps-level support units in the 18th Airborne Corps. Although more lightly equipped than conventional airborne formations, most special operations forces are parachute trained and capable of forced entry.

6. A division battle staff of 115 is certainly feasible if training management, garrison support and other non-combat functions are outsourced, privatized or transferred to other post activities.

7. This concept envisions the brigade commander in actual command of these units unless they are placed under another brigade's operational control for specific tactical missions. The DIVARTY, division engineer (DIVENG) and divisions support command (DISCOM) commanders retain oversight and branch-specific technical and training responsibilities for organic DS units assigned to maneuver brigades. One option is to leave them as raters of DS units, with the brigade commander as intermediate rater and the commanding general as senior rater. Another is to have the brigade commander serve as rater for his DS units while soliciting letter input from DIVARTY, DIVENG and DISCOM commanders.

8. Given current US air dominance, eliminating the short-range AD battalion is justifiable. The brigade AD battery is intended to provide point defense of high value assets such as command posts (CPs) and the brigade support area against low-level rotary-wing threats.

9. With a brigadier general commanding the maneuver brigades, there would be no need for same-rank assistant division commanders. The division chief of staff would run the division main CP; the division support commander would run the division rear CP; and the commanding general would direct the fight forward from the division tactical CP, brigade CPs or from a command and control aircraft.

10. Until LOSAT is fielded, the vulnerable tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW) missile system should be replaced by the Javelin. Although the Javelin's range is slightly less than the TOW's, its fire-and-forget, soft-launch, top-attack features make it more survivable and effective. Another crucial requirement is to increase the antiarmor crew from three to four. Because of the density of weapons assigned to the crew, its multiple missions and its inability to function after even a single casualty, this modest increase is imperative. Heavy weapons would include the Mark-19 automatic grenade launcher and the M2 .50-caliber heavy machine gun.

11. Trained snipers are important force multipliers. Their value has been neglected too long in US Army infantry units. They can be effective against targets at ranges to 1,000 meters. The number of sniper teams per battalion should be increased from 3 to 24, which would provide tremendous improvement in long-range precision fires at low manpower costs.

12. Because the 81-mm mortar platoon already has HMMWVs, its replacement by the heavier M120 would not affect its mobility or deployability. Although ammunition for the 120-mm mortar is bulkier, the disadvantage is more than offset by the weapon's greatly improved range and effects. Through the early 1980s, airborne units had 81-mm mortars at company level and the 4.2-inch heavy mortar at battalion level, without degraded ability to resupply ammunition.

13. The assault squadron should field 38 Blackhawks

in three troops of 12 each, plus two for headquarters. This would give the division the ability to move one infantry battalion combat echelon in one lift. The weapon mix would depend on the mission. For air assaults, the UH-60 would be armed with miniguns. For light attack missions, rockets and Hellfires would be added.

14. With 25 Comanches in the air cavalry/light attack squadron and 38 Hellfire-equipped Blackhawks in the assault squadron, it is theoretically possible for the cavalry regiment to launch about 900 fire-and-forget Hellfire missiles in less than five minutes—enough to completely shatter an enemy tank division.

15. The ground cavalry squadron and light armor battalion would retain maintenance and support platoons.

16. Ideally, the squadron would employ three troops, each with two tank platoons, two scout platoons and a three-tube 120-mm mortar section. The ground cavalry squadron scout platoons would field the UpArmored HMMWV (UAHMMWV) mounting the MK19 automatic grenade launcher and M2.50-caliber heavy machine gun. By 2010 the future scout vehicle would replace the UAHMMWV.

17. Currently, airborne infantry battalions' organic trucks can move one rifle company team in a single lift.

18. This has already been announced for the reorganized Army XXI heavy division.

19. Aviation units' CSS in the cavalry regiment can be safely consolidated in the regimental support squadron since all aircraft must return to rear areas to refuel, repair and maintain.

