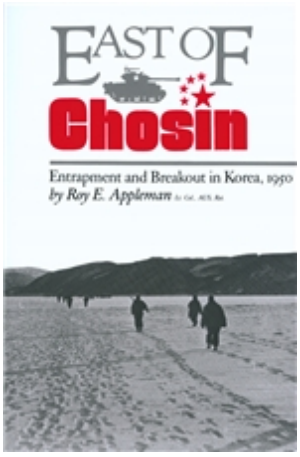
TF 1-16 IN "Iron Rangers"
Read2Lead Reflective Essays



East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea, 1950 by Roy E. Appleman

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This volume belongs to the Army Profession – it is a gift by and for our profession. It is a part of a movement of like-hearted comrades who are committed to advancing the practice of company-level leadership and who are willing to give their all to become more effective leaders. Please mark it up, dog ear it, write notes in it, carry it in your rucksack, and then when you have squeezed every ounce of knowledge that you can from it – pass it on. You can do so in any number of ways, to include: hand it off to one of your comrades, go through it with a junior leader you are mentoring, or contribute it to your unit's professional library. Whatever you do, don't allow it to gather dust on your bookshelf! Imagine the day twenty years from now when a young LT picks this volume up and sees your name and the margin notes you made, along with those of twenty other members of the profession who have been impacted by it.

When you and your fellow leaders read this volume, keep an eye out for practical applications. The conversations that result will undoubtedly improve your unit's performance. Ask each other, "So what if you read a book – what did you do with it? How are you going to apply it to your practice of leadership, or to your unit's planning and training?"

Finally, please take a moment to share what you have learned from the book on your professional forum: https://juniorofficer.army.mil

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Foreword

By Jared Nichols, Executive Officer, TF 1-16 IN

Leader Development is not something that can be left to chance. In order to ensure that a leader development program is effective, it must be planned like a deliberate operation. In the fall of 2016, during our forward deployment to the Republic of Korea, it was apparent that we were failing in our obligation to develop the leaders in our battalion. Efforts were haphazard at best and were not synchronized. Development events were routinely cancelled.

We hit the reset button.

The Leader Development Council formed as a result of a need to develop a comprehensive framework for officer development. The Council maintains control of the development of future events and in the execution of the overall strategy. The Council meets once a month to review past events, propose new events, and to do final execution checks. These events are then briefed to the Battalion Commander, who approves the event slate. We now have an effective method for planning, synchronizing, and leading events for the battalion.

One of the programs that the council proposed was "to read a book". With little to no budget for events, we researched ways to acquire professional reading for officers of the battalion. We reached out to Center for Advancement of Leader Development and Organizational Learning (CALDOL) at West Point to see if our book program could be sponsored as a Read2Lead program. CALDOL agreed to sponsor our program and we subsequently researched possible books to present to the Battalion Commander for his approval. We recommended *East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea*. The factors that led to us settling on this book were: it related to our current mission in Korea and it has many moral-ethical accounts that would drive small group discussion.

Upon receiving the books, members of the Council pre-read the book and separated the chapters of the book into reading sections. We then generated open ended questions in each chapter to drive discussion and consolidated these questions into our reading guide. The Reading Guide separated Read2Lead into a seven week program. Each company formed a book club led by their Company Commander (for staff, the staff captains took charge). These groups met once a week in small groups using the reading guide to drive discussion. The Field Grade officers rotated amongst the companies each week, with each Field Grade sitting on a different

company. For the final Week Seven event, the Battalion Commander led a consolidated discussion based on that week's questions.

The final piece of the program was a 3-5 page reflection paper by each 2LT and 1LT in the battalion. The reflection papers were an effort for each officer to internalize the reading and provided a way for senior officers to review the professional writing of junior officers in the battalion. It also provided a means for closure for all of the participants.

This program has forced leaders in the battalion to talk about hard issues and to talk about leadership. It has inspired conversations during PT, in the mess hall, and while out socializing. It has provided a common reference point that we can all look to in planning and execution of operations. Following a recent Brigade level OPD, the Brigade Commander remarked to our Battalion Commander "How did the battalion achieve the open discussion displayed during Devil Talks (the OPD)?" Where did the battalion develop the willingness to openly communicate opinions and discussion in a large group?"

Read2Lead did that. It forced our leaders to talk about hard issues, it made them think, it made them listen to others, and it made them talk about leadership in all its dimensions.

We now have a culture of organizational learning and development in our battalion.

It is on us to not lose that.

Editor's Note

To faithfully reproduce the essays as the participants wrote them, no attempt has been made to standardize citations or narrative style. Unless specifically noted, alterations to the essays are limited to font size, spacing, and basic grammar/spelling. Unless otherwise explicitly stated in the essay, historical references and citations are assumed to refer to the text of *East of Chosin*.

Platoon Leaders

Timothy Abbracciamento
G CO, 1-16 IN

Roy E. Appleman's *East of Chosin* depicts the story of the 31st RCT, comprised of roughly three thousand Soldiers tasked with protecting the eastern flank of the 1st Marine Division at the Chosin Reservoir. The book provides a detailed account of the bloody battle, lasting four days and five nights. Throughout the gripping tale, a vivid picture is painted, showing just how difficult a situation the 31st RCT was thrust into. Furthermore, there are many stories of selfless heroism, inspirational leadership, and unbelievable events. Although the end state of the conflict is a very depressing one, upon reflection there are many excellent lessons and takeaways that can be translated to situations in present day times. I have narrowed down the topics I would like to reflect upon into three: 1) An important lesson learned, 2) The human factor in times of turmoil, and 3) The intellectual curiosity and discussion piqued by the book.

As the conflict on the Chosin Reservoir developed, there was one common theme throughout the tale that struck me the most: a lack of communication. This problem occurred at every echelon, with the eventual outcome being that platoons and even squads within the same company did not share the same information. This was a great cause of strife especially when a large muscle move was ordered, such as the convoy LTC Faith ordered at the end of the second night. For example, while the SP time was set for 0430, an entire company did not receive word of the mission until 0500. This type of breakdown in communication absolutely hinders the ability of a unit to function cohesively as a team as can be seen throughout the book. Another aspect of communication that was lacking was actual radio communication. Although ways existed for the 31st RCT to enhance their radio communications both to their higher command as well as internally, this was never made a priority, and in my opinion was one of the deadliest mistakes. As such, the story truly enhanced my opinion that proper communication, both radio and face-to-face are some of the most essential pieces to mission success, especially as the PL of a distribution platoon.

Another topic I wish to touch upon is the human brain and psyche and how it reacts during times of turmoil and hopelessness. There are certain parts of the story and individual actions taken that at first glance did not make logical sense to me as a reader. However, upon further reflection I tried to picture myself in the same situation and came up with some theories

and conclusions. One such situation is the disappearance of Colonel MacLean when he strode across the ice to meet what he thought was the vanguard of his 2nd Battalion. All of the observer accounts state that it was quite clearly Chinese who were firing on him as he walked toward the unknown force, though this did not deter him one bit. My conclusion on the situation was that Colonel MacLean was so set on receiving these reinforcements that he convinced himself that the force across the ice had to be his 2nd Battalion despite being fired upon. Whether it was a case of blind optimism or waning hope will never be known. Another situation which I found interesting was the counterattack volunteered for and organized by First Lieutenant Robert D. Wilson to take back some high ground from the Chinese where they had breached the perimeter. By all accounts I believe Wilson undertook a suicide mission, having almost no equipment and very few men to recapture a position the Chinese maintained excellent firepower on. At this point, I believe it was a high possibility that he undertook it knowing full well how it would end up, and wished to die with valor. These are a few specific examples from the book which I believed provided thoughtful discussion into the human brain and how it reacts to certain scenarios.

I was sitting in Starbucks reading a book one night when a handful of Soldiers walked in, some from my previous platoon and some from my current one. Upon seeing me, they made their way to my table to ask me a question: “Would you ever shoot one of your Soldiers to make a point or statement in a dire combat situation?” Being that we had discussed a version of this question in one of our book discussions I was taken aback for multiple reasons. The first was where they had heard the question come from, and the second that they wanted to discuss the answer to this question long after they had been released from work. We were able to engage in a thought provoking discussion for a few minutes which brought out many differing opinions. It was extremely satisfying to see so many young Soldiers genuinely interested and engaging in intellectual discussion with me as we all shared our ideas. I believe that this moment was the most fulfilling one I got from the reading of the book *East of Chosin* and the book discussions we held and helped me to realize the importance of the program in a much wider spectrum.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

Cody Barger
B CO, 1-16 IN

The National Training Center crushes egos in the middle of July. Bandido Charlie learned this lesson early in the Battalion's recent rotation during our first night in the box, as our new and inexperienced fire support team took the initiative to set up an observation post. Once set, they lost communications with the company but accepted this as fact, and regained radio communications the next morning when they returned to the company command post. This did not make our already disgruntled Company Commander very happy, and he educated the entire company over the radio on the topic. He said: "An OP without comms is just camping!" in a few more words. The lesson we learned that day was not a new one to the United States Army, and a failure to gain and maintain communications with subordinate units, adjacent units, and higher headquarters can have dire consequences. This failure to communicate ultimately overshadowed the heroic actions of the 31st Regimental Combat Team east of the Chosin Reservoir during the Korean War, and contributed significantly to their ultimate destruction.

In his book, *East of Chosin*, Roy Appleman states that "It would be hard to find a more nearly hopeless or more tragic story in American military history (Appleman xii)." This claim implies that nothing could have saved the 31st RCT, and that the Chinese effectively defeated them prior to their occupation of the perimeter at the Pyongnuri-gang inlet on eastern shore of the Chosin Reservoir. I will argue that the 31st RCT failed because they did not gain and maintain communications with adjacent units, higher headquarters, and themselves, and that this singular failure ultimately sealed their fate.

The first sign of communication failure occurred when COL Macclean, the 31st RCT Commander ordered the reconnaissance platoon to investigate reports of a Chinese presence in a town east of the reservoir. The platoon was never heard from again, and after failing to gain communications with the platoon using an enablers sophisticated AC radio, the 31st RCT simply disregarded the implications of the lost platoon, and continued to occupy their positions as ordered. This failure to emphasize communication, or the failure to question what a lack of communication implied in the case of the reconnaissance platoon directly contributed to the 31st RCT occupying the fighting positions where so many would lose their lives.

The 31st RCT occupied their northernmost positions at Pyongnuri-gang inlet immediately after the Marines abandoned the positions to regroup on the western side of the reservoir. The

Marines had been in the area longer than the 31st, and had encountered enough Chinese to determine that at least four Divisions were in the reservoir area. (Appleman 51) This information was passed along to the X Corps, but X Corps never disseminated this information to the 31st RCT. Additionally, the Marines and the Army did not communicate on the same type of frequencies with their conventional radios, but could have communicated with each other through the Forward Air Control center. This was not determined to be a priority, and as a result the intelligence gathered by the Marines was never relayed to the 31st.

The 31st thus occupied battle positions designed for a unit much larger than their own, and without available intelligence of the enemy in the area. We can only speculate as to why the 31st RCT chose to spread their strength over such a large area, but in doing so, communications between the spread out company command posts and the battalion and regimental headquarters became a priority. These communications were established in the 1st Battalion on the first night, as battalion mortars were able to support the infantry companies during the Chinese attack (68). However, the 3rd Battalion did not appear to have the same level of internal communications, as only K Company received the alert from the Battalion Headquarters prior to the Chinese attack on their position (76). Clearly, the internal communications within the various companies of the 31st RCT were imperfect at the start of the battle, and they gradually broke down over the next four days.

In reflecting on their operations at Chosin, MAJ Robert Jones, LTC Faith's adjutant and a former infantry company commander described the reasons why he believed the 31st RCT was doomed from the onset. He said:

> The units were separated and could do very little to support each other. When the Chinese attacked on the night of 27-28 Nov 50 the operation was doomed to failure. The overwhelming strength of the enemy, the dispersion of the US forces, the lack of communication, the dearth of instructions from higher headquarters, the confusion and ultimately the lack of a chain of command above the RCT level, the absence of intelligence, and the lack of logistical and combat support to the RCT dictated the final outcome (320).

Of the seven factors MAJ Jones mentions, only "the overwhelming strength of the enemy" could not have been remedied with a greater emphasis on communication.

The unfortunate fate of the 31st RCT at Chosin will never truly be understood, but if Appleman's book alludes to one single factor that doomed the soldiers on the eastern side of the

lake, it was the inability to communicate, and a lack of emphasis on constant communication that ultimately led to their demise. This is important to remember, and it is not a lesson that can be re-learned without a similar terrifying cost. It is the mission of the Combined Division to "Fight Tonight and Win", but if we do not learn from the mistakes of our predecessors on the peninsula we are doomed to suffer their same tragic fate.

Andrew Gerken
HHC, 1-16 IN

Over the 7 weeks of reading, the weekly discussions within the Company and the capstone Read2Lead event with the entire battalion, there was one instance that stuck with me and left an impression. That instance was one seemingly small decision made by LTC Faith to discount the Marines advice to wait on regimental strength before occupying the area of the reservoir. This seemingly small decision had a huge impact on the rest of the operation. I have come to find in my relatively short career in the military, and in school studying business administration, that it is commonly smaller decisions and practices that have the largest impacts on organizations. I will highlight examples I have experienced with this philosophy of strategic minimal decisions with large effects, specifically how LTC Faith could have benefitted from listening to the guy on the ground, as highlighted by Pete Blaber in the book, *The Mission, the Men and Me*.

As the 31st Regimental Combat Team began to build combat power in preparation for what they thought would be an attack North, COL MacLean informed LTC Faith that his Battalion would be attached to the RCT. LTC Faith then made a decision that would violate a very simple principle that proved to be their first, and I believe largest mistake of the fight in the coming days. LTC Faith chose not to listen to the guy on the ground, "Faith asked permission to move to the forward Marine position the next morning after the Marines had vacated it. MacLean approved the request. Faith, in making this proposal, did not follow the Marines caution in assembling regimental strength before moving farther into the unknown" (Appleman 31). LTC Faith violated a basic decision making principle when it comes to leading men into combat, he did not listen to the guy on the ground.

The Mission, the Men, and Me is a book of guiding principles refined over a career in special operations written by Pete Blaber. The author uses his experience in combat throughout

the 90's and early 2000's to share his leadership maxims; and how they can be used to navigate the complexities of combat through his examples, but can just as easily be applied to business or any venture in our lives. Blaber highlights 5 main principles that when properly applied can provide great success to any organization. They are: "The Mission, the Men and Me"; "Don't get treed by a Chihuahua"; "Imagine the unimaginable, humor your imagination"; "When in doubt, and develop the situation"; "Always listen to the guy on the ground"; "it's not reality unless it's shared". The most important of these as it applies to *East of Chosin* is listening to the guy on the ground, always. This is defined as listening to those who are interacting with the environment and can provide the best insight into the realities of the area and the situation. Blaber explains that even with all their extensive reading, research, and imagery of an area they planned an extensive training event at, they weren't prepared fully when the event started. It was not until they spoke to a local Park Ranger, that they were able to gain the context they needed to be successful.

