

Getting Ready near Uijongbu

The Months of May and June were spent getting the new replacement soldiers relatively trained. And patrols, many with Tanks from the 70th Tank Battalion accompanying, were sent out west and north west of Uijongbu, to keep in contact with the enemy units, which increasingly seemed to be digging in and fortifying their defenses more than we had seen before.

In turn, the 7th Cav, starting out with the 4th GEF (Greek) Battalion setting up an advanced Patrol Base almost half way between US and Chinese Army lines. Then patrols were sent out in a 9,000 meter arc to keep contact with the enemy.

One of my platoon patrols surrounded 15 enemy troops in a house. We killed 6 enemy soldiers and took 3 prisoners.

But some other patrols lead to humorous results. Another platoon captured 10 pack horses. Brought them back, we found pack saddles, and commenced using them to transport heavy supplies to our outlying troops. After all we WERE the 7th Cavalry. Right?

Korean War (19)

Category: Korean War

Published: Tuesday, 02 August 2011 16:39

Written by dave

Hits: 3814



All I had to do was put a yellow ribbon in that Cav Animal's forelock, a 1st Cavalry Division Crest on the horseblanket, and we were in the Garry Owen business! Thats me in the "saddle".

The USO PAYS US A VISIT

Then, since we were pretty much out of range of Chinese Artillery, our Company was chosen to host a bevy of 4 USO lady entertainers for lunch!!

That causes us a scramble, because our Rifle Company was not used to serving plate lunches! And we sure didn't have any beer, wine much less bourbon, So we decided to really let the ladies get the idea what a 'front line unit' really was like and what it celebrated.

One idea was to take a half empty whisky bottle that someone had kept, carefully use a pen to mark on the lable a series of marks denoting 'when' we last celebrated a big event in Company K's combat history. i.e, one line on the label for when we drank to the 'Breakout of the Pusan Perimeter', 'Thanksgiving in Pyonyang,' 'Shanks Boots'- with a mark showing just where we all took one sip of whiskey and not let the bottle run dry.

So we gravely put a mark and wrote "USO Visit by the Ladies" Then each lady just took a sip. And we told them, if they hear a loud clanging bell, to get in one of the foxholes - for that meant incoming artillery.They really thought we were the warriors. And had stories to tell back home how they visited a real front line outfit - Company K, 7th Cav, Custer's outfit.

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(Note that Lieutenant 'Bon Vivant' Radcliff who came from Canada, and joined the US Army was at the head of the table as I took the picture. And also note in the marginal note, he was Killed in Action 4 months later on Hill 339.)

The 7th Cav Spirit

Milton Caniff did this Cartoon in 1959. But look closely,

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because he sure put 'K' on the crossed Sabers. K
Company, 7th Cav. MY COMPANY! HE had the Garry
Owen Spirit! We enjoyed waving our Garry Owen 7th Cav
banner wherever we went. Soldiers from other, dull, units
got jealous. Custer? We called the Korean War, Custer's
Revenge!

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The Skull Flap

Not all the incidents were laughable. At least I was not

laughing when the Battalion Commander, Lt Col Haldane confronted me in July one day.

I had to spend most of my time on the defensive or offense mountain ridges with my fighting platoons. I rarely rode in my jeep "K-1." My First Sergeant or Executive officer would routinely be driven by my driver to and from Headquarters or supply, or the mail drop at Regiment. I was in that jeep only when I was called to the Hdq and it was too far to walk to and back

But my jeep had, as all of the ones across 8th Army, a verticle 'wire cutter.' An angle iron welded to the front bumper, and standing up at least 7 feet high. That was to defeat the enemy patrols which would stretch a 'decapitation' wire across well travelled routes where jeeps with personnel in the front seat were expected. At night, if the wire cutter was not there, one or both men in the front seat, especially if the windshield were down, or the man stood up to peer far ahead, could have their heads chopped off.

That wire cutter iron was routine on all jeeps and my jeep was no exception. But one day as I was hiking down to the road where my jeep would pick me up, I looked down and saw a skeleton, with a North Korean enemy uniform still attached to it from some long past battle that went through the area. I picked up a human skull from the enemy soldier who had fallen there, and first put it atop

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the wire cutting angle iron. Then in my company headquarters I took a piece of yellow cavalry ribbon and put it around the skull's neck and told my driver to leave it there.



Over the next week or so, every time my driver had to visit battalion headquarters, that skull was there. The word got around. Until Col Haldane heard about it, and the next time my K-1 jeep came around, he ordered the driver to take it down. And told me he wanted to see me.

So I got an ass chewing for my bit of gallows humor.