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MR Almanac

Force Protection Implications: TF Smith and the 24th Infantry Division, Korea 1950

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"They were Task Force [TF] Smith, which [General Douglas] MacArthur termed an arrogant display of strength, sent ahead into Korea to give the Communists pause. [Major General (MG) William F.] Dean had been ordered to move his entire 24th [Infantry] Division to the peninsula, but it was scattered the length and breadth of Japan, near six separate ports, and there were no ships immediately available. It would have to go in bits and pieces, of which Task Force Smith was the first."¹

Since July 1950, TF Smith and the

24th Infantry Division (ID) have been used as examples of poor tactical combat performance. However, instead of serving as an indictment, their actions should be reminders of the results of operational, national and strategic failure.

Poor operational and strategic intelligence; poor operational planning; and a lack of operational mobility and transportation were as much to blame for initial US failures in Korea as any problems tactical units might have had. The finger should have been wagged at senior

leaders all the way up to the National Command Authority.

In retrospect, TF Smith performed reasonably well, considering what it faced. Survivors of TF Smith have related, and analyses indicate, that even a larger, better-prepared force would have still failed, given the 4th North Korean People's Army (NKPA) Division's strength.²

Despite the tremendous setbacks in July and August 1950, TF Smith and the 24th ID played key roles in slowing North Korean forces in the drive to Pusan. The North Koreans

were thrown off schedule, which permitted the US military to establish the Pusan perimeter and led to the NKPA's eventual defeat. This is often conveniently overlooked to prove the high cost of tactical unpreparedness. However, TF Smith and, subsequently, 24th ID elements, successfully conducted what was once called a high-risk delay.

Operational Implications

Operational implications of committing occupation forces in Japan to combat in 1950 offer relevant lessons for today. With reductions in unit strengths, training readiness and capabilities of current US forces, the Army would do well to reexamine historical precedents regarding incremental application of force to a conflict.

The situation that faced the 8th Army in Japan bears many similarities to situations the Army now faces in force projection. Most notable is the severe shortage of strategic transportation assets available for timely response.³ This specific problem directly affected the operational concept of how the Advanced Command (ADCOM) and 8th Army conducted initial missions in the 1950 delay to the Naktong River.

Given the US Armed Forces' current capabilities, force-projection doctrine might have to be practiced under circumstances similar to those of July 1950. Deployment to Saudi Arabia in Autumn 1990 occurred before downsizing fully affected the US military. The problem is more critical now with aging aircraft and a severely deflated military.

Had the Iraqis taken advantage of the situation early during Operation *Desert Shield*, the 82d Airborne Division's history during that time might read more like TF Smith's. The major difference for the Army units was that *Desert Shield* soldiers had received high-quality training and equipment.

Specific analysis of TF Smith and 24th ID actions shows that incremental deployment of the 24th ID, especially TF Smith, was the 8th Army's only proper operational course of action. Unfortunately, some historians, such as author Clay Blair, give

their actions short shrift: "The Americans had achieved little in this piecemeal and disorganized waste of precious lives and equipment. At most they delayed the NKPA a total of three, possibly four, days."⁴

Taken out of operational context, three to four days might seem inconsequential, but the 24th ID was only part of the delaying force. The 1st Cavalry and 25th ID deployed in depth behind the 24th ID. Proper analysis must consider the entire delay.

Korea 1950

Deploying units from Japan was key to the 8th Army's ability to establish a contiguous defensive perimeter before the North Koreans arrived in force.⁵ Therefore, US forces' initial deployment from Japan was time-sensitive because of the relatively short distance from the demilitarized zone (DMZ) to the southern end of the peninsula. Also, the lack of defensible terrain and the presence of natural barriers stymied tactical units' dispositions. These factors limited MacArthur's options.

The NKPA had the advantages of initiative and momentum. This was especially true after it crossed the Han River south of Seoul where organized South Korean resistance crumbled in the western corridor. Spearheaded by armor forces traveling on Highway 1, the main avenue of approach from Seoul to Pusan, the NKPA intended to move swiftly to Pusan, then consolidate with follow-on forces. The 4th NKPA ID led armor and truck-mounted infantry units as they advanced along this axis.⁶

The 4th NKPA ID followed the Soviet model when planning operations. There was a strict timetable for daily advances, and subordinate units received march objectives. If all went well, the 4th NKPA ID hoped to advance an average of 20 kilometers a day once it broke through South Korean defenses north of the river.⁷