In my very short military and professional life I have come to notice a pattern of applying small, important maxims at the right time, are capable of having the greatest effect. One of the greatest training events I have been lucky enough to participate in was a shooting and CQB course put on by AWG just months before my deployment to Sadr City, Iraq. In there one of our instructors emphasized to us that there is no such thing as advanced skills and drills, just a mastery of the basics while under stress. This was one of the first instances that stuck with me of the idea that great results don't come from some magically complex decision or process, just the proper application of the basics. Another example is when I was completing my business administration degree I watched numerous Ted Talks with incredibly brilliant people preaching very basic ideas. These ideas, from business to leadership to creativity were almost always founded on very simple basic principles. The value was in actually applying them and living them.

I fully appreciate the value of seemingly small decisions and maxims can have an exponentially large impact on an organization. Pete Blaber emphasizes his as they apply to combat. I don't believe any of these ideas would be new to anyone they were presented to. But similar to the idea of advanced shooting tactics, it's the application of these ideas under stress that are important in combat and the preparation leading to. I am hard pressed to believe that no one in the vicinity of LTC Faith and the Marines conversation would have thought that they

should heed the warning of those who had been interacting with the environment and had the best on ground assessment of where the 31st RCT was heading towards.

I am not sure what caused LTC Faith to discount the advice of building Regimental strength first before into the unknown. Call it pride, pressure from higher to advance or just an ignorance of the severity of the situation. LTC Faith violated further Blaber maxims of developing the situation when in doubt and prioritizing decisions based the mission and the men before himself. That short account of LTC Faith's decision very early on in the book stuck with me as I read on and during every discussion. Could it have saved the American Forces from almost complete annihilation? Could it have accomplished the mission without the severe loss of American lives? It is easy to sit back and say what could have been better 67 years later, but I believe whole heartedly that listening to the guy on the ground would have done nothing but improve the situation for the 31st RCT in accomplishment of its mission and lives saved of the men who fought east of the Chosin Reservoir. This is a prime illustration of the simple organization effecting decisions that I will work to implement in whatever leadership role I may find myself, from combat to garrison to business.

Tashi Ghale
B CO, 1-16 IN

Roy Appleman's *East of Chosin* is primarily an account of the destruction of the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT) – Task Force MacLean and Task Force Faith. COL Allan MacLean was the commander of the 31st RCT which comprised of approximately 3,000 troops to include 700 KATUSA Soldiers. LTC Don Faith was the commander of 1-32nd Infantry Regiment and worked for COL MacLean. In essence the annihilation of the 31st RCT allowed other US Forces units to withdraw and ultimately led to a cease-fire.

On 27th November 1950, Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) 80th Division encircled the unsuspecting units of Task Force MacLean and attacked it vigorously over the course of several days. The 31st RCT fought courageously and on many occasions successfully repelled CCF's frontal attacks resulting in thousands of enemy personnel killed. However, the continuous onslaught of Chinese Soldiers was too much to bear and when the dust finally settled only 385 US Soldiers survived.

One might wonder as to what went wrong? There were several mistakes made. The disappearance of 31st's Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) platoon was clearly an indicator that something was amiss. Intelligence derived from captured prisoners and supportive locals did not align with higher's intel report. Failure to analyze probing attacks and the reluctance of senior Officers to accept the factual data from the ground (among other things) ultimately contributed to the demise of the 31st RCT and the subsequent defeat of US Forces.

Lessons learned. Always follow-up with your elements. When the I&R team/platoon fails to report back one needs to be cognizant and immediately start to try to make contact. If possible send out a search party and notify Higher of the situation. Prisoners are notorious for giving false information. However, when several prisoners captured separately provide a similar account of enemy's situation and plan then one needs to definitely look into it. Use of supportive locals to your market advantage should not be ignored but rather utilized to the utmost benefit. As an Officer one must be courageous enough to realize when the situation at- hand is spiraling out of control and accept the facts in order to adapt to the constantly changing situation so as to enable overall mission success. One must also be courageous enough to speak-up when you know there are holes in the plan - confront it tactfully and professionally.

I am not sure how I would have conducted myself. Looking back, it is relatively easy to express opinions and suggestions based on what you know. However, when one finds oneself in a similarly unpleasant situation with an almost impossible and surely a suicide mission, it could be of no surprise when the end result turns out to be the same. I believe the Soldiers on the ground did their best with what they had i.e., almost everything was working against them and yet they managed to put up a great fight. They were eventually sacrificed for the greater good that is to save the remainder of the US Forces. However, the outcome could have been completely different if only the General Officers had accepted the realities and intel from the ground early on.

Thomas Grages
B CO, 1-16 IN

"I believe that for most of us it was just another terrible part of an already unbelievable situation which progressively worsened." (Appleman 215) Roy E. Appleman's *East of Chosin*

depicts the actions of the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT) and their terrible fate in the Chosin Reservoir. In the quote above, MAJ Miller, Executive Officer of 1-32 IN, describes the final moments of the Battalion's effort to reach friendly Marines across the frozen reservoir. Not only does the quote describe their final realization of failure, but it epitomizes their demise from the onset. I chose to focus this analysis of the battle at the battalion/regimental level and lower because far too often, we criticize the actions of field grade officers without more thorough scrutiny. Though their decisions undoubtedly directly affected the subordinate units, the responsibility also lays at the level of Battalion/Regimental leadership. Clearly there were many aspects of the situation which contributed to the failure of the 31st RCT but, after careful examination, massive failures in communication, control, and sustainment had the most devastating effect on the 31st RCT.

For one to truly grasp what happened, it is important to briefly note the overall situation of friendly and enemy forces during this part of the Korean War. In short, the 31st RCT was banded together as an ad hoc unit whose mission was to push north, clearing the Chosin Reservoir all the way to the Yalu River with the help of the rest of the 7th ID and the Marines. The unit was expected to receive little resistance from the North Koreans and even less from the Chinese. In reality, the red flags were waving early, painting a picture of impending danger to the North. For example, an intelligence officer had interrogated many Korean civilians moving south past the friendly Americans. On the interrogation's findings Appleman writes, "They had revealed that there were Chinese soldiers in the vicinity who had said that they intended to recapture the reservoir area within three to five days." (30) However, many of these accounts were dismissed because the 31st RCT had yet to run into the enemy. This proved to be a fatal mistake, because within days the RCT would be completely enveloped by multiple divisions of the Communist Chinese Forces (CCF).

One of the biggest contributors to the RCT's downfall, was the lack of communication. Far too often, soldiers at all levels were left without a clear understanding of the situation because information had failed to be passed along and disseminated. The failure in communication is apparent right away and, at one point hours after CCF's initial assault, LTC Faith, the Battalion Commander of 1-32 IN, still had not known the 31st RCT was under attack. The author describes the confusing situation when he quotes CPT Bigger, Commander of D Company, "After I returned to the BN CP we were still trying to piece together what was

happening. As I remember, Lt. Col. Faith was still planning an attack of sorts the next morning. We couldn't understand why we could not get the artillery support we needed-we had not yet, as far as I know-been informed that the 31st was under attack.'" (71) Perhaps the most devastating effect that the lack of communication had was when the 31st Tank Company prematurely abandoned their defensive position before the 31st RCT was ready to breakout. The presence of the tank company at Hudong-ni was, effectively, what kept the CCF from establishing punishing resistance to the withdrawal. Once they left, the CCF was able to emplace a roadblock supplemented with a fire block at the hairpin curve on the east side of Hill 1221. To this day, there are disputes as to who gave the order to leave the crucial position. Sadly, it is probable that hundreds of lives would have been saved if the tanks had withdrawn in synchronization with the 31st RCT.

In addition to the failure in communication, loss of control by leaders amongst all levels of the unit greatly added to the destruction of the 31st RCT. When the concept of control comes to mind, I think of two fundamental elements: discipline and mission command. "Army Doctrine Publication 6-0" defines control as "…the regulation of forces and warfighting functions to accomplish the mission in accordance with the commander's intent" (ADP 6-0 page 2-12). Many times throughout East of Chosin, leaders lost control or never had control of their formations. The commander's intent was either completely ignored or was never communicated in the first place. For example, upon hearing the decision to withdraw, many units took it upon themselves to move out in desperation, not bothering to disseminate any information or have any semblance of control. CPT Jordan, Commander of M Company, describes a hectic situation where he was never notified to withdraw. Only by observing the withdrawal of the 3rd BN CP, does he give the command for his company to move out (198). The last straw of control seems to break when the convoy is completely enveloped in the open, taking heavy fire from hilltop 1221. To make matters worse, 3-31 IN had completely vacated their responsibility as the rear guard resulting in effective direct fire becoming fiercer from the rear. The profound lack of discipline proved extremely fatal for 31st RCT.

Lastly, the sustainment catastrophe augmented the 31st RCT's problems to a scale that they could not recover from. One of the most devastating weapon systems of the friendly unit was the dual-40. This weapon system coupled with CPT McClymont's leadership helped save countless lives. The largest failure in sustainment occurred when the shells were dropped at the

31st Tank Company's location, instead of TF Faith's location. As to the importance of the 40 mm shells, the author writes, "The failure of the airdrops to deliver the right ammunition and supplies to the intended area had serous results. Captain McClymont's dual-40 guns did not receive a single resupply shell during the entire time they were in the Chosin Reservoir battles" (155). Early during the breakout, the weapon systems had completely run out of ammunition, resulting in a loss of the Battalion's main organic fire power. In addition to the 40 mm shell mishap, the unit was poorly equipped at the start. For example, small arms lacked powder to lubricate in the cold, the soldiers lacked basic cold weather gear like coats and fur hats, and many of the vehicles ran out of gas.

Though the disaster at Chosin probably could have been avoided, there are learning points that Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers alike can learn from. One important value from the book that resonates with me is discipline. Whether it's individual soldiers displaying the mental fortitude to take the hard route and clear the high ground, or junior officers leading a charge up a hill into certain death, one cannot put a price on discipline. It is also important to remember the heroic actions of many soldiers. Had it not been for CPT Stamford's timely airstrikes, or CPL Godfrey's successful defense of a CCF onslaught, there would be countless more deaths. Undeniably, there were staggering failures in communication, control, and sustainment. In fact, these failures resulted in over 2,500 casualties. Too often we focus on the victorious battles that our military has fought. However, I would argue that it is just as important to analyze the failures and reading this book has taught invaluable lessons that I will carry with me forever.

Christopher Lacroix
B CO, 1-16 IN

I would like to start this reflection by stating that *East of Chosin* is a truly amazing and inspiring story that demonstrates the will power and fight the American soldier has inside of them. When reflecting on this book, and a thought that was in my mind the entire time reading it, was how easy this situation can become any Army unit. More specifically, after participating in Warrior Strike V and failing my Company with a poor security posture, then to read this book and see how detrimental their mistakes were, I could not help but think of my own unit. I learned that you can fight and win all day and think you know all the answers, but the enemy will

strike when you least expect it, and the unit will pay heavily. Not only do I understand what the 31st RCT went through at Chosin, I apply it to my own training with my Platoon to make sure we will be better in the future and to ensure the men are ready to fight when given the worst conditions and equipment.

There are many hard lessons learned in *East of Chosin*, ranging from having the proper supplies to keep the equipment functional to having enough cold weather clothing. One of the largest lessons that I learned from *East of Chosin* was how important it is to have constant communication with higher and with adjacent units. Keeping constant communications with the elements to your left and right is imperative and needs to be addressed instantly if it is lost. Without knowing the status of those other elements could end in catastrophe for your unit and the same if one were to lose communication with higher. How are leaders supposed to know the most recent intelligence reports or what the status of their organization is? This situation came up early on in chapter 2 when the soldiers state "they were concerned after 24 hours after not hearing from Coke". I think that is unbelievable that a unit went 24 hours without communication and did not take action to fix the situation and that an entire Platoon can just vanish. Another time lack of communication came into play that stuck out to me was in chapter 5 when the 31st RCT was setting up a security position with a road in between Platoons, leaving a huge high avenue of approach gap in their security. Additionally, several of the support elements were pushed back up against the reservoir which I think was poor planning on the 31st RCT's part as that does not leave much room in case of a retrograde. The big take away from this lesson is the importance of keeping constant communication with adjacent units and higher headquarters. Commanders need a clear and up to date picture of what the battlefield looks like in order to make well educated and sound decisions while in combat.

Another part of *East of Chosin* that I reflect heavily on as it pertains to my experience in 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, is the outstanding leadership of the NCOs in the 31st RCT. I truly believe the NCOs in that unit are the reason they lasted as long as they did. Not to mention many officers dying during this battle, but the non-commissioned officers really stepped up to the plate when they were needed and kept order when there was none. Even though the soldiers had never fought together before or come from the same background, the NCOs kept them together and provided enough strength in them to stay and fight and even obey orders that were not always in their best interest at the time.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

The last learning point I want to cover from this event is how the Army does not train for retrogrades. Table XII here in Korea was my first time in my career in the Army that I have trained to retrograde and it was a wakeup call for me and added an entirely new planning process to my order. That process alone from table XII was just retrograding my Platoon, I cannot imagine the planning process for a Battalion or more. There were several ethical dilemmas with LTC Faith's order to retrograde and that was leaving back hundreds of dead and wounded, something the Army also does not do. That is a decision hopefully no leader has to make but unfortunately some do and in this case, I feel that the 31st did the right thing by beginning a retrograde and kept up the fight against the Chinese which ultimately lead to the retrograde of other units to safety. That is an important lesson from *East of Chosin* to remember that operations are not always in favor of your level per say, but usually the mission comes from a much higher one for a greater picture on a larger scale. Hard choices will have to be made from time to time and the training these leaders had paid off. They did the best they could with the equipment and men they had.

To bring it all together at the end of this reflection, there are countless lessons that I learned from the 31st RCT's mistakes that I can apply to training to ensure my men are better off and well trained from having great NCOs and rehearsing retrogrades. *East of Chosin* is a tragedy and also a story of valor and courage that America should be proud of to have men like that. Overall, *East of Chosin* was an exhilarating read at times and I was shocked that some of the text in the book were of real events that took place. The men in the 31st RCT had it rough and still fought through it until the end. I look forward to passing this book on to a peer in the future and talking about it with my men.

Brian Manning
D TRP, 1-4 CAV

The loss of the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT) at The Battle of Chosin can be accredited to numerous factors. Failed sequence of events, missed opportunities, poor communication and sheer bad luck all played into Task Force Faith's destruction. A major factor that stuck out throughout each chapter was the lack of planning, reconnaissance and guidance generated and issued by the 31st Battalion staff and higher echelon headquarters.

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In today's Army, line company leadership and Soldiers have the tendency to blame BN Staff, as a scapegoat, for poorly planned events and failures, whether true or not. Planning for over 800 Soldiers, accounting for infinite what ifs and external factors is difficult. Battalion level staff and higher set the conditions for future operations and smooth friction points before they become problems. East of Chosin clearly shows without MDMP and guidance from higher echelons companies are set up for imminent failure.

When I arrived at Fort Riley I was assigned to 3-66 AR and placed in the S3 shop. I arrived two weeks prior to Danger Focus when 1BDE entered a large key collective training density. With all Platoon Leader slots filled and crews certified I realized I would be in the S3 shop until the end of NTC. Battalion Staff work was a complete shock and different than what I expected. I had no prior training or experience with staff work and my mind set was not suited for the job. I quickly learned I worked in support of three maneuver companies and everything I did was to aid in their mission. My time on BN Staff was short lived (thank God) but the experience broadened my perspective on how the Army functions and left me with a more open mind set as a Platoon Leader.

Task Force Faith's failure made me realize the importance of a BN Staff, especially in a combat environment. I believe the companies failed because the 31st RCT BN Staff failed itself. Communication and guidance were not existent leaving companies to fend for themselves. The excerpts below give a firsthand account, at the company level, the lack of synchronization and leadership from the BN staff. Captain Erwin Bigger, commanded the Weapons Company within 1-32 IN and summarized the Chosin operation with the following:

> Small unit leadership was as good as it could have been. Squad and Platoon Leaders acted professionally and bravely. Company commanders exposed themselves and were unselfish in performing their responsibilities… We were frustrated however by the lack of specific instructions from senior officers. We were not sure who to look for or from what headquarters we were to receive our orders. It is obvious that although senior officers could get in by helicopter, not one came to take over elements of two different combat teams. And there was certainly a lack of coordination of the 7th Division units in the Chosin area. We never knew that there were other 7th Division units as close to us as two miles. (Appleman 217).

LT Mortrude explained the lack of BN planning of the retrograde of the 31 RCT saying:

> In my opinion retrograde movement must be at least as well planned as the conventional attack. There must, in fact, be much greater emphasis on details of

> command, control, and coordination. If, for example, we had been assigned successive objectives as control measures, the critical pass of the road through ground which we has seized with our spontaneous assault would not have been left uncovered. Also, there apparently was little effort on the part of the 7th Division. (Appleman 219)

Beside for the hasty retrograde plan, at no point did LTC Faith bring in the company commanders for an OPORD, huddle or any type of synchronization meeting. Communication was nonexistent. Where was the S2 providing NAI's and updated enemy SITEMPS? Why wasn't the S6 working continuously to bring up radio communication and provide enablers, like TACP CPT Stamford, the right radio fills for mission success? The S4 left the companies with no ammunition or supplies against an attacking force. To me, if any effort or resemblance of planning had been made and disseminated Task Force Faith could have defended successfully. Ultimately, the responsibility relays on LTC Faith and the BN XO to ensure the staff completes its mission to make the company's successful. In the end, Task Force Faith may not have been successful at Chosin, but if the staff had done its job many lives and the unit could have been saved.

Tyree Meadows
A CO, 1-16 IN

The men in "East of Chosin" particularly the leadership, would take solace in Theodore Roosevelt's word in Sorbonne placing the "doer of deeds" ahead of the critic. As students, critics, observers and relating epithets, we oft state the "should have, would have, and could haves" of men who were acting to the best of their ability while the events of history are more complex as "history is made by human beings, and in the case of military history, mainly by people under pressure, and usually in circumstances of chaos, danger, and incomplete and frequently conflicting information." We instead of following in a thread of "fire and forget" critiques of these men's actions and instead evaluate our unit, and army's capabilities to fight in similar conditions and overcome the same forms of adversity. In that spirit, I believe our unit and Army's ability to overcome these issues relies on the leaders from strategic to tactical ability to interpret and internalize of the men who have fought before us.

While the men of Chosin were placed in a unique predicament, their issues are not uncommon from armies that have fought before them. Without giving a book summary of "East

of Chosin" a common thread of issues faced by the 31st RCT consisted of lack of initiative, communication failures, and tactical withdrawal capabilities. These issues are not unique to 31st RCT, the Korean War or even the American Army as these are problems that have been faced and overcame by leaders, from Napoleon to Petraeus, and their lessons in recent years have been emphasized by maneuver officer development beginning at the commissioning level.[1]
In addressing the aforementioned issues, I will rely solely on examples that the leaders of Chosin could have researched in their own professional development, as tool of comparison of not only lessons they could of learned but to also show the prophetic tendencies of military history.

Issues

The first issue that will be evaluated is the lack of initiative, which contemporary officers may recognize as a key component of "*Mission Command*" as partly defined in ADRP 6-0 as"… the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative…"[2] While this initiative was first published by the US Army in 2012 the principles were established in the early 1800's by Prussian Generals and used against Allied forces in WWI by the Germans under the name *Auftragstaktik* which is a tactical and leadership principle the believes in empowering subordinates to take initiative in battle to capture victory or prevent defeat.[3] It was developed from the devastating defeats by Napoleon and would shape and refine the Prussian-German military in every war since. Their defeat led to knowledge, which American Generals such as MacArthur could have taken and utilized in their command structure in Korea which would have led to dissemination of execution decisions to the leaders on the ground who had a clearer picture of the fight, and potentially led to an early withdrawal, or even greater initiative at the company and platoon levels and allowed them to be proactive instead of reactive.

On the subject of communications failures, many of them men who fought in the Korean War would have been no more than a few generations removed from the soldiers who fought in WWI, and could have been aware of the stories of Colonel Whittlesey's 308th IN, known as the "*Lost Battalion.*" In the testimonies of the events that occurred throughout their altercation it is clear that vary effectiveness of communication between higher and air support greatly impacted

[1] http://www.benning.army.mil/MSSP/Military%20History/
[2] https://aadrake.com/static/ADP-6-0-Mission-Command.pdf
[3] http://www.ramblemuse.com/rmtp/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Widder_2002_Auftragstaktik_MilRevr.pdf

the mission's success.[4] Similarly in both Chosin and the 308th case there were events of fratricide and failed air drops, however in the instances of the 308th there was paramount priority placed on continuously establishing communication with higher and adjacent units. While many of these methods were unsuccessful, if the 31st RCT would have placed such an emphasis on communication they may have been able to relay messages to adjacent units and paint a clearer picture for higher command in Japan.

At a tactical level, the planning and execution of the defense and follow on withdrawal was in many ways disastrous, and while these tactical task are rarely spoken of in high esteem, they could be contributed to saving our country from defeat as executed by then General George Washington in the Battle of Long Island. The circumstances Washington faced were potentially being routed and captured by an overwhelming force, and instead of accept defeat he led his men through a deceptive withdrawal to evade the enemy and fight another day.[5] His lesson was learned and executed by allied forces in Gallipoli more than a century later where they withdrew an even larger force to safety under the fire of an overwhelming force through hasty yet meticulous planning and execution.[6] Many factors contribute to the 31st failure in this category yet, regardless of which is chosen the fact remains the evacuation was not properly planned, briefed or executed which led to a greater number of prisoners and causalities.

Reflection

In holding true to the proclamation in the introduction of refraining from hollow critiques, as an army the development occurs in our self-reflection.

As following the sequence above we shall begin with initiative. Mission Command has been clearly defined as both a warfighting function and a philosophy, however it can be questioned if these are espoused or enacted values. Mission Command places the responsibility on commanders, subordinates and every soldier in that order to ensure mission success, as a result with each echelon of a unit there are questions that should be asked. Are the leaders trained well enough to accomplish the mission with minimal guidance? Are subordinate leaders trained up and understand the outlook of their leadership? Is the intent and spirit of the mission

[4] http://www.worldwar1.com/dbc/whitt.htm
[5] https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/27/nyregion/the-battle-of-brooklyn-a-loss-that-helped-win-the-revolution.html?_r=0
[6] http://www.gallipoli.gov.au/north-beach-and-the-sari-bair-range/evacuation-of-anzac.php

disseminated to the lowest level? While answering these questions each unit from the team level to theater will have to be honest and critical in order to truly evaluate their capabilities.

Another common thread addressed were the difficulties in communication, particularly adjacent units and air support. In the current task organization there are soldiers down to the platoon level whom are trained and tested on their ability to communicate with both rotary and fixed wing air craft. Each echelon is also given officers whom are expected to be subject matter experts with both communication standard operating procedures and capabilities, with specialty personnel allocated to communicate cross-branch. However, what kind of Joint Military communications have we as an Army established and trained? At the tactical level, have leaders considered, and rehearsed operations with degraded communications capabilities and exercised their contingency plans? I believe this is an area that has been emphasized in my own unit, yet I am unable to speak for all, because if only one end of the radio works both parties still face a higher probability of defeat.

Lastly the tactical training of a proper defense and deliberate withdrawal goes in stark contrast in many of the values of American exceptionalism and army creeds. As an infantry officer you are trained that retreating is a battle drill that is not important, as Americans we never retreat. Yet history has proved this to be false, while the culture still persists in our military. In my own unit we have had a personal experience which highlighted the importance of defense and have gown greatly from that. Prior to that crucible however I am unsure as a unit or leader I would have placed such an emphasis on retrograde operations.

Conclusion

I have always been interested in history, and a believer that "those who don't learn history, are doomed to repeat it." Especially in our profession, where the history directly applies to our conduct now. I like to think that we as an army have learned from our mistakes and are working to continuously improve, however our success will depend on our ability to read, understand, and adopt the AARs.

Deaven Miller
B CO, 1-16 IN

The lessons I drew from *East of Chosin* are a direct reflection from the book's vast amounts of information of the event of the 31st RCT on the Korean Peninsula in 1950. I focused

on a few lessons which I believe the author, Mr. Roy Appleman, gave the largest amount of data to support. Holding this book as a true historical account, as so the individual events depicted within it, *East of Chosin* is fairly rendered as a record of data. The data must then be taken and molded into a lesson derived from the experiences presented from the soldiers of 31st RCTs, so that those of us who may find ourselves in such a situation may result in a better fate.
Two great mistakes characterized the leadership's inability to accomplish the 31st RCT's objective: communications planning and enforcing soldier discipline. The facts then reveal communications between almost every element was extremely strained.

The first Chinese attack on Alpha Company on the night of the 27th began at 2300, the Battalion CP did not learn of the attack until 0100, by which time the battle had bled into Charlie Company's position. When the battalion leadership did learn of the attack, the information was outdated. The result was an established posture of playing catch up in attempting to understand what was happening with each Company. This evidence points to lack of a communications plan as a major factor in the 31st RCT's fate at the reservoir. Further evidence of communications failure is recorded upon the BN's plan to retrograde, when it required four hours for Battalion Commander LTC Faith's order to withdraw to reach all the Company leadership. Additionally, the Chinese were able to break through so much of Alpha Company's lines due to soldiers falling asleep in their fighting positions. This was a result of the leadership's inability to plan a rest and security plan and then to enforce this plan. The seriousness of the situation had not been presented to the troops and as such their need to pull security was not a top priority in the minds of the soldiers. It is a failure on the officers and senior NCOs at the platoon level to instill the gravity of the situation when no one can see it.

I possess a greater sense of the importance of the resolve and skill an individual Soldier was able to bring to the fight and so influence the events of battle for the 31st RCT. Captain Edward Stamford, who determined in a moment that he needed to assume the role of Alpha Company decision maker upon the sudden death of its commander, is evidence of such a conclusion. Although not an infantry man at the time, he possessed the primary resource a skilled officer can bring to a fight, an ability to make calculated decisions quickly. Eventually returning to his role as the Battalion's forward air controller he is revealed to have inflicted great destruction on the enemy due to great proficiency in his field. Further evidence is found in the individual Corporal James Godfrey, when Appleman revels the capability of a single soldier, so

highly skilled with a 75mm recoilless rifle, that he successfully destroys two to three tanks, a follow on assault wave of approximately one-hundred foot soldiers, and a mortar position. Furthermore, Appleman does not portray this account as a solution of merely a powerful weapon system by revealing "Another 75mm crew located there- did not repeated Godfrey's success. The crew fired one shot--(the) Chinese dragged the weapon away." Again, *East of Chosin* is a record of statistics and facts. The conclusion I have no uncertainties arriving to, from the data shown, tells Corporal Godfrey and Captain Stanford possessed the skill and confidence to accomplish a task their fellow soldiers could not. What would have resulted if both 75mm recoilless rifle teams were capable of inflicting the casualties a single team…the data would have reflected. If the supply personnel were so skilled at ordering resupply and efficient at securing distribution to the line companies; if each rifleman was so skilled with his weapon, with preparing his fighting position, in hand to hand combat; if the medics were so skilled at rapidly removing injured from the front lines and quickly jumping the medical tent to new locations; if the junior NCOs and officers were so skilled in motivating their troops and maneuvering their elements; if the senior NCOs and officers were so skilled at coordinating elements and planning…what would the data have revealed? If we as leaders work to inspire such level of skill for our Soldiers in their role in this fighting force and we ourselves are so dedicated to become equally skilled at maneuvering and coordinating each of these individuals…we become a skilled force, a skilled unit. Very few would believe it was vain what CPL Godfrey was able to accomplish, though the unit was defeated, instead of concluding it was due to their being less individuals like him which carried the battles result.

Mr. Appleman produced an extraordinary portrait of a single moment in U.S. military history. With painstaking detail, a multitude of sources, and seven years' worth of dedication, he gave us a tool to train upon. Essentially this is what *East of Chosin* becomes, a means of preparing for a future fight. As the range is to our marksmanship, a gunnery table is to our crew firepower capabilities, and physical fitness is to our body's performance on the battlefield, a book like Appleman's is to the military a leader's decision making process. Why make the same mistakes which resulted in a 28/40 marksmanship score over and over, when you can accept a correction, implement the correction, and hit your target. Why lack a solid communications PACE plan, or fail to enforce basic discipline among soldiers when the results of such decisions

are shown in transparent detail. How do you learn, unless you either experience an event and accept the lesson, or accept a lesson from someone else's experience?

David Pham
D TRP, 1-4 CAV

East of Chosin by Roy E. Appleman prompts many questions on the 'why' and 'what-ifs' to delve into the reasoning for actions the 31st RCT soldiers and leadership took. Throughout the reading, Chosin has not changed my perspective regarding habits and motivation of successful leadership. On the contrary, it has reinforced my views throughout the book. Individuals and leaders will be successful through habits and not necessarily motivation. Motivation wanes. It cannot be manufactured; it is an intrinsic product that is too easily devastated by emotions and swayed by external conditions. Habits stand the test of time. They are repetition, muscle memory, and standard operating procedures.

There is truth to "old habits die hard". An individual is built by habits. Cold weather, unclear guidance, counteractive command climate, and combat easily breaks down motivation. Habits will sustain an individual as the fight continues well past initial contact. I suspect that Corporal Godfrey's (D Company) success on the 75mm recoilless rifle was due to his adherence to training. He was just as cold and tired as everyone else. Captain Stamford and Lieutenant Mortrude are other examples of habits over motivation. Chosin delves highly into their background. They continue to lead from the first night until the linkup at Hagaru-ri following the breakout attempt. This is in stark contrast to many nameless soldiers mentioned throughout the reading. When the conditions of the foxholes and battle positions were introduced, officer and NCOs were weary of checking the line. Soldiers and KATUSA, when "threatened… they still dozed in the holes when they should have been watchful" (69). Not to say that the entire success or failure of the 31st RCT rested solely on these individual alone, but their inactions were felt across the formation.

From Chosin, there is not a fundamental departure from conventional wisdom. We train as we fight. Heed not, then failure is certain. This is why standard operating procedures are emplaced. That is why rehearsals are conducted. Higher echelon requires coordination through its subordinate units, down to the individual. The individual has the responsibility of having to perform. It would be very easy blame leadership for lacking of trying to instill motivation. At the

first road block during the breakout attempt, why did soldiers bypass an obstacle rather than clear through? It would seem obvious to return fire and cover fire for an assaulting element to flank.

The outcomes at Chosin were result of individual failures that snowballed to higher echelon. It is not a result of the failure of the officers and NCOs. Soldiers' motivation will always wane, regardless of the need to perform. Being able to perform, through repetition or sheer habit, does not necessarily require motivation. Units need cohesion through adherence of habits created by the command climate. It is easy to look back in hindsight to assume that soldiers of the 31st RCT acted the way they did through lack of motivation.

This is not to say that the individual is the critical factor that sways the tides of war toward victory or defeat, but rather, it is higher echelon's systematic approach to forming deeply engrained patterns of behavior within the individual.