Meanwhile, in Japan, MacArthur's choices for committing ground forces were limited. Although the landing at Inchon was in the planning stage, no ships or US Marine Corps troops were available for a

seaborne invasion. Like today's strained US military, the US Air Force (USAF) did not have enough in-theater lift capability to fly necessary forces to Korea from Japan. Nor were airfields sufficiently developed to handle heavier aircraft even if they had been readily available.⁸

MacArthur had to decide quickly whether to send a force—any force—or to wait, organize and fully equip an element of the understrength occupation forces. Sending units piecemeal into combat is desirable but is what happened in Korea as a conscious decision. The decision to send a small detachment of US ground troops was based on rational suppositions. Acting decisively and participating in the ground conflict immediately would demonstrate US resolve to deter communist aggression. And, the NKPA would not continue the fight if it knew it was fighting a world power in ground combat. In retrospect, this assumption was obviously faulty.

The operational implications were fairly clear—establish a presence on the Korean peninsula quickly with whatever force was available; slow the NKPA's advance; then reinforce forces on the ground deployments from Japan. Failure to perform these actions would result in lost seaports and would require forced entry from the sea to regain a foothold on the peninsula. Time was critical; the last substantial obstacle to the NKPA's southward advance was the Naktong River.

Accepting Risk

The solution in 1950 provides a classic example of what might occur for the US in the future. The 8th Army was to deploy a regiment of infantry immediately. The 24th ID was the closest Army unit in southern Japan to ports of embarkation. It was to send a unit by air as quickly as possible with the balance of the force to follow by sea.⁹ Thus began the events that placed the ill-equipped and undermanned TF Smith in its predicament.

Military leaders clearly understood the implications of committing forces to combat piecemeal, and they willingly took the risk that the

unit might be defeated in detail. Quantitative analysis of ADCOM and 8th Army's delay to the Nakdong River shows that the operational objective was met, but at a tremendous cost.¹⁰

MacArthur and Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker accepted the risk. Figures relating to time and distance factors, the method of measuring success in this case, are so complex that to limit the study of the delay to the Nakdong River alone might easily lead to simplistic conclusions. However, numbers clearly show that the North Korean advance was exceedingly slow under the circumstances and that the incremental application of US combat power definitely caused the North Koreans to fall behind schedule.

The July 1950 operational considerations also relate to current force-projection scenarios. Timely, incremental deployment into a theater to retain a foothold and a less-timely application of greater combat power were essentially the tradeoffs the 8th Army faced. Then, as now, strategic lift capability was a limiting factor that frustrated planners at all levels.

Along with ADCOM and 8th Army defenses, other factors slowed and prevented NKPA units' timely crossing of the Nakdong River. From what verifiable facts support, a combination of internal and external factors—the friction of war—delayed their advance. Internal factors included poor command and control, limited communication means, rigid tactical doctrine and artificial restraints in their operational plans. External factors included effects of weather and terrain, opposing ground actions and direct application of UN air power.

The results of the 8th Army's delay to the Nakdong River can be quantitatively assessed and contradict assertions that TF Smith and the 24th ID's initial actions were of no consequence. Simple mathematical analysis supports a generalization regarding the operational conduct of the delay and whether the example offers legitimate lessons. Because we know the NKPA's doctrine and have access to captured NKPA orders for the offensive, this information be-

comes control data with which to evaluate the NKPA's actual performance. We can compare the effect of US operations against NKPA units with the actual communist plan. We can make logical assumptions to determine what would have happened had ADCOM and the 8th Army not fought as it did along Highway 1—for example, if the force had waited for sufficient combat power before moving against the North Koreans.

On 1 July, Dean's 24th ID was alerted to send elements to Japan immediately by air.¹¹ The commander of the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Bradley Smith, quickly cobbled together a task force and flew to Pusan on 2 July. Smith, a former Infantry School instructor, was a World War II combat veteran of the South Pacific.¹² His battalion was one of the best-trained infantry battalions in the 24th ID, despite personnel shortages, a lack of serviceable equipment and an unavailability of good maneuver areas for training.