The way forward is applying a leadership style within a command climate that cultivates success and also does not undermine morale. Habits create actions which sets the conditions for success. Though motivation cannot be manufactured and is inherently temporary, it doesn't hurt to have some motivation sprinkled in every now and then.

Samuel Port
G CO, 1-16 IN

East of Chosin by Roy E. Appleman was an interesting account of the 31st RCT's demise at Chosin. The soldiers at Chosin faced impossible odds and their leaders faced numerous challenges that had to be overcome for them to even try and survive. Looking back on the accounts now it seems like there were numerous mistakes that were made, not just from the officers of the RCT but from numerous generals as well. I believe what began the chain of events that led to the annihilation of the 31st RCT was due to the mind-set of these leaders. They were destroyed due to arrogance.

The Korean War began shortly after the end of WWII, where America defeated not only the Germans in Europe but the Japanese in the Pacific. America asserted itself as a major world power and believed that their military might made them virtually unstoppable, especially towards non-European countries. To them, the Korean War was going to be easy because before this the Japanese were the biggest threat in Asia, and with their defeat that meant America was the top

dog in the region as well, no one could stop them. After all, what could a country of little yellow men do against the might of America?

Arrogance made it easy for generals to dismiss the Chinese threat as at most a nuisance that could be easily dealt with. This was the biggest mistake of the leadership. When the Chinese came down and started to attack American troops the initial thought of the generals was that it could not possibly be the actual Chinese army, if anything they were just a small group of volunteers. Even when captured Chinese prisoners admitted to being a part of the Chinese army the notion was dismissed. General MacArthur would not be deterred on his attack toward the Korean border, he believed that, "…the Chinese would not dare cross the Yalu in force but if they did his air force would destroy them." His arrogance made him vastly underestimate the Chinese and overestimate the capability of the air force to stop them. It was unfortunate that even when contrary information was gathered, they were dismissed because it did not fit the beliefs of the leaders.

The lack of communication during the entire operation also negated any chance for survival. Information flow occurred slowly, if at all, at all echelons during this operation. There were multiple battles between the Chinese and the X Corp before Chosin but somehow the information was never distributed. This could have also been due to the arrogance of the U.S. forces. When the 8th Cavalry Regiment was destroyed by the Chinese it was blamed on the regiment for not establishing adequate security; causing them to become overrun. The main source of miscommunication was between the Marines and the Army. The Marines also encountered numerous Chinese forces and they even had intel that there were four divisions of Chinese soldiers were in the Chosin reservoir area, yet that information never got to the 31st RCT.

There are two main lessons I think can be learned from this account, you should never underestimate the enemy nor overestimate yourself and that communication is key. The fault of the generals lie in hubris, they believed their strength was absolute and that no one would dare challenge them. However, when evidence showed that their initial reasoning was flawed, MacArthur and other generals rejected the facts in favor of their beliefs. By the time they realized that the Chinese did dare to fight them, and were consequently winning, it was already too late to effectively plan to fight them. They had to sacrifice the 31st RCT in order to save the 1st Marine Division. It may have been possible to effectively drive the Chinese off if the

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American forces did not underestimate the Chinese and took the indication of a Chinese offensive seriously. This ties into the communication aspect as well. If information was able to flow smoothly not only between the Army forces but the Marines as well a more accurate picture of the situation could have been painted. With this accurate portrait drawn leaders could have possibly come up with better solutions. For instance, COL Maclean may have decided to occupy the Marine defense differently and not have LTC Faith overstretch and occupy the hill. I believe that if the leaders did not underestimate their enemy the events that occurred at Chosin would have unfolded differently.

Taylor Richard
A CO, 1-16 IN

Disregarding all spectacle and self-righteousness, what is the true responsibility of an officer in the United States Army? When faced with imminent death or surrender, why do some units thrive while others fall into chaos? These were the harsh questions that I was forced to grapple with while reading *East of Chosin*, and discovering the story of the near total destruction of the 31st RCT at the turning point of the Korean War. As an Army and as a country, we tend to glorify our victories and simply ignore our defeats. However, the harsh realities and lessons that can be gleaned from those fateful days near the Chosin Reservoir are invaluable to current and future Army leaders.

Combat arms officers in the US Army are managers of violence who must utilize all the assets at their disposal, and sometimes sacrifice them, in order to accomplish their mission. This was the first uncomfortable truth that *East of Chosin* forced me to reckon with. It was a common reoccurrence throughout the battle. For example, on page 180, Appleman states, "Barr told Smith about the 500 wounded to be brought out in any breakout attempt from the Task Force Faith perimeter and said that this would be his biggest handicap." In other words, from LTC Faith up, leaders were struggling with the idea that it may be necessary to leave the wounded if the 31st RCT was to limp away from the battle. After the December 1st bombing and strafing runs by close air support cleared the area surrounding Hilltop 1221, the Task Force could have easily escaped had they been willing to leave the wounded, but still they did not. Although these intentions were noble, they were foolish, and essentially doomed all of Task Force Faith. Ironically, one can easily surmise that Faith's superiors aware of the situation of the 31st RCT,

and had essentially sacrificed them to prevent a double envelopment of US forces by the Chinese. General Barr and others flew out to LTC Faith, were aware of his dire circumstances, and still withdrew the 31st Tank Company and the 31st Infantry Rear twenty four hours before the breakout attempt. As officers, we must sometimes give orders that will result in the death of some of those under our command to accomplish the higher mission. A platoon leader must know this when he orders a squad into an enemy building, just as the Generals in Korea knew that once the point of no return had been reached, the 31st RCT would not be reinforced. War is hell, but officers in the US Army need to understand that they have volunteered to make the extremely difficult choices that no one else will make.

The second major theme throughout *East of Chosin* was the absolute necessity for officers to be able to adapt to their situation and fight flexibly. From the very start, the 31st seem to be paralyzed by groupthink and a lack of true mission analysis. On an even higher level, no one seemed to challenge General MacArthur's decision to push forward to the Yalu River. The 31st RCT rushed to move forward at Chosin despite intelligence on the nearby Chinese forces and the fact that they were undermanned and poorly equipped. Even after Communist Chinese Forces were behind LTC Faith's A Company on November 28, he still rigidly stuck to his original plan to attack. This exemplifies the overarching problem that the 31st faced of fighting the plan instead of the fight. Another glaring example of this lack of practicality was the fact that throughout the entire operation, Task Force Faith lacked the ability to communicate via radio with their higher and adjacent units. The lack of communication between units was the single largest contributing factor to the disaster that occurred at Chosin. As a leader, whether it be as a squad leader or a battalion commander, it is unacceptable to operate without being able to communicate with your higher headquarters. The lethality of our Army is dependent on the ability to synchronize our movements and maneuvers. In summary, at certain key junctions during the battle, many of the leaders of Task Force Faith failed to utilize the disciplined initiative necessary to allow the RCT to effectively adapt to the situation unfolding before them.

On a personal level, *East of Chosin* exposed me to the heavy burden that I must bear as an infantry officer. I have a responsibility to my men to plan for every scenario, no matter how unlikely, and be able to make tactically sound decisions under extreme pressure which balance accomplishing the mission with the welfare of my soldiers. Furthermore, reading about the tragedy that befell the 31st RCT, forced me to ponder how my own organization, 1-16 IN, would

fare in a similar situation. I concluded that we have the right leadership, staff, and camaraderie that would have allowed us to avoid the fate of the 31st RCT. If our battalion was tasked to hold a piece of key terrain against an enemy force four times our size, I have the utmost confidence that we would hold that terrain and win.

Patrick Richards
C CO, 1-16 IN

The book *East of Chosin* (1987) by Lt. Col. Roy E. Appleman chronicles the drawn-out conflict that unfolded over seventeen days in Korea, from November 27 to December 13, 1950. On the east side of the manmade Chosin Reservoir, environmental factors combined with errors in Command strategy and tactics, leading to the demise of the 31st Regimental Combat Team at the hands of the Chinese 80th Division. In *East of Chosin,* Lt. Col. Roy Appleman objectively outlines the events surrounding the conflict, leaving the reader to judge what went wrong and who was responsible. As someone dedicated to the army, this book was personally very hard for me to read. However, in many ways, it was illuminating and helped me to think about questions related to this disturbing event in our history, as well as sharing pride in the bravery of our dedicated troops, even in losses.

Late in November of 1950, the war between United Nations forces and North Korea appeared to be nearing an end. Under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, the UN forces under the Far East Command were eager to reunite North and South Korea and wrap up the war before Christmas. They pursued the communist Korean People's Army into North Korea, toward the Yalu River and the Manchurian border, confident that the KPA would crumble. As part of the plan, X Corps was ordered to attack westward from the Chosin Reservoir on the morning of November 27, to cut off enemy supply lines and destroy the enemy all the way to the Chinese and Soviet borders. However, we know troops of the 7th were at that time scattered, making the assembly of the 31st RCT over a two-day period nearly impossible (Appleman 1-10).

Meanwhile and earlier, Lt. Col. Appleman describes, the Chinese had entered the Chosin Reservoir area on November 17, ten days before the X Corps' scheduled attack. The collocation of these two enemy forces in fierce, bitter cold conditions was very striking to me. Today with our technology and advancements in communication I fell that we would have known of these

movements and been able to execute a strong counterattack.

Descriptions of terrible roads and terrible weather (-37) made me chill as I read about the developing battle. I could empathize strongly with the soldiers involved and felt their pain in that cold. Plus, at 120,000 strong, the Chinese forces were four times larger than ours. I believe having read this book that in the days leading up to the battle and during engagement that many questionable decisions and assumptions were likely made on the part of Command. As Appleman suggests, the rush to wrap up the conflict by the end of the year coupled with the assumption that enemy troops would be minimal resulted in hastily made decisions that set a course for disaster (5).

It was known the Chinese Army had already established a presence near the Chosin Reservoir (4), just not how large. So far as is presented in this text, we have to wonder if General MacArthur and the others in charge completely underestimated and did not expect the Chinese descent to attack down Yalu River, even though Chinese prisoners had roughly shared that information.

The decision to engage on November 27 specifically was unfortunate. Appleman writes, "General Hodes watched the progress of the tank attack [at Hill 1221] and saw that it would not succeed. . . . He . . . lost four tanks" (114). This was difficult for me to read, given that I'm a tank platoon leader. I think back to when we conducted Warrior Strike in VB3. Blue Platoon was overran by the opposition, so the Commander [Cpt. Churchill] ordered my platoon to execute our contingency plan and reinforce Blue Platoon. Because of this quick decision, we were able to save Blue's last tank and establish a defense to regain control of the battle and take the offensive position. What was their contingency plan? Could more tanks advancing have made the difference? Would they have been able to or ordered to engage in battle had they waited until the 28th or 29th? Most tanks went in the wrong direction, away from the battle, on November 30, ordered withdrawn, along with many troops (Appleman 300). Consequently, the 31st RCT with only about 3000 troops spread thinly along the eastern bank of Chosin Reservoir took the brunt of the Chinese attacks (Appleman 54). Lt. Col. Appleman asks the question, "*Who ordered the 31st Rear and the 31st Tank Company to withdraw . . . ? What were the reasons for the order?*" (185). He includes the thought that this was "just when their presence had become most crucial" (185). With 4 tanks seen destroyed previously, were the generals trying to save the armor? What could the rationale have been?

Over a few days, the 31st RCT was essentially decimated by the Chinese 80th. I was particularly moved by the depictive descriptions of Hill 1221, where many had to be left behind and in the rescue trucks "wounded were piled 2 and 3 deep" (259).

All but the 31st Tank Division were rendered combat-ineffective by December 1. With the exception of tanks, mostly withdrawn, all of the vehicles, artillery, mortar, and machine guns of the 31st RCT were lost. At the end, only 385 men were able-bodied enough to continue (Appleman 300-303). These losses are staggering and heartbreaking.

In reflection, this book made me realize that perhaps not all decisions made by even the finest generals are always going to be good ones. But also, not all battles can be won. I would like to read more to find out more about the generals' roles and thoughts on this matter. It's not clear why General MacArthur ordered this attempt, especially when Chinese prisoners had told of Chinese build-ups in the area, although the book did say he was apparently misinformed as to readiness by generals whose opinion he had asked and relied upon. I felt great discomfiture thinking of the troops who were asked to complete this mission.

It is also possible the information chain was to blame more than MacArthur, who may have been trying to beat time, with winter clearly at hand and a final victory desired by all. Either General MacArthur and/or his generals reporting to him may not have believed the Chinese prisoner information, or thought the numbers and strength of the CPL would be fewer than was the case, or they truly believed victory was possible. With the troops of the 31st being scattered at the start and that information possibly not adequately conveyed, judgement was skewed. Also, the Chinese troops were coming, and if those in charge suspected this, then they also may have felt that any Western delay would give the Chinese stronger momentum in the battle. Perhaps it was felt they could not wait further to engage. Is it possible General MacArthur knew in advance this battle might be a loss but believed it had to be fought anyway? I felt great discomfiture thinking of the troops who were asked to complete this mission. Were they sacrificed for the greater good of the mission? Is it ethical to do this? I believe so. By joining the army we have promised to give our lives for this country and I believe this is one of those time when the ultimate sacrifice had to be made.

As an Armor Officer myself, I will always wonder if moving our tanks forward might have made a difference in the battle. Certainly the losses of the Chinese would have been much higher had our tanks been able to engage. Nothing is worse than not going forward with your

regiment into battle when they are taking a hit and you are left behind unable to assist.

While the 7th was greatly reduced and defeated, Lt. Col. Appleman quotes one platoon leader as later saying: "Our officers carried on although some of them were wounded 2 or 3 times. I believe they did everything in this world to get everyone out. . . . I would serve under them anywhere" (327).

The fight on the East side by the 7th likely counted more than many thought in first hearing of it. As Lieutenant Col. Appleman concludes with a measure of reflective pride in the 7th:

> In the ultimate analysis of the Chosin Reservoir action, the 7th Infantry Division troops who fought on the East side of the reservoir probably provided the narrow margin that enabled the 1st Marine Division to hold Hagaruri, making possible the completion of an airstrip from which several thousand wounded troops were evacuated . . . . (329)

Joe Scavuzzo
HHC, 1-16 IN

After reading Roy E. Appleman's *East of Chosin* and discussing the events of the battle throughout the weekly discussions, I have been able to capture main points that are relatable to today's Army, current events on the Korean Peninsula, and the Iron Rangers. One of these main points, which I will be reflecting on, is the communication, or lack thereof, within the 31st Regimental Combat Team. Communication is paramount to any organization's success; whether they are in battle, in training, or in a weekly garrison routine. As the Iron Ranger's Scout Platoon Leader, communicating all the gathered information to any echelon within the Battalion is essential, and almost the backbone, to what the Scout Platoon's job, which is why I have reflected the most on communication.

Even though Appleman barely discusses the events of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, led by LT Richard Coke Jr., I believe a lot can be taken away from the small excerpt. The biggest aspect within that scenario is the communication piece. One might ask the rhetorical questions of: were they captured or killed by the Chinese early on in their mission? If they were, who, where, and when did this happen? Did COL MacLean or LTC Faith try to send a search party to find them? To me, the biggest question is, if the I&R Platoon lost communication with any Battalion element, did they try to reestablish communication with

Battalion where they last had contact with them? Everyone in the Army, no matter what rank or echelon they are in, needs to understand the importance of a PACE plan while conducting any operation. To LT Coke and his Platoon, reestablishing communication and maintaining discipline within the PACE plan could have saved their lives on that day. Another significant example of the effects of not maintaining communication with different echelons was when GEN Hodes radioed for GEN Barr to have 2-31 RCT quickly move and link-up with 1-32 RCT, which at the end was already too late (Appleman, 164-165).

Not only could reestablishing communication with 1-31st save the I&R Platoon, but LT Coke could have provided enough information to help COL MacLean and LTC Faith gain a better understanding of what type of engagement they would be facing. According to COL Carl G. Witte, no reports came in from LT Coke or his Platoon for at least 24 hours. Due to Appleman not discussing more about the I&R Platoon, we do not fully know if the I&R Platoon was sending reports back or not; however, like mentioned above, reporting is essential to any Scout's mission. Reporting any intelligence about the enemy, key terrain, routes, etc. and maintaining some form of contact with the enemy will enhance the decision making process for any commander. "Painting the picture for the commander" may be the difference between mission success or failure, which is why the Scout Platoon in 1-16IN has to be the best. As the Scout Platoon Leader, I have to ensure that the 1-16's Scout Platoon Soldiers are experts in all communication systems and trained to have the initiative discipline to maintain communication with any Friendly Force.

When I was a Company Executive Officer, I learned first-hand the importance of communication and maintaining that communication with Battalion. During our rotation at the National Training Center, my radios and BFT continuously had issues that prevented me to communicate with Battalion and sometimes even my Company. This was a major hindrance because I was not able to send reports that would have helped shape the battlefield and would have made what was happening during each battle more clear for the Battalion Commander (which I still deeply regret to this day, Sir) to make his decisions. Even when the Company was not in any engagement and was conducting TLPs, communication with Battalion was difficult to maintain with a small number of operating BFTs. We were able to maintain that communication because of our PACE plan.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

With today's communication systems and the sheer fact that the Iron Rangers have been working together as a team on all levels, I believe that establishing and maintaining communication within the unit will not be an issue if we had to go to combat. There were many times when the Companies in the 1-31st RCT were not communicating with each other during the battle's major events. Chaos and disorganization seemed to always occur because of this lack, but with the right leaders within those units, communication was reestablished giving more control back to the Companies.

As we read Appleman's *East of Chosin* and discussed the events of 1-31 RCT's battle, different issues and topics came to mind as how the Iron Rangers could better ourselves to be an elite fighting force. To me, as the Scout Platoon Leader, communication is one of the most important. Without communication, fire fights, battles, and wars may be lost. Unfortunately, the possible lack of communication may have been the cost of his I&R Platoon and maybe the potential intelligence reports that may have saved the 1-31st, which I do not plan on happening to the Iron Rangers Scout Platoon.

Gregory Sidlinger
B CO, 1-16 IN

One of the main issues that led to the demise of the 31st RCT in East of Chosin was discipline, both organizationally and individually. Organizationally, 31st RCT's disciplinary breakdown was systemic of a breakdown that reached the highest echelons of the Pacific Command, during the Chinese incursion into the conflict in the winter of 1950. Though the organizational indiscipline was what set the stage for the disaster that befell those "East of Chosin", the many instances of individual indiscipline were the thousand cuts that bled the RCT white.

A recurring fault in 31st RCT (and in the army as a whole) during the breakout of the Korean conflict, was the indiscipline of the rank and file within the armed services. Drastic downsizing had a lasting impact on the service by mismanaging much of the talent that was left after WWII. As Fehrenbach notes (2008) The Doolittle Board was originally implemented to eradicate the "caste system" of the Army, which provoked a number of abuses in WWII. The thought was that by reducing the power of the Commissioned and Non Commissioned Officer Corps, future abuses would not occur (p.23). Although well-intentioned, it unfortunately did

lasting damage to the Army, as it took away the backbone of discipline - which is the basis for all military ability to effectively function with any hope of victory in war. The downfall of discipline within the Army came to a head when the American forces were routed by a hardened North Korean force in the summer of 1950. Six months later, the allied troops that pushed past the 38th parallel towards the Yalu River had gained experience both at the organizational and individual level. However, the distance that the American military had to make up for, to create disciplined formations that could withstand Chinese opposition, had been made unobtainable by the mismanagement of the interwar years.

At the organizational level, the 31st RCT acted in haste to move their element piecemeal to their tentative line of departure in the vicinity of the P'ungnyuri Inlet on the east side of the Chosin reservoir. The rush to fulfill the higher headquarters' intent to attack north caused the 31st RCT to move into position with its elements strung out along 4 miles of road at the edge of the reservoir. Even more, the RCT had an entire battalion—a full third of its overall strength—two days behind, at best. The lack of organizational discipline to wait and move only when the RCT was amassed in strength, went against not only basic military principle, but also against the warnings of the Marine units that were already in the area of operation.

The communication breakdown (or lack of effort to fix it) between the 31st RCT and its higher headquarters was one of the most egregious faults that the organization committed. Appleman makes note that with few exceptions of individual initiative (Captain Stamford relaying through Corsairs aircraft above the RCT's position), the 31st RCT never made a concerted effort to re-establish communications with higher, even when they had the Division commander present in their CP while encircled. The discipline to take the initiative to re-establish communications was obviously not a great priority, or, it would have been made part of the larger concern that the RCT had while evaluating their situation during the encirclement and subsequent breakout. As it was, one can conclude that the RCT solely relied on the higher headquarters to address and fix the issue.

Organizationally, the RCT was a mirror image of formations across the peninsula who were hastily thrown together from formations in Japan, in country, and supplemented by ill trained KATUSA forces. Though this ad hoc consortium is certainly a large reason for which the RCT ultimately failed, it should have reinforced basic principles in how the RCT would maneuver itself. Namely, it should have had the discipline to exercise tactical patience in

employing such a green and ad hoc element into a battle space (certainly not piecemeal) which was devoid of credible intelligence.

Individual discipline was as prevalent among the troops of the 31st RCT as the valor which was displayed by so many who fought through the disastrous situation. However, the actions of a few are what infinitely effects the many, and in the state that the army was in during the winter of 1950, there were no shortages of individual indiscipline that would affect the whole group. As Appleman cites (2002) from Lt. Mortrude's report of the night of 25-26 November, that while inspecting his own platoons line, he found that only one sentry was up and that he had to take corrective actions against his NCO's who had failed one of their basic duties (p.26). It is also mentioned by the author that Mortrude's diligence in inspecting his platoon's area of defense was not reciprocated by many other officers across the RCT. This lax pattern of discipline across the RCT contributed greatly to the infiltration of the lines during the first night of combat against the Chinese forces. During the initial fighting at the inlet, many Americans were killed in their sleeping bags by enemy that had overrun sentries that were ill prepared and not properly managed.

By the time 31st RCT made its attempt at a breakout on the afternoon of December the 1st, any vestige of discipline within the ranks had insurmountably deteriorated from the previous days and nights of fighting. As the officers of the RCT became casualties during the breakout, the men of the 31st became a mob. Appleman makes little mention of the role of the NCO's during the breakout, let alone of them re-organizing the elements to maintain order and carry out the missions of their elements. Individual valor was in no short supply in the 31st RCT during their engagements "East of Chosin", however the valor of even many could not turn the tide for the RCT to successfully breakout from its position. For this to have happened, the RCT required that the organization (and its higher echelons) do the disciplined, diligence to ensure the greatest degree of success for the RCT's breakout. As well, the RCT required its soldiers, as a whole, to be able to maintain individual discipline that was the lynchpin in executing a withdrawal like the one 31st RCT attempted. The lack of individual discipline rests on those soldiers, but it must be said that it was fueled by an Army that was unwilling to train its soldiers for the mental and physical rigors of combat. Having checked the disciplinary order of both Officers and NCO's, created an environment within the Army for indiscipline to thrive. The organizational indiscipline is far less easy to forgive. With the experienced officers, who maned the higher

headquarters of the 31st RCT and those echelons above it, a more disciplined and thorough plan should have been made to ensure greater success for the RCT. As it was, those with the most experience failed the 31st RCT the most egregiously, through indiscipline of basic principles of planning and patrolling.

Aaron Smith
C CO, 1-16 IN

My preconception of the Korean War aligned with the notion that the post-World War II conflict was and remains the "forgotten war". It is bewildering that this conflict did not persist with the American population over time in regard to the deployment of over 300,000 American Soldiers - slightly over one-third becoming casualties - in addition to the millions of Korean civilian and communist forces suffering that same fate (Mize 10). I initially focused on the breakdown of communication at all levels of leadership that led to the destruction of the Army's 31st Regimental Combat Team while reading and discussing *East of Chosin* by Australian LTC (Ret.) Roy E. Appleman. The decisions leaders were forced to make at the Chosin Reservoir foolishly brewed my belief that the accounts could never occur to 1-16 IN - or at least we would rationally make less mistakes. Being overly critical distracted from the valuable message of leadership presence and its effect on the outcome of battle.

An element of leadership presence is discipline. The suppression of one's desire to act without restraint is heavily influenced by leaders. Guillaume Le Blond stated, "Without discipline, an army is formed of nothing more than an assemblage of volunteers, incapable of uniting for a collaborative defense" (1030-1031).

Night security was essential throughout the assembly at the Chosin Reservoir. The vulnerability of a regimental combat team based on the penetration of a company line due to a lack of discipline within a platoon, squad, or team is alarming. Lieutenant James Mortrude took the initiative to inspect his platoon area and the company front though no formidable size of enemy had been engaged. Lieutenant Mortrude's attitude and effort in forcing his men to conduct night security patrols displays the power of leadership presence on Soldier discipline, as he instructed and organized walking security patrols within each squad (Appleman 26). He embodied the saying, "do what is right even when no one is looking".

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

Fear and the anticipation of enemy contact created a crack in the discipline of Soldiers within 2-31 IN as they pushed to the Chosin Reservoir to fill the missing combat power of the regiment. A booby trap on a bridge exploded ahead of the battalion column, which wounded one man. Major Gurfein stated,

> Within 10 seconds a near rout had started with the tail and lead companies turning to the rear and starting to overrun the battalion command group… Not an NCO or junior officer raised his voice to stop the rout… During this commotion not a single shot had been fired by the enemy or us. (162)

The opposite of Lieutenant Mortrude's embodiment above occurred. Young officers and noncommissioned officers of 2-31 allowed the anxiety of enemy contact have the better of them, as they did not act and make a decision without the encouragement of a higher ranking officer. Major Gurfein's actions to collect his men and reestablish order multiple times throughout the evening confirms the effect leadership presence has on discipline. It took only one man to reunite the cohesion of a battalion sized element. Disciplined self-initiative is a trait that I will continue to work on as a young junior officer.

The Chinese block at Hill 1221 and the amount of casualties during the breakout attempt led to the destruction of Task Force Faith. Several surviving leaders stated that the high quantity of officer and noncommissioned officer casualties caused units to interchange and individuals to abandon organization (251, 319). The emplacement of a succession of command and conservation of leadership is crucial in attempting to achieve a mission. Additionally, training the man below one's position to fulfill one's duties and responsibilities and learning from the man above further strengthens the ability of a unit to endure the reality of deaths in combat.

The acts of 1-16 IN noncommissioned officers are a testament to that mentality. Platoon Sergeants are orchestrating lower ranking soldiers to attempt Advanced Gunnery Training System (AGTS) as gunners even though newly qualified crews were minted less than two months ago. Tank commanders are teaching more than individual soldier tasks and crew drills to their crews. Gunners are giving drivers and loaders more responsibility in their absence. The continuation of that ideal will benefit 1-16 IN in future combat operations.

Leadership at all levels has the ability to sway the result of a battle. *East of Chosin* illustrates that although the perception of the Korean War appears that it has been omitted from 20th century American conflicts, many lessons remain applicable to small unit leadership in

preparation and training for the next international conflict. We as an organization must create dialogue with subordinates regarding the accounts of the Chosin Reservoir if we are to continue to maintain readiness on the Korean Peninsula and ensure we are fit to "Fight Tonight".

Michael Smith
D TRP, 1-4 CAV

Introduction

The 2016 MLB World Series was a series for the ages. The Cleveland Indians, and the Chicago Cubs. The bottom feeders of their respective leagues for 50 plus years! The fact that both were playing each other for the World Series went against everything baseball experts predicted for that season. Yet, these two teams were pitted against each other to bring back the title for their organization, and 28 other teams were watching from home in disbelief. All 28 of these teams had one thing in common, besides being losers, they underestimated their opponent. After all, how could these two teams, who haven't tasted success in generations have a chance of greatness? Unfortunately, that was the case for the United States Military throughout the Korean War. From the onset in June of 1950 there was lackluster view of the enemy, and their abilities. This mistake was not made just once at the onset of the war with the destruction of Task Force Smith by the North Koreans, but twice with the Chinese as the war progressed. At the forefront of the mistake was the 31st RCT east of the Chosin reservoir.

East of Chosin

The underlying issue throughout the Korean War was an underestimation of the enemy and their capabilities. This was something the 31st RCT was doing intentionally, or unintentionally by their actions while moving north. The 31st RCT were in bad positions and stretched beyond their means. Major Miller, the Battalion XO stated "In order to cover this ground the battalion was extended beyond its capabilities," (47) The 31st RCT was taking up poor positions and had poor control of their units. Lieutenant Mortrude, a C Company Platoon Leader stated in one of his reports. "Checked the Platoon Area and found only one man awake…visited adjacent platoon areas and found the same situation." (26) There was poor command and control of units at all levels, and Officers and NCOs were not doing their jobs.

Perhaps the largest mistake of the entire operation was the 31st RCTs disregard for their intel collected by their reconnaissance units. At one point the 31st RCT had "minor contact with

members of the 125th Division and some unidentified Chinese" (50) On November 26th patrols Chinese Soldiers surrendered to the 7th Marines and identified 3 divisions advancing south towards Hagaru-ri. Intelligence also suggested that the Chinese would, attack and maneuver at night, yet 31st RCT Soldiers struggled with the discipline to stay awake and conduct their watch shifts during the night.

While it can be said there were other underlying issues that led to this confusion and poor control of the 31st RCT I believe had there been a higher respect for the enemy many of these mistakes would have been avoided. Units would not have so halfheartedly occupied positions, and Soldiers from General Almond to Privates in the 31st RCT would have conducted their jobs with more diligence. The 31st RCT was ultimately able to adapt the problems they created for themselves, but at an extremely high cost.

Application

A healthy, respect for the enemy is what every soldier needs. As Officers the first thing we are taught to do when developing a plan for combat is to conduct IPB of the battlefield. That process requires the development of the enemy plan prior to developing our own. This requires leaders to be knowledgeable of enemy capabilities and tactics in order to develop an accurate enemy plan. Unfortunately, the study of our enemy is not something we put a major emphasis on. We stress the need to "*fight tonight"* yet we allow our Soldiers to go out and drink regularly. We act like the enemy doesn't know this, and wouldn't attack on the weekend. Yet the Korean War started with an attack early Sunday morning on June 25th, 1950 with many South Korean and American Soldiers on pass for the weekend because of an alert that had taken place during the previous two weeks. There is a false sense of readiness in Korea and it needs to be changed.