The lack of air transportation reduced battalion personnel initially deployed to a relatively small, two-company, one-artillery battery task force pared out of the 1st Battalion, 21st infantry. On 2 July, these forces were sent north from Pusan with orders to block NKPA units moving south out of the Seoul area on Highway 1 toward Taejon.¹³ Highway 1 runs from Seoul to Taejon then to Waegwan through the mountains that parallel a rail line. This small but primary avenue of approach runs diagonally across the southern peninsula from the northwest to the southeast, terminating at Pusan. Based on poor intelligence and broad guidance, Dean intended to conduct a series of delays along this major corridor to aid the arrival of his remaining his force.

Juk-Mi Pass

Smith emplaced his forces along the high ground dominating both Highway 1 and the rail line, which ran through a relatively long tunnel under the extreme right flank of his position. Highway 1 bisected a saddle in the hill known as Juk-Mi Pass. The task force's two infantry companies were situated abreast

about four kilometers south of the pass on each side of the highway. One platoon was sited west of the highway, but the majority of the infantry troops were sited east of the road. An artillery battery was disposed to the rear.¹⁴ The terrain was undeniably the most defensible available.

The 4th NKPA ID and the 107th Tank Regiment were approaching TF Smith. Having crossed the Han River on 1 July, these units were leading the advance down Highway 1. Between 1-4 July, the 4th NKPA ID fought the remnants of the 1st and 7th IDs that were defending the Han River's south bank.¹⁵ By 4 July, the North Koreans had overcome South Korean resistance, entered Suwon and were visible from the hills adjacent to Juk-Mi Pass.

The North Koreans had moved 30 kilometers in four days, much less than the planned movement rate of 20 kilometers a day. However, they had to break through the South Korean main line of resistance, fight numerous actions north of the Han River, cross the river and move up initial logistic support from the DMZ. Under the circumstances, these movement figures are well within norms.

The distance from Suwon to Osan is just over 10 kilometers. The 4th NKPA ID left Suwon early on 5 July about the time TF Smith was settling into position on the hillside at Juk-Mi Pass. Tanks led the North Korean movement followed by motorized infantry then dismounted infantry. To maintain order, the armor and motorized infantry moved slowly so the dismounted infantry could follow closely. Still, by the time the North Koreans encountered TF Smith, a gap had developed between mounted and dismounted elements.

Movement was confined mostly to main roads because of poor trafficability. Most of the countryside was covered with rice paddies. Off-road movement was difficult for infantry and virtually impossible for armored vehicles. Smith knew this and disposed his antitank (AT) weapons to cover Highway 1 and the rail line.

The battle began at 0816, 5 July. North Korean tanks initially broke

through US positions and continued to Suwon without slowing appreciably. With the exception of the artillery battery's direct fire on the tanks, the North Koreans suffered no losses. The old, understrength bazooka and 57-millimeter recoilless rifle shells just bounced off the Soviet-designed armor. After two heavy engagements, TF Smith began a withdrawal under pressure at 1400.

Unfortunately, the direct support artillery battery, A Battery, 52d Field Artillery, was defeated. The tanks cut the landlines to the forward observers, and all radios went dead. The tanks continued engaging the 105-millimeter guns in direct-fire duels. The 4.2-inch heavy mortar section ran out of ammunition. After the initial engagement there was no indirect fire support. Close air support (CAS) was nonexistent. Because of recent fratricide incidents, CAS was restricted from operating south of the Han River. This prohibition effectively hobbled US ground maneuver elements and gave communist forces a distinct advantage.

A withdrawal in contact is probably the most difficult tactical maneuver to conduct even for well-trained units. For untrained units, the sequenced withdrawal quickly degenerated, becoming a rout. Grossly outnumbered US soldiers were overrun. The entire fight lasted from six to seven hours, actually a reputable showing based on simulations. By about 1500, organized resistance ceased, and TF Smith scattered.¹⁶ After executing captured US wounded, the 4th NKPA ID continued to Osan where it reorganized after covering approximately 15 kilometers.

From Osan to Taejon

While TF Smith was fighting to the north at Juk-Mi Pass, the 1/34 Infantry, 24th ID, was digging in about 10 kilometers south of Osan. Their positions were about halfway between Osan and P'yong'taek. The 34th Infantry Regiment had followed the 21st Infantry Regiment to Korea and was rushed forward along Highway 1 to back up TF Smith.

The North Koreans moved out of Osan early on 6 July and encountered the 1/34th Infantry between 0600 and 0800. On 6 July, the 107th

Tank Regiment led the movement south, only to find a blown bridge north of P'yong'taek. The 1/34th Infantry encountered the same problems as TF Smith had: they had no AT weapons that could stop T-34s, and more important, they could not tie-in flank defenses. They fought no more than three hours before withdrawing.¹⁷ Meanwhile, the 34th Infantry Regiment was falling back to Ch'onan, about 20 kilometers south of P'yong'taek. The North Koreans spent the remainder of 6 July repairing the blown bridge and finding fording sites.¹⁸

Fearing envelopment, the 3/34th Infantry, which was supposed to defend Ansong in a parallel position to the east of the 1/34th Infantry, withdrew without fighting. The 4th NKPA ID moved against relatively light resistance and covered the 20 kilometers expected of it during the day's march. On 7 July, the 4th NKPA ID left P'yong'taek moving south toward Ch'onan 20 kilometers away. By evening the North Koreans were in Ch'onan. The 3/34th Infantry succeeded in engaging only the 4th NKPA ID reconnaissance elements north of the town, then withdrew into Ch'onan.

While the North Korean march figures for 6 and 7 July do not belie the total picture, traveling 20 kilometers a day was costly. They were getting farther from their base of supplies. Their artillery required bulky ammunition, and their vehicles needed fuel, which had to be transported over roads increasingly interdicted by UN air power. Also, the 4th NKPA ID was forced to fight, causing them to deploy and reorganize along Highway 1 after each engagement. These time-consuming deployments slowed them down and broke their momentum. To continue to meet the goal of 20 kilometers a day they would have had to press soldiers who were already suffering from the physical effects of combat and constant marching in the monsoon heat.

Small engagements and battles occurred that continued in a similar manner for other elements of the 24th ID as they were committed piecemeal against the North Koreans. On 9 July, the first elements of

the 25th ID arrived in Korea. At Chonui (10 July), Choch'iwon (11-12 July), the Kum River Line (15-16 July) and Taejon (19-20 July), US units engaged and slowed the North Korean advance. The fights from Osan to Taejon covered about 100 kilometers and took the North Koreans 15 days. While these desperate battles were being fought, the 1st Cavalry Division boarded ships for Korea on 15 July. In Tokyo, MacArthur's staff began plans for an amphibious assault to conduct an operational envelopment of the North Koreans.¹⁹

The North Koreans moved the greatest distance during the campaign to the Naktong River in the two days following the battle at Osan—20 kilometers each day. On both days they fought engagements before continuing. However, for the following 13 consecutive days, the North Koreans covered only 60 kilometers, fighting three more battles en route. This movement to Taejon averaged only 4.6 kilometers per day. This was a substantial decrease in march tempo, which appears to correlate with the increasing application of air power and the resistance encountered from newly arrived 24th ID units.²⁰

After the battle for Taejon on 20 July, where Dean was captured, the North Koreans faced 1st Cavalry and 25th ID elements that took up the fight from the 24th ID along the Taejon-Taegu corridor. The 1st Cavalry and 25th ID continued to delay the North Koreans as additional US units arrived. The 24th ID was withdrawn behind Taegu to refit and reorganize. The 25th ID also blocked the Chunchon/Wonju approach, the route of a North Korean supporting attack toward Taegu.

On 31 July, the 2d ID arrived, and on 2 August the 29th Regimental Combat Team arrived. US strength was building slowly and forces were being deployed into the line along the Naktong River. On 1 August the 1st Cavalry withdrew over the river at Waegwan and destroyed the bridges.

TF Smith's Value

Numbers prove that Blair was only partially correct in his analysis of the 24th ID's contribution to the

delay of the North Koreans. His overall assessment is questionable. First, the physical and mental effects of numerous engagements and battles took the edge off NKPA forces and physically tired them. Also, the constant losses in personnel and supplies degraded the NKPA's fighting potential. How then can we ascertain whether the operational decision to hastily commit the 24th ID piecemeal into Korea was the correct decision? It becomes a cost-benefit analysis.