Conclusion

As leaders, it is our responsibility to ensure our Soldiers are presented with a realistic enemy. The worst thing we can do as a unit is down play the capabilities of our enemy. My takeaway from East of Chosin is to know my enemy better than they know me, and to never underestimate their capabilities. Having this fear, and respect for the enemy will help prevent me from making costly mistakes that can be avoided in combat. As an organization having an improved understanding of the enemy will allow us to win more battles, and help us avoid situations like East of Chosin. The moment we underestimate our enemy is the moment they

surprise us, and take us off guard. After all, if the Cubs can win the World Series then anything is possible.

Company Staff

Dustin Allen
XO, D TRP, 1-4 CAV

When one reaches the end of an undergraduate degree, one does not expect to be writing papers until they at least go to graduate school. Most would never think about writing book reviews, outside of English majors, in their everyday jobs, so when the officers of 1-16 IN BN were assigned a book to help develop the Army's future leaders I was taken by surprise. Coming from a small college where the cadre were all from the 75th Ranger Regiment I thought that the majority of my development as an officer would come from stories of combat experience or from Ranger School stories. I was not exposed to the real meaning of what it meant to really develop as an officer. Needless to say I was not the least bit happy when I found out that we would be reading a book to help us with our development. With all of this being said I still enjoyed the experience and was able to draw from others' experiences in the Army to add to my already preconceived notions of the United States.

The beginning of the book starts off as dry and monotonous, with the author's very detailed retelling of events leading up the 31st RCTs actions east of the Chosin Reservoir. Even with a hard boring surface, I was still able to dig through the crust and find some very meaningful information for which I would like to center my paper.

It is common knowledge that the United States Military goes through cyclical phases with conflicts being at the center of these phases. The Military goes from a wartime power house to a post war draw down which leaves us behind other nations when the next conflict arises. I acknowledge that over the past few decades the ebb and flow of these cycles have not been as rough, but in the decades prior the waters have been pretty rough. These peaks and valleys come from the American stance against large standing armies. Since the beginnings of our nation Americans disliked the idea of Military tyranny, as can be seen in our Declaration of Independence and the 2nd and 4th Amendments in the Bill of Rights to our Constitution. The end of the 2nd World War saw nothing different when America drew down the size of the military so

as to not have a large standing Army. Leaving the U.S. forces in Korea ill prepared to defend against a battle hardened and well number Chinese Communist Army.

Throughout the first half of the book the author mentions on several occasions that a vast majority of the Leaders in the 31st RCT had little to no Combat experience from World War II, the soldiers of the unit were not the well trained and disciplined soldiers of World War II, and many of the 31st RCTs numbers came from KATUSAs who were basically shanghaied from the street of South Korea. In my opinion this goes to show that the Korean War was just an afterthought to Law Makers in Washington and to the American people who were only 5 years removed from a major conflict. The lack of a steady flow of resources, inexperienced soldiers, and a lack of dedicated leadership would set the stage for the 31st RCTs, as well as the U.S. forces in Korea, last luster withdrawal back to the 38th Parallel. The majority of the problems that arose during the battle at Chosin could have been avoided with experienced leaders and a little more disciplined initiative.

How does the lack of support from Washington, inexperienced soldiers and leaders, and a lack of overall situational awareness relate to the current situation and my development as an officer? The truth is that we are in a very similar post war drop in combat power just as those in 1950's Korea were. The war in Iraq ended almost 5 years ago, just like the Korean War and World War II. Our ranks are no longer filled with the vast number of Combat experienced Veterans as there were during the height of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have new leaders who have never been in battle. We have an American public who has no taste for wars of attrition after just finishing one of America's longest wars. The American public is also more obsessed with State side problems than those of the world. Another major conflict, until the last couple of days, has been far away from the minds of most. With this being said the most important thing to do is to always be prepared to "fight tonight." Though disciplined initiative from all ranks, self-study of past conflict and current events, effective maintenance procedures, and training as if the next big war were to start tonight the American Military can always be prepared to push forward to victory. The biggest setback that I see with today's environment is getting the formations to have the mindset to always be prepared and take their environments serious. At this time I have no solution to change the character of the current American soldiers.

All in all the book was not a bad read and I quite enjoyed the firsthand accounts of those that survived the Chosin Reservoir. It would not hurt to trim some of the fat that book has, but

with that being said I relish the chance to learn from those that came before us. Whether the decisions of the past were good or bad they always lay the groundworks for the future. Those that do not learn from the past are destined to repeat it.

Jillian Collins
Maintenance Control Officer, G CO, 1-16 IN

The book *East of Chosin* gives a historical account of the last major offensive that America planned to make during the Korean War. This was supposed to be the offensive that pushed the North Koreans across the Yalu River into Manchuria. Instead ended up becoming the deadliest battle in the Korean War, but arguably the most decisive one. Reading this book helped me understand different leadership techniques, lessons on making hard decisions, and the importance of communication across different formations.

Throughout the book I was able to read about different leaders across the formation and the impact they made during their time in a leadership role. These leaders varied from NCOs to Officers and allowed me to see the different leadership styles each individual had. The book discussed some leaders, including a Colonel, who chose to lead from the front and be on the front lines with their guys. These leaders had the approach to do anything that they asked their men to do. Some leaders that stayed back to keep command and control, which helped them see the overall battlefield picture and understand their decisions that they made. Then you had some leaders who had to rise to the occasion and take control when they barely understood what was going on. Ultimately, it's a book about leadership styles, leadership lessons, and the hard decisions that have to be made. I was able to learn a lot about leadership and how different styles played out in different situations. This book helped strengthen my belief that there is no "cookie cutter" model of leadership, however everyone's individual style plays off of their own strengths and weaknesses. From the top down I was able to witness how different decisions make impacts onto the lowest levels the costs associated with making hard decisions with the information they had. This book ultimately helped me understand how different leadership styles react in similar situations. No leader is the same, but it is important to take lessons from other leaders to consistently improve yourself as one.

Another major lesson this book teaches young leaders is the importance of communication across a formation. There is a lot of speculation and gray areas in the book due to

soldiers across the formations not really knowing what was going on. The survivors that were able to contribute were not always sure as to what the intent was at times, the mission that they were supposed to accomplish, or generally the gravity of the situation they were in. There was a failure of communication across the ranks that led to the breakdowns across the formation. This can be argued that there was lack of technology, but there had to have been systems in place to ensure all companies had information while pushing forward. It took hours for decisions to make it to the outer perimeter which caused some individuals to get left behind to face the Chinese alone. I can pick apart how bad communication was in LTC Faith's formation, but this also goes all the way to the top levels of leadership. LTC Faith did the best he could with the limited information he was given. LTC Faith never got a clear commanders intent about what his overall mission at Chosin Reservoir was, nor was ever told the severity of the situation he was in when countless senior leaders flew in to talk to him. In the Army today, communication is one of the biggest pitfalls we see across formations. Soldiers like to be well-informed of what is going on and as leaders we owe them information to keep them informed. Communication is one of the facets of leadership that everyone has to consistently work on with subordinates and leaders to keep a unit running. When communication starts to fail, we start to see issues across the board due to a soldier "not knowing" which directly relates back to us as leaders. In the book, it shows what can happen in a real life situation when communication fails, lessons can be taken from this failure of communication to motivate us to better practice communication on a day to day basis.

Overall, this book related to me on a deeper level due to my Granddad being a sniper in the 1st Marine Division during the Korean War. He used to always tell stories about how he would watch platoons and companies take a hill, for only a few of them to come back down. He told stories of the cold, had permanent frost bite damage on his toes, and even received his purple heart in Korea for wounds he sustained. For me, it caused me to think deeper about the sacrifice that the 31st RCT made during their stand at the Chosin Reservoir, and ultimately realize that if these men didn't hold out as long as they did and if the Chinese made it to the 1st Marine Division, I might not even be alive today. This made me have a greater appreciation of the stand that the 31st RCT took at Chosin Reservoir and the men who lost their lives fighting at the Reservoir. Without the sacrifices made, who knows if my granddad would've been able to come back alive.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

Reading *East of Chosin* and understanding the direct impact they made for the Marines and units fighting the war around them made me appreciate everything they did. It is easy to go through and pick apart every "bad decision", every failed leader, and everything we can say we wouldn't do today, but at the same time realize you might not be any different. In the same situation, none of us truly know how we will react, how well our decisions will be communicated, or if we would be able to get everyone out alive. There's too many unknowns to think as a leader we will do better, so it's easier to learn from the mistakes they made, and have a deeper understanding of why they made that decisions with the options in front of them.

Christopher Ewing
Fire Support Officer, A CO, 1-16 IN

With the advancement of the United States forces pushing onto the Korean Peninsula they set a tone that they could not be stopped. They had all done what no one thought could happen, they secured a hold in Incheon after a successful beach landing. With this the American forces began their assault through Seoul, securing the city within days. This is the driving force that these men needed, they had it in their mind that they could not be beat. Once they reached the North Korean border the leaders made the decision that since they had pushed the North Koreans this far relatively painlessly they might as well try to eradicate the North Koreans for good, so they pushed past the border capturing Pyongyang within the following weeks. This is where the forces had the finish line in sight, the Yalu River, but this fogged vision of just reaching the finish line came at a cost none of them expected. This is the story of the 31st RCT and the lessons that leaders today can take from their experiences.

With the push into Northern Korea General Douglas MacArthur planned the last major offensive of the operation, the one that was going to end the war, the one that would get the men home by Christmas. United States forces assembled around the Chosin Reservoir, the Marines of the west side and the Army on the East. With this the 1-32nd IN , commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Don Faith, moved up the east side of the reservoir settling in the most northern position. This is where the war ending operation went sideways.

What the Army or Marines did not see was thousands of Chinese forces moving along the hilltops. The Army liked to hug the roads since it was the most easily accessible and the quickest route. The fastest they could travel the sooner the war would be over. Once they settled into the

reservoir the Chinese arose attacking constantly throughout the night, breaking through defensive lines and killing anyone they could find. This happened the first night and into the second until LTC Faith decided it was time to retrograde back to the rest of the RCT, but he did not know the dire situation that they were in as well. When he arrived they merged what was left of the battalions together forming a massive defensive front repelling off numerous attacks from the Chinese, but would they receive help or reinforcements to retrograde back further?

The help was not coming, but why? Was the army focused on other things? Did they realize the problem that they were now in? Were they too deep into the North Korean area to even get help to? These are all questions the LTC. Faith must have been asking himself when he made the order to breakout from their inlet perimeter. He had not been ordered to move back, for all he knew he was supposed to stay there, but if they did there would be no possible way of transporting the hundreds of casualties back. These are decisions that we today can look at and speculate about but it is almost unimaginable to say for sure what you would do.

So what would you do in a situation like that? How could there have been better communication operations? How could there have been better resupply? Should they have left earlier? Did the army leave them there to fend for themselves so they could block the harbor further south? These are questions that you are forced to speculate about. There is no other better way of learning then looking at history and trying to see what was going on from their eyes. If you cannot think of better ways to train after reading this book then you are wrong because I am sure these men did not think they would be in that situation, just as many of us do today. Many different things happen in the world today where a battle like this could very well happen again. Alliances fall and enemies attack and I am sure they will not warn you before they do so based on seeing how the 31st RCT handled during this battle how do you think your men now would fare? Are you training properly for the unexpected or are you counting days waiting to be done?

Andres Gonzalez
Fire Support Officer, C CO, 1-16 IN

From the perspective of different historians, the Korean War seems to be the conflict that took the United States off their high horse of being a fighting force that could not be thwarted. For many, the Korean conflict is called “the forgotten war” and is over shadowed by the mass attention of the Second World War and the Vietnam War. At the time of the book, the 1st RCT

believed that end of the war was near and that GI's will soon be home for Christmas; which would not be the case. Though this book talks about a very dark time for the United States Army and the armed forces as a whole, I believe that there are many different things that soldiers from all ranks can take away from this. The importance of communication with all echelons, the presence of officer and NCO leadership, and the emphasis of contingency plans and a planned retrograde played a huge factor in the foreseeable failure of the 1st RCT. The lack of these influences by the 1st RCT are why the word "Chosin" is reminded of honor within the Marine Corps, while in the Army it's almost never mentioned.

Even before the first Chinese attack, there was very little to no communications from echelons and adjacent units. General Almond was barely keeping in touch with Colonel Faith, keeping his regiment in a constant defensive position, until the final retrograde back to Hagaru-ri. Individual companies did not know where each other were during the fighting, in which many assumed that the company had just been overran and wiped out. When radio communications fell through, runners were used. Unfortunately, many of these runners did not return and instead of having an SOP about how much time they would give a runner until a new one needed to be sent; they just waited. During the retrograde, many of the company commanders were not even properly informed about the plan; only knowing from hearsay or literally seeing mass movements of troops and joining them. Though the men of 1st RCT fought bravely throughout the battle, plans were not briefed well or at all and many would become casualties because of it.

Napoleon Bonaparte stated that "A Leader is a Dealer in Hope". He was also once a young Artillery lieutenant; so, you know he was a very wise man. By the time the remaining force of what was Task Force Faith linked up with the 1st Marine Division, it was a walking skeleton of what it was when they arrived at the Chosin Reservoir. Throughout the battle, the Regiment started to lose more officers and NCOs. The capture of Col Faith was so bizarre and jaw dropping, that questioning of the competence of leadership would have been a frequent thought among his former subordinates. During the 2nd Battalion's movement up north, an explosion causes the entire battalion to scatter and panic. Based off the eye witness of a Captain who was present, there were almost no attempt from the officers and NCOs to control the situation. Many of the platoon leaders hadn't even been through any training, including the equivalent to BOLC at the time and now were leading men into combat. But many leaders still took initiative and gave their men a task and purpose, even during the grimmest situations.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

During the 1st RCT's retrograde back to the 1st Marines, many officers and NCO's grabbed they're men and assaulted machine gun and fixed Chinese positions to reduce the amount of fire the vehicles filled with wounded were taking. Even during some of the worst conditions, situations and realties of the battle, leaders were willing to courageously step up and take control to achieve the objective.

The word "retreat" and "falling back" are almost non-existent in the doctrine and philosophy of the American fighting man, that we forget that is how we fought for most of the American Revolutionary War. The idea of a "Tactical Retrograde" is not a very pleasant idea in most people's eyes, but it is a necessary plan to have rehearsed when all else fails and to fight another day. For the 1st RCT, it wasn't even a thought in their mind until it was too late. For them, the war was almost over and the thoughts of Christmas ham and block leave overshadowed their thoughts rather than that a war was still raging on. Everyone from PVT Joe Snuffy to General McArthur were thinking that the war would be over and that American GIs would never have to smell kimchi again (they were so wrong…). Instead an overwhelming Chinese army shot the dream of an early victory and threw off the entire UN chain of command. There was no contingency plan, reinforcements had failed to break through, and ammunition and supplies were drastically being drained. By the time of the retrograde, many believed it was too late and the movement itself was sloppy, poorly planned and morale within the ranks were at an all-time low. It was blatantly obvious that a contingency plan as well as SOP at the lower echelons were not even brought up for discussion, in case of a chance that the RCT would have to fall back. In result, it leads to the close utter destruction of an entire Regiment and the loss of hundreds of American fighting men.

The battle of the Chosin Reservoir is often overlooked in the history of the United States Army. Other than the reason that so many Americans lost their lives during this hellish campaign, it's still extremely important to know and understand. It's great to live and take immense pride in our victories (Reminder: Back to back World War Champs), but it is even more important to understand our faults and failures to understand how we can improve from our mistakes: both past and present. The 1st RCT's battle in the Chosin Reservoir may have not been the Army's proudest, but that makes it even more important. The understanding of how constant communication from all levels of a unit, the importance of leadership during the worst situations, and the preparation of contingency plans for any aspect that an operation may lead too; are some

of the lessons learned that a soldier of any rank can apply to any modern situation. No matter what a person thinks of the book itself, the story of the men of the 1st RCT of the 7th Infantry Division at the Chosin Reservoir can be something to admire, question, and learn from.