If the North Koreans planned to move about 20 kilometers a day along the route from Seoul to the Nakdong River, and the route is approximately 230 kilometers by road, then the NKPA should have reached the Nakdong River in approximately 11 to 12 days. This assumes they were conducting an exploitation after initially defeating ROK forces that were defending well forward—north of the Han River.

If the North Koreans had moved unimpeded by ground combat to the Nakdong River, they might have been able to launch a large-scale, coordinated attack from the march. Overwhelming the defenders along the Nakdong River would have allowed them to secure a bridgehead quickly. Instead, they arrived tired and off-balance from the numerous contacts they had experienced during their advance.

Instead of arriving at the Nakdong River within 12 days of leaving Seoul, the North Koreans did not arrive in strength until after 1 August, 24 days after their first engagement against TF Smith. The 24th ID was directly responsible for delaying the North Koreans about half the distance from Suwon to the Nakdong River, approximately 90 kilometers from Osan to Taejon. The North Koreans took 15 days to cover this distance, more than three times as long as it would have taken them to reach the Nakdong River crossings near Waegwan had they achieved their goal of 20 kilometers a day.

Those 15 days allowed more than two additional US divisions to arrive in Korea. If the North Koreans had not been slowed and attrited before they reached the Nakdong River, UN forces would have lost the chance to

establish a reasonable defense along the last natural terrain barrier en route to Pusan, which would have been catastrophic. Instead, the North Koreans were forced to conduct an opposed river crossing after their momentum had been broken. Instead of crossing on about 18 July, they did not attempt a major crossing until 26 August.²¹

What contributed to the North Koreans' failure? Poor communications and a desire to maintain strict command and control were two reasons. Reporting was poor, largely because not enough radios were available for timely reports. For example, at Osan the 4th NKPA ID's advance guard was engaged, and the infantry was separated from the tanks. Later, two North Korean regiments of the division's main body marched into the area without having received any communication about TF Smith's location.

On 7 July, air interdiction also began taking a serious toll just when the North Koreans' momentum seemed to be building. Between 7 and 9 July, during the battle of Ch'onan, North Korean columns moving down the western axes of advance received a tremendous blow. UN fighter-bombers caught North Korean armored and motorized columns on the roads, destroying an estimated 44 tanks and 197 trucks. On 10 July, during the battle at Chonui, North Korean follow-on and logistic elements were caught in march column on the roads near P'yong'taek and were devastated. USAF fighter-bombers were credited with destroying 38 tanks, 7 armored carriers and 117 trucks. Interestingly, the vehicles were backed-up at the bridge, which withdrawing 34th Infantry Regiment forces had blown up on 7 July.

There is no doubt that continued destruction of road-bound North Korean units greatly helped relieve the pressure on 24th ID units. While air power was not directly decisive against the large numbers of infantry forces in the North Korean army, it certainly appears to have helped slow them down by indirectly affecting their support.

Several other factors must also be considered. The North Koreans

were forced to follow Highway 1 in column because off-road mobility was impossible. Once dismounted infantry deploy tactically, reorganizing for renewed movement becomes time consuming. This was especially so for the North Koreans who had to rely on vocal, whistle, and hand and arm signals to communicate with troops moving through rice paddies.

The 4th NKPA ID deployed not once or twice, but as many as eight times against 24th ID delay positions. Cumulative effects of smaller deployments cost the North Koreans more time than one or two larger deployments. Everyone in the follow-on elements had to stop and wait while lead forces fought through. While the 8th Army might not have specifically intended for this to occur, it was a welcome by-product of piecemeal commitment of battalions and regiments.

Under these circumstances, 24th ID deployments of battalion-size forces provided the depth to blunt an armored attack and prevented the North Koreans' all-out pursuit. Had the North Koreans defeated one or two large units in delaying positions, they might have been able to envelop, bypass and move to the Nakdong River before US troops could prepare another delaying position. Fighting a number of smaller engagements tired the North Koreans, hurt their efficiency and slowed their momentum.

It might be presumptuous to assume that quantitative analysis of the North Korean's movement to the Nakdong River can reveal hard evidence that TF Smith and the 24th ID decisively affected the North Korean advance. However, numbers show that TF Smith and the 24th ID's efforts were critical to successfully establishing a defense on the Nakdong River. If the 24th ID was successful, then TF Smith was integral to that success. TF Smith's actions were the first in a series of actions. When taken together, these actions caused the North Koreans to fail.

The implications for operational planners at higher levels are evident. Committing the 24th ID piecemeal, employing the division unsupported on either flank and failing to provide proper joint or combined

arms requirements caused the 24th ID and the 8th Army to pay a severe price. During the delay from Osan to Taegu, the 24th ID lost almost 2,000 men killed, wounded and missing during 18 days of combat. The division was reduced to about 4,000 men by the time it was withdrawn from Taegu and replaced in the line.²² Yet, the 24th ID did what it was supposed to do—delay the North Koreans along the most dangerous avenue of approach to Pusan.

No More TF Smiths

Former Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) General Gordon R. Sullivan's statement, "No more Task Force Smiths!" is a metaphor intended to reflect the US Armed Forces' condition rather than being a specific criticism of TF Smith. Unfortunately, many misinterpret Sullivan's quote as a specific criticism of TF Smith. TF Smith's performance is often attributed solely to equipment, training and troop fitness factors. These contributing factors do not change the fact that US soldiers had to fight an overwhelmingly superior enemy force under terrible conditions.

Computing rough force ratios shows the disadvantage under which TF Smith and the 24th ID labored. Still, they slowed the North Korean advance until two other divisions could arrive in the Pusan perimeter. In fact, the 24th ID's contribution must be measured in hours and days. In the end, the delay by the 24th ID, 1st Cavalry Division and 25th ID directly contributed to North Korea's failure to reach the barrier the Nakdong River provided.

At a high cost, TF Smith and the 24th ID accomplished their missions. Colonel James T. Stewart's view differs from Blair's in this regard: "The NKPA around Pusan perimeter was nothing more than a skeleton which had been depleted by direct destruction and starved by the air interdiction program."²³ The earlier tragedy in no way reflects poorly on soldiers of a neglected army that had been serving as a constabulary occupation force.

Situations confronting the US Army today have the potential to repeat at least some of the actions of

1950. As the Army prepares for conventional missions and takes on the competing requirements to act as an international police force, it suffers from diminishing resources, is subject to shortfalls in strategic deployment transportation and, consequently, suffers declining readiness.

Committing lightly armed or grossly outnumbered delaying forces is a possibility senior commanders and planners must consider during risk analysis. The risk assessment might not allow a bloodless operation, which many leaders, soldiers and citizens expect. US forces might not have the luxury of a 6-month buildup like that which occurred before Operation *Desert Storm*.

Is the US Army prepared psychologically, and has it prepared the nation psychologically, for the costs of a conflict in which our military does not hold the initial advantage? It happened before. What makes us so sure it will never happen again? While we hope we can trade space for time when outnumbered, there might be little or no space to trade, in which case force attrition might be the result. In this regard, "No more Task Force Smiths!" rings hollow.

NOTES

1. T.R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 98.
2. Brigadier General (Retired) Bradley Smith, in a 16 November 1990 letter to me, states: "Without AT mines and 3.5-inch rocket launchers, my whole battalion would not have done much better than we did with two companies." Smith's dispositions would have met today's standards for infantry battalion defensive positions. The units and weapons were best sited to take advantage of elevation, fields of fire and observation. Task Force Smith's ability to delay as long as it did is remarkable. TF Smith members interviewed for this article include retired LTC Duane Scott, commander, Battery A, 52d Field Artillery; retired COL Jack Doody, heavy mortar platoon leader; retired COL Philip Day, rifle platoon leader, C Company; and retired COL William Wynick, platoon leader, C Company. I also corresponded with retired BG Lynch, rifle platoon leader, B Company.
3. Robert Frank Futrell, *The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 6-7. The USAF had limited lift capability in June 1950. The 8th Wing, 5th Air Force, had 12 C-54s at Ashiya Air Base, Japan. The 374 Troop Carrier Wing at Tachikawa had two squadrons of C-54s. The 21st Troop Carrier Squadron at Clark Field, Philippines, was also alerted. In a telephone interview on 18 November 1995, Day said the C-54s could carry 50 troops or a limited number of troops with a couple of jeeps and trailers.
4. Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Times Books, 1987), 115. Actually, 8th Army elements slowed the North Korean advance three times longer than Blair gives them credit for.
5. William Glenn Robertson, *Counterattack on the Nakdong, 1950* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1985), 9.
6. General Headquarters, Far East Command Intelligence Section, Intelligence Summary, 4th North Korean ID, 41-50. Declassified 20 August 1975. Document provided by Joe Bermudez. The 4th NKPA ID was TF Smith's primary antagonist. With 3d NKPA ID elements, it fought the 24th ID until 22 July. The 4th NKPA ID, organized as a typical North Korean division, was com-