John Hensleigh
Executive Officer, A CO, 1-16 IN

Due to the lack of consistent communication, there were several instances during the entrapment east of the Chosin reservoir when leaders at different levels had the opportunity to decide between the mission or their men in an apparent vacuum of direct external influence. Three such examples are the Task Force Faith Breakout, the TF rear guard, and the Hill 1221 roadblock assaults. In each of these situations, unit leaders decided to abandon their given mission in favor of preservation of their soldiers. Intriguingly, the author paints each situation with a different level of condemnation of the decision to put soldiers before the mission.

At the time Lieutenant Colonel Faith issued the order that Task Force Faith would break out of the envelopment at the inlet perimeter, the last contact between he and his superiors that was documented in *East of Chosin* was when Major General Barr visited the task force perimeter on 30 November. Even then, Barr was no longer in Faith's chain of command, and could have only advised Faith as one leader to another. Prior to that interaction, his last guidance from his superiors would have been when Colonel Maclean issued the order to pull back from the forward perimeter to the inlet perimeter early on the morning of 29 November. Presumably, the standing order at the time of COL Maclean's capture would have been to consolidate at the inlet perimeter and prepare to continue the push north toward the Yalu River. So, in the absence of guidance from higher, Faith's decision to withdraw his task force would have been an abandonment of his mission, a decision he made not with strategic insight, but simply with the preservation of his troops in mind. The only fault the author seems to find with Faith's decision to abandon his mission is that he didn't do it sooner.

During the breakout movement, Major Storms' 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment was responsible for providing rear security to the vulnerable wheeled convoy. Whether this order was disseminated to the lowest levels is unknown; Storms' subordinates reported not receiving adequate guidance regarding the breakout mission, so it may not have been fully distributed to the company commanders. When the convoy stalled at the first blown bridge just north of Hill

1221, the rear guard elements continued to press forward toward Hill 1221, leaving the rear of the convoy exposed. Whether this abandonment of assigned task was the result of a conscious decision, or simply of a lack of control over the formation was not explored in the book. Major Storms' fate is not clear, but he perished somewhere between the blown bridge crossing and the final CCF fireblock just north of Hudong-ni. The author touts him as a highly capable leader; if we presume that he distributed the order to his subordinate commanders and ensured that they understood their tasks (as a good leader would have done), then either he or his subordinate leaders had to have either chosen to forsake their mission in favor of self-preservation, or lost all control over their formations, precipitating in an every-man-for-himself mentality across the formation. The dissolution of the rear guard elements as they pushed forward toward Hill 1221 was heartily condemned by several leaders who survived the breakout, and by the author.

Finally, the assault over Hill 1221 by various small elements in an assigned effort to flank the CCF fireblock in the saddle was a fine example of units choosing to save themselves rather than adhere to the mission at hand. By this juncture in the episode, unit organization had broken down substantially, leaving leaders with whatever soldiers were closest at hand and still willing to follow. The commander's intent to have a small unit assault up the north face of Hill 1221 and aggressively flank the fireblock in the saddle may not have been disseminated to all levels of leadership, but a reasonably aware individual would have been able to determine upon reaching the crest of the ridge that there was an enemy position in the saddle to the east that was preventing the column from proceeding. Nonetheless, one after another of these piecemeal elements broke for the prospective safety of Hagaru-ri in the distance to the south. Leaders in some cases begged for soldiers to act in the best interest of the task force; others simply opted to follow the herd as their soldiers abandoned their pinned-down colleagues at the convoy. Neither the survivors of the Chosin breakout nor the author seem to be able to hold these small unit leaders accountable for not carrying out their mission in support of the task force, possibly because the unit structure and discipline had degraded to such an extent at this point as to all but cease to exist.

Military leaders must be familiar with their unit's assigned task and purpose, contingency coordinations, the commander's intent, and the degree of freedom allowed them by their chain of command to make tactical decisions for their unit. With that, it is critical that military leaders disseminate the aforementioned information to their subordinates, and that they are able to

recognize when their subordinates lead their units according to the guidance given. Leaders must be willing to stand up for a subordinate who executed his or her mission according to the stated guidelines, and to take corrective action when a subordinate fails to stay within the limits of the mission. If these conditions are met in an organization, leaders at all levels can direct their units in good conscience knowing that they are within the assigned mission and intent to accomplish the overall endstate.

Kevin Lee
Executive Officer, HHC, 1-16 IN

Reflecting on *East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea, 1950* by Roy E. Appleman grants an opportunity to analyze the leadership traits possessed by leaders in the 31st Regimental Combat Team during the harshest of conditions. One such leader, LTC Don Carlos Faith, served as the Battalion Commander for 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry and subsequently Task Force Faith during the Chosin Reservoir Campaign. Despite initial shortcomings, LTC Faith managed to exercise decision making that preserved life. As every Soldier capable was enlisted to frontline fighting, LTC Faith willed the formation to defend and breakout to Hagaru-ri. Though ultimately the task force failed, and LTC Faith died of his injuries, one must recognize the leadership qualities he exemplified.

It is important to identify LTC Faith's shortcomings as well as his positive traits. Most condemning was an unwillingness to accept advice from his leaders and initially failing to adapt quickly from the offense to the defense. As his forces moved north, he disregarded advice from Marines occupying positions east of the reservoir not to move north with anything short of a full RCT (Appleman, 31). This instance, coupled with reports of Chinese forces in the area, did not deter the U.S. forces poised to aggressively push north to the Yalu River. LTC Faith neglected multiple signs that he was facing a more significant force than initial intelligence reports suggested.

This would not be the only time LTC Faith showed an inability to adapt. In another instance, according to Appleman's analysis, the Regimental Combat Team was still preparing for an offensive maneuver after being attacked on the November 27th (Appleman, 132). After receiving staggering losses this is one of the few instances LTC Faith reveals his inexperience in such a distinguished position. LTC Faith, having been a World War II veteran, had served

roughly only nine years in the United States Army prior to the Chosin Reservoir. Though LTC Faith over extended his forces, which resulted in significant losses, LTC Faith was still attempting to execute within his Commander's Intent. Whether this is an inability to adapt to an ever developing battlefield or simply a young leader attempting to operate within the Regimental Combat Commander's intent, the initial folly of LTC Faith is outweighed by the numerous leadership decisions he makes to save the lives of his Soldiers and the Soldiers of the battalions he inherits as fellow leaders are either wounded or killed.

LTC Faith serves as a quintessential example of genuine leadership while reacting to the Chinese attacks and the eventual break out from the inlet. LTC Faith was the highest ranking officer remaining after the capture of COL MacLean and the evacuation of both LTC Embree and LTC Reilly following the visit of General Barr (Appleman, 155). This sequence of events meant Faith was now in charge of over 1,000 Soldiers and associated equipment. LTC Faith made the necessary call for the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry to move south to consolidate with the remainder of the RCT. Upon his arrival to the inlet he was able to precisely mass forces along the perimeter and reorganize the units as necessary to include a reserve force that could be rapidly deployed to the line wherever a break through threatened. The task force was promptly renamed "Task Force Faith" as he assumed command with relatively little effect on the units themselves.

The decision to breakout no doubt weighed on LTC Faith's mind, as he received no guidance on the action, however, he understood that his logistics could not outlast the larger Chinese force. He disseminated a sound order utilizing the M19s and M16s to defend the column of injured soldiers and the vehicles carrying them. CPT Edward Stamford, the air controller, accidentally dropped napalm on some of the lead elements during the breakout. After progress is stalled, LTC Faith's character as a leader is shown as Stamford recalls:

> I saw him in one act that showed him as a true leader On 1 December when the troops were on the verge of running away from the area where a Napalm tank had landed, he moved among the men and met the enemy with drawn pistol. By this demonstration of courage he rallied the men and put the enemy to fight, thus averting disaster. (Appleman, 214)

Despite nonstop combat for days he continued to maneuver the depleted forces until he was mortally wounded. Nevertheless, he led an attack on an enemy position overlooking a blockade. The attack, conducted with squad sized elements, shows a Lieutenant Colonel with

mastery of small unit tactics leading small elements in the absence of junior leaders because he understood the consequences the convoy faced if further stalled. Even once he received the fatal injury, he continued to issue orders to push forward. LTC Faith understood the necessity of tempo in this instance and that the column's only chance of success was to continue forward. LTC Faith died north of Hudong-ni, but without his valor the column would have never made it this far, let alone had as many men make it to the friendly Marine lines.

East of Chosin grants readers the rare ability to assess and reflect on leadership of men placed under the most disadvantageous of circumstances. LTC Don C. Faith reveals himself to be capable of incredible feats including maneuvering thousands of Soldiers despite a scant nine years in service. Though initially overly ambitious, LTC Faith exercised sound judgment as he reconsolidated his forces and moved south. After every senior leader had exited the battle space he remained and gave the final order to breakout. No doubt the Soldiers that did survive can credit his personal courage as he placed himself in danger countless times and continued to push the element forward even once critically wounded in an effort to save the ill-fated 31st Regimental Combat Team. An analysis of LTC Faith allows young leaders the opportunity to see what they should strive for, being a steward to one's craft, wholeheartedly embodying the Army Values, with the ability to take initiative and exercise sound judgment in order to save lives in the most dire of situations.

Brennan Miller
Executive Officer, C CO, 1-16 IN

While reading *East of Chosin,* many different themes stuck out to me throughout the entirety of the book. Whether it was common communication issues, leadership pro's and con's, or the outside factors effects on the unit. There was one common theme that seemed to continuously keep reappearing over and over throughout the book that I couldn't seem to get out of my head: Complacency. Some would argue that Task Force Faith and the 31st Regimental Combat Team had no chance to begin with due to uncontrollable circumstances, and to a point, I would agree. While I do agree that there were factors out of their control that did hinder their success, the complacency at all levels is what factored most in the defeat of the 31st RCT.

To set the stage, as most know, the United States was just coming off a victory of World War II just 5 years prior to the 31st RCT mission at Chosin. The U.S. had just destroyed the war

machine of Nazi Germany. This gave the U.S. military an air of invincibility. This invincibility was seen at all levels of the military, from the everyday soldier all the way up to the field grade level. Throughout Chosin you could see this air of invincibility transform into complacency. From a military planning/Intelligence standpoint this caused the higher echelons to not correctly anticipate Chinese action of the US advance on the North Korean Army. The US was attempting to push the North Korean Army across the Yalu River and into China. What the US didn't seem to take into account was the fact that the Chinese, who are Communists just like North Korea, wouldn't appreciate the US presence on their border with the stance of the United States government on Communism. Hindsight is 20/20, but it seems as though Chinese intervention in Korea should not only have been anticipated, but with the rate that the US was moving north toward the Yalu, it should have been expected. If the US would have anticipated Chinese actions more appropriately, the 31st RCT could have been more prepared for the fighting force they saw at Chosin Reservoir.

At the lower echelons of the Army, like the 31st RCT, this air of invincibility turned into the idea of "We will be home by Christmas". As many know, this mentality has not worked for the US in past wars such as WWI. The idea that the North Korean Army was incompetent seems to spread through the ranks. Even at the squad level in terms of security, there were many accounts of leaders doing security checks through the night and finding not just one soldier asleep on security, but all soldiers asleep. This following account is from Lt. Col. Mortrude's notes on his security checks one night:

> Awakened 0200. Weather very cold with fresh snow falling. Checked platoon area and found only one man awake. Awakened Platoon Sergeant and required him to organize walking security patrols in each squad area for the remainder of the night. Visited adjacent platoon areas and found the same situation (Appleman, 26).

When you have soldiers focused more on the fact that they will be going home in a few months, they don't focus on the mission or even take the mission seriously. This causes the soldiers to not take security seriously and risk not just their own lives, but everyone within that formation. The mentality of "We will be home by Christmas" breeds complacency and that complacency trickles down from the top and hinders the performance of soldiers at all ranks.

Not only did complacency seem to take over the unit at the planning level or in terms of AA security at the squad level, it also took hold at the platoon and company level. The scouts

went out on mission, had no communications and were never seen again. From the accounts in East of Chosin, it seemed as if there was no plan for if the scouts lost communications or if they were not back within a certain amount of time. This is astonishing because even when junior leaders are first being trained to lead in the Army, they are taught that the number one weapon on the battlefield is a hand mic and that you never go anywhere with some sort of a five point contingency plan. Not just this scout platoon, but units throughout the 31st RCT seem to just be going through the motions. They weren't expecting much out of the enemy due to complacency, so they had reason to prepare or execute their mission correctly.

As I stated earlier, the 31st RCT was put into a bad situation, with bad uncontrollable factors, but I feel as though they could have taken the Korean force and the Chinese involvement more seriously. The weather and terrain played huge factors into the outcome, but had they refused the urge to become barn sour and continue to focus on the mission, the 31st RCT could have had a better chance. This is something the Iron Rangers need to remember. The deployment is coming to an end, but we must maintain readiness and keep focused on the mission because nobody thinks the worst is going to happen to them until it does. This matters most at the company grade leadership level. Company grade leaders have the most face time with soldiers and soldiers will often mimic the attitude of their leadership. If their platoon leader is acting complacent and constantly complaining about wanting the deployment to end, the soldiers will likely do the same. But if a platoon leader remains mission focused and motivated, soldiers will see this and it will likely rub off on them. As leaders it is our duty to keep the men motivated and mission focused and this will naturally drive complacency out of the formation.

Anthony Morris
Executive Officer, B CO, 1-16 IN

Editor's Note: Morris' original essay contained an appendix with maps of the battle area. Copyright, space, and printing considerations preclude reproducing them here.

INTRODUCTION[1]

The destruction of the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT), an American unit fighting in the Korean War, in December of 1950 around the Changjin Reservoir stands as one of the most interesting cases of study from the Korean War because of the multitude of failures that led to it. More specifically, the 31st RCT's actions in the vicinity of the Reservoir led to its destruction and consequently failure to achieve its operational goal of being a supporting effort to adjacent units operating in the area.[2] Given this failure, I seek with this paper to use a combination of secondary critical analysis sources—as well as the extremely limited primary sources available—to examine the operations of the 31st RCT at the Changjin Reservoir because I want to find out how their operations led to their own destruction.[3] Herein, I assert that the ineffective use of the mass principle of war by the elements of the 31st RCT allowed for their destruction. This paper proceeds as follows: First, I discuss the concepts –specifically the mass principle of war—by which I will test my thesis. Next, I introduce the historical context of the 31st RCT at the Changjin Reservoir. Then, using the mass principle of war[4] as my framework of analysis, I evaluate the actions of the 31st RCT, based on the evidence available, in order to determine how their actions caused their own destruction. Finally, I conclude by outlining some implications of my argument for the history of the military art and, consequently, future war.

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[1] For all the titles of operations, actions, places, military members, or other military-related terms that I mention in this paper, I consulted the USA Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms in order to ensure that I represented them correctly. The only potential issue that may arise is that I consulted the version published in 2011, meaning that it may have provided me with terms, ideas, or concepts that either did not exist or have been modified since the Korean War; however, even if this proves to be the case, everything is still written officially correctly; it just may be out of its time period. For the document I am discussing here, see United States of America, Department of Defense, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2011.