posed of the 5th, 16th and 18th Infantry Regiments and the 4th Artillery Regiment. T-34s that preceded the 4th NKPA ID were from the 107th Tank Regiment. The 4th NKPA ID's total strength at the outbreak of the war was approximately 11,000 men. It suffered about 3,400 casualties in the opening week of the war and was given the honorific title Seoul Division for its part in the capture of Seoul. On 3 November 1950, US forces destroyed the 4th NKPA ID, the remnants dispersing into the hills.

7. Operations Order No. 1, 4th ID (NKPA), 22 June 1950, ATIS Translation No. 200045, 30 October 1950. Provided by Joe Bermudez.

8. Charles E. Miller, *Airlift Doctrine* (Washington, DC: Air University Press, 1988), 195. Except for those near Seoul, the few airfields in Korea were not suitable for large operations. Unfortunately, by the time TF Smith arrived, the North Koreans already occupied them. The Pusan airfield deteriorated rapidly under the weight of the C-54s that delivered TF Smith. The smaller, less capable C-47s, which could carry only 18 troops, had to be substituted until repairs were made.

9. Top Secret message from LTG Walton H. Walker to MG William Dean (Eyes Only), dated 30 June 1950, declassified 4 January 1953.

10. Until 8th US Army headquarters arrived in Korea, BG John Church was the commander of the advanced elements. On 15 July, 8th US Army headquarters took command of all ground units.

11. Robertson, 6. The tasking for 24th ID to send a regimental combat team to Korea was based primarily on the proximity of division elements to air and sea embarkation ports. The division's initial elements were sent by air, large elements followed by sea.

12. In a telephone conversation with Smith on 10 September 1990, he said the Osan position was the last in a series of five he reconnoitered on 4 July en route north from P'yongtaek toward Suwon. Smith had no illusions about what he was up against. Not knowing the enemy's location, his leader's reconnaissance was as much contingency planning as anything.

13. John Toland, *In Mortal Combat: Korea, 1950-1953* (New York: Morrow, 1991), 77.

14. Blair, 102.

15. Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong North to the Yalu, June-November 1950, US Army in the Korean War* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, US Army, 1961), 82.

16. Interview with retired LTC Duane Scott, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Smith was the commander of A Battery, 52d FA, TF Smith, on 5 July 1950.

17. Appleman, 84.

18. *VFW Magazine* (June-July 2000), 13-14.

19. Robert Jackson, *Air War Over Korea: Sixteen Stories of Heroism in the Air* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), 19.

20. James Stewart, *Airpower: The Decisive Force in Korea* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1957), 19.

21. Stewart, 9. While I believe Stewart's title is exaggerated, he provides an interesting alternative perspective of air operations. In a letter to me, Wynick claims that USAF kills tended to be overrated. They "spent a lot of time shooting up dead tanks" in the middle of his company's positions. This occurred after the battle at Osan since ADCOM had asked GEN George E. Stratemeyer, commander, Far East Air Forces, to temporarily suspend operations south of the Han River after 3 July because of fratricide and civilian casualties caused by uncoordinated fighter bomber attacks. An ammunition train alongside TF Smith was mistakenly strafed as it arrived in P'yongtaek on 3 July. These factors, plus the lack of good weather were the prime reasons air power was not used at Osan. And, even if air power had been available, TF Smith had no forward air controllers.

22. The cost computes to about 111 men a day, roughly an understrength 1950 rifle company. Another way to express the cost is about 20 men a kilometer from Osan to Taegu.

23. Stewart, 9.

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