[2] Paul T. Berquist, MAJ, USA, *Organizational Leadership in Crisis: The 31st Regimental Combat Team at Chosin Reservoir, Korea, 24 November - 2 December 1950*, Master's thesis, U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, Aug 2006 - Jun 2007 (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2007), 12-18.

[3] My research led me to ask whether my conclusions apply to the failure of the whole of X Corps' offensive in the east. I do not fully discuss the failure of X Corps' offensive, but I do assert that the operation stood fated to fail from its conception due to failures in intelligence gathering and sharing. This theory can be explored in future work separate from this paper.

[4] I first encountered the concept of the Principles of Warfare, which incidentally are no longer officially in use by the US Army, in my studies at the United States Military Academy. For a detailing of the Principles of War provided by the USMA History Department to students, see United States Military Academy, Department of History, HI301 / HI302 Course Glossary, United States Military Academy, Accessed April 2017.
For the actual publication by the United States Army that details the Principles of War—even though they are no longer officially recognized tenets of war planning, making, or analysis—see United States of America, Department of the Army, Headquarters, FM 3-0: Operations, Washington, DC: United States Army, 2008.

THE *CADRE D'ANALYSE*

Following the close of the First World War, the United States Army adopted nine concepts that described what a military unit must accomplish in order to win a fight at any level of war, be it tactical, operational, or strategic.[5] These concepts, dubbed the principles of war, were based largely on the writings of the French interpreter of Napoleon Bonaparte's military success, Antoine-Henri Jomini, as well as the work of a British military theorist J. F. C. Fuller.[6] The principles of war historically formed the bedrock of Army doctrine, although they are no longer a part of it today.[7] Nevertheless, they are perhaps the simplest and most direct expression of the imperatives of successful warfighting. For this reason, they are an important tool for analyzing the conduct of war; and, as such, they form the framework of analysis—or *cadre d'analyse* as Jomini described it—I use to test my thesis in this paper.

I test my thesis against one of the nine principles of war. The principle that forms my analysis method is the mass principle of war. I selected this principle because the mission given to the 31st RCT at the Changjin Reservoir (Changjin is an alternate spelling of Chosin and is used interchangeably with the latter in this paper) was to mass their collective force in preparation for an offensive operation as part of the US Army's Seventh Infantry Division and the United States' Military's Tenth Corps.[8] The mass principle of war is defined as the concentration of combat power at the decisive place and time.[9]

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In late October of 1950 during the Korean War, a United Nations force, operating in support of the establishment of democracy in Korea and commanded by General (GEN) Douglas MacArthur, saw its offensive to seize the Korean peninsula stymied. More specifically, GEN MacArthur's plan to seize all the territory on the sub-continent up to the Yalu River that marked the border with China was spoiled by that country's decision to involve itself in the war.[10]10 The Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army (PLA) surprised and vigorously attacked Republic of Korea (ROK) and United Nations' forces moving north, leading to devastating losses for both

[5] Ibid, 8.
[6] Ibid, 8.
[7] Ibid, 8.
[8] Berquist, 20-30.
[9] HI301 / HI302 Course Glossary, 8.
[10] Roy Edgar Appleman, "The War in Korea, November, 1950," in *East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea*, 1950, 5th ed. (S.l.: Texas A & M University, 1987).

elements.[11] As a result, they decided to move into defensive positions in order to consolidate and reorganize.[12]12

By early November, Chinese PLA forces ceased their offensive operations and withdrew from contact with United Nations' forces. GEN MacArthur concluded that the Chinese forces had exhausted themselves in their offensive and had decided to retreat north.[13] His assessment and decision was largely based on the reports of aerial reconnaissance, which formed the only large-scale intelligence collection effort the United Nations' force mounted during this fight.[14] Consequently, he decided to resume the offensive to reunify the Korean state.[15] In order to achieve this objective, the United States Military's Tenth (X) Corps was given the task of advancing to the Yalu River on the northeastern side of the peninsula while the US Military's Eighth Army was tasked with advancing to the same objective on the northwestern side.[16] The X Corps, under the command of Lieutenant General (LTG) Almond, recommenced its movement northward.[17] LTG Almond directed his two subordinate units, the United States Marine Corps' (USMC) 1st Marine Division and the United States Army's Seventh Infantry Division (7th ID), to attack north to the Changjin Reservoir. The goal of this operation was to maneuver X Corps forces past the reservoir and over the Taebek Mountains in an effort to conduct a turning movement and flank Chinese PLA forces fighting against Eighth Army units operating in the west.[18]

While maneuvering around the Chosin Reservoir in an attempt to achieve the operational goal of a conducting a turning movement and flanking elements of the PLA, United Nations' forces encountered unexpected Chinese resistance in the vicinity of the Reservoir.[19] This resistance quickly developed into the Battle of the Changjin Reservoir, which lasted from 27 November 1950 until 3 December 1950.[20] This battle saw the complete destruction of the 31st

[11] Berquist, 9-37.
[12] Ibid, 20-37.
[13] Ibid, 26-27.
[14] Ibid, 26-27.
[15] Ibid, 27.
[16] Appleman.
[17] Ibid, 14-21.
[18] Berquist, 28.
[19] Ibid, 28-40.
[20] Appleman.

RCT, a subordinate unit of 7th ID, by PLA forces.[21] In addition, this battle saw the retreat of the rest of X Corps elements south of the Chosin Reservoir in order to consolidate and reorganize. Hereafter, I examine the orders given to the 31st RCT by higher command and the performance of the Regiment with respect to those orders and once it was in contact with the enemy force.

THE 31ST RCT AT THE CHANGJIN RESERVOIR

The 31st RCT commenced movement to their positions east of the Changjin Reservoir on the same day that they received the orders to conduct such action.[22] The first unit from the newly constituted regiment to move to Chosin was 1/32 IN Battalion under the command of LTC Faith.[23] The other elements of the 31st RCT—including 3/31 IN Battalion, the 31st Regiment Heavy Mortar Company, and the 57th Field Artillery Battalion, albeit just one battery—under the command of COL MacLean were headed to join 1/32 IN Battalion shortly afterward.[24] 1/32 IN Battalion was ordered by X Corps to move to the positions of the 5th Marine Regiment on the east side of the Chosin Reservoir and await the arrival of other 7ID units.[25] There is no mention in historical records of X Corps directing 7ID to send the rest of the 31st RCT. Yet, 7ID sent the entire 31st RCT east of the Chosin Reservoir regardless.

It is likely that 7ID was attempting to mass their forces around the Reservoir in order to best prepare themselves for the operation they were tasked with conducting— maneuvering north, turning the line of the PLA forces inhibiting Eighth Army movement, and advancing to defensive positions south of the Yalu River on the northeast side of the peninsula.[26]26 Historical evidence suggests that an understanding of the operational level of war[27] escaped LTC Faith. More specifically, when BG Hodes, the Assistant Division Commander of 7ID, came to

[21] Appleman, 54-63.
[22] Berquist, 32.
[23] Ibid, 30-35.
[24] Ibid 34.
[25] Ibid, 33-34.
[26] Berquist, 32-33.
[27] The Operational Level of War, as defined by DOD, is "the level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to achieve strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to achieve the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events." Although the US Army did not fully articulate a concept of an operational level of war until near the end of the twentieth century, the phrase can still be used, carefully, to explore the problem of connecting tactical actions with larger strategic plans.
I pulled this definition and the discussion of how it links the tactical and strategic levels of war directly from the course guide for the History of the Military Art taught at the United States Military Academy. For more information on this subject or the source I used to define it, please see HI301/HI302 Course Glossary, 2.

Changjin to inspect 1/32 IN Battalion before the arrival of the rest of the regiment, Faith told Hodes that he could attack north absent the support of the rest of the 31st RCT or any other unit. BG Hodes warned LTC Faith to hold his position until the rest of the regiment arrived.[28]

FAILURE TO MASS

By the night of 27 November 1950, LTC Faith had positioned 1/32 IN Battalion in a horseshoe formation east-northeast of Changjin.[29] LTC Reilly, the Commander of 3/31 IN Battalion, had positioned his formation south of 1/32 IN Battalion's position and east of the Reservoir (See Map I). That evening, all subordinate units of the 31st RCT were ordered by COL MacLean to commence their attack northward the following morning in support of the 1st Marine Division's effort to turn the line of the PLA units retarding the advance of Eighth Army. It is likely that the apparently poor effort that went into the positioning of the subordinate units of the 31st RCT was due to the fact that each one expected to move out to attack the following morning.[30] Regardless, the 31st RCT—more specifically, the subordinate units of 1/32 and 3/31 IN Battalions along with the battery from 57th FA Battalion—failed to mass their forces the evening of 27 November (See Map I).[31] More specifically, they did not concentrate their combat power in a coherent manner. Never mind at the decisive place and time because their combat power was not massed in the first place.[32] Indeed, the failure to mass combat power that evening set the 31st RCT up for failure in the ensuing Battle of the Chosin Reservoir because in the following days they never managed to recover from the original failure to mass.

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[28] In contrast to the actions of the 1/32 IN Battalion and subsequently the 31st RCT as a whole—this is discussed in the actual paper above—these actions, or more accurately deliberate inaction, display effective implementation of the mass principle of war. More specifically, one see the mass principle of war in that commanders at the corps, division, and regimental level recognized the need to gather up all available combat power—one finds historical evidence of this concept in the massing of the marine elements west of Changjin and Army elements to the east—regardless of who it was and prepare to move on the objectives they had been given—one finds historical evidence of this concept in the X Corps' operational plan in support of MacArthur's strategy. The failure to adhere to the mass principle of war occurred at the regimental level and below. This argument, with evidence to support it, is laid out in more detail in the paper above.

[29] Berquist, 25-34.

[30] One must also be aware that, in this case, Soldiers had heard MacArthur's speech promising redeployment before Christmas. At the Officer and Senior NCO level, they had been told that reconnaissance elements could not find any Chinese forces anywhere near their positions. Further, all the units were preparing to attack the following morning. Thus, everyone was focused on something other than establishing a perimeter and a hasty defense that evening. This fact stands to show that a lack of focus or presence can lead to the downfall of any unit, no matter its size or level of warfighting proficiency.

[31] Berquist, 41.

[32] Appleman, 77-89.

The 28th of November 1950 saw little change in the disposition of the 31st RCT, as they had yet to realize how dire their situation stood (See Map II). [33] Additionally, they thought that 2/31 IN Battalion was going to arrive to aid them.[34] Perhaps the failure to realize the severity of the situation or the expectation of reinforcements contributed to the continued failure to mass the combat power of the 31st RCT at a decisive point at a specified—or definitive—point in time (See Map II).[35] Relevant to this discussion is the visit of LTG Almond on 28 November. It is relevant in the sense that he offered suggestions for improvement to COL MacLean and LTC Faith, ultimately asking them to mass their forces in order to still execute the northward attack, despite the fact the Regiment already stood in contact with enemy forces.[36] Important to note here is the fact that the X Corps Commander asked the 31st RCT to mass their forces to attack; yet, he failed to point out to them that they did not have their forces effectively massed around the Changjin Reservoir at that point.[37]

By 29 November, LTC Faith had decided to consolidate the 31st RCT—which had now become Task Force Faith because COL MacLean was missing and the unit had lost too much combat power to be organized as a regiment—at the P'ungnyuri Inlet of the Changjin Reservoir.[38] Evident here is a decision to mass combat power at a decisive point and time by LTC Faith. Unfortunately for Task Force Faith, the failure to effectively mass forces by the 31st RCT on 26 November and 27 November meant that their massing efforts on 29 November eventually proved fruitless. Put simply, Task Force Faith never recovered from the original failure to effectively mass forces prior to the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir (See Map II).[39] Indeed, by the time the Battle found its bloody and saddening end on 2 December 1950 when survivors from Task Force Faith arrived at Hagaru-Ri, the failure to mass by units and leaders in the 31st RCT had cost the unit most of its combat power and nearly all of its leadership.[40] These failures described above displays ineffective implementation—or perhaps lack of implementation—of the mass principle of war in that leaders of the subordinate units of the 31st RCT failed to recognize the need to gather up all their combat power, irrespective of who it was,

[33] Berquist, 44.
[34] Appleman, 83-84.
[35] Berquist, 44-45.
[36] Berquist, 46.
[37] Appleman, 106-109.
[38] Berquist, 55.
[39] Ibid, 57-63.
[40] Appleman, 278-285.

at a designated point or in a specified timeframe, especially after they were attacked by enemy PLA forces (See Map II).

By failing to mass their forces, the subordinate units of the 31st RCT not only failed to fight the Chinese PLA offensive that was launched on 27 November, they failed to achieve their operational objective of supporting the 1st Marine Divisions' effort to turn the PLA's line to the northwest and allow freedom of maneuver for Eighth Army.[41] Moreover, the 31st RCT led to their own destruction by their ineffective use of—or perhaps failure to use—the mass principle of war. It is likely that if the subordinate units of the 31st had more effectively massed their forces, then they would not only have stood a better chance of survival against the PLA onslaught; they would likely have been able to aid the 1st Marine Division in accomplishing their mission (See Map III). The resulting retreat of elements of the X Corps of the United Nations' force ultimately led the entire effort to move south of the 38th Parallel, a move that helped lead to the establishment of two Korean states, North and South, separated by a DMZ. It is not a leap of faith to say that a failure to mass at a lower unit level led to this outcome; however, one cannot say it was the driving factor. Regardless, it is my intent that this paper and the evidence presented here showcases the importance of the effective implementation of the mass principle of war in the art of warfighting.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper has been to either prove or disprove the thesis that the ineffective use of—or perhaps failure to use—the mass principle of war by the subordinate elements and leaders of the 31st RCT led to the destruction of the unit in the Battle of the Changjin Reservoir. Herein, evidence has shown that weak and ineffective implementation of the mass principle of war by the subordinate units and leaders of the 31st RCT contributed to the destruction of the unit at the Chosin Reservoir. Abstracting lessons from this case, one can see that the failure of the 31st RCT at the Changjin Reservoir was ultimately fueled by ineffective use or lack of use of the principles of war in a joint operational capacity. Thus, for the student of military history, it is worth considering the idea that the Battle of Changjin Reservoir has helped launch an effort in modernity to understand the elements or principles that make a unit effective or not in a combat environment.

[41] Berquist, 75-82.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

John Petty
XO, G CO, 1-16 IN

The philosopher George Santayana once said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Roy Edgar Appleman’s *East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea,* published in 1987, helps us with the first part of the philosopher’s theory. Appleman’s thorough study of the events that unfolded surrounding Task Force Faith in the Chosin Campaign of 1950 not only change the historiography of the Korean War but offer some key insights for modern day military leaders so as they may not be “condemned to repeat it.”

I’m sure reading the numerous amount of reflection papers proves that Army Leaders in different branches and different positions had different takeaways from this book. I had a multitude of takeaways while reading this book including why communication is so important on the battlefield, ensuring there is always a concept of support and then at minimum two backup concepts of support, and everyone knows each others roles on the battlefield. By that last one I’m referring to the many incidents during Task Force Faith where just about all leaders were KIA, WIA, or MIA during the fight and subordinates were forced to step up and take on the position of their superior. Did they do as good as a job as they wanted being thrown on the spot as they were? Could the Iron Ranger Battalion’s lower level leaders take the position of their superiors at a moment’s notice if called upon? Not only do we have to ensure we strive to master our current positions but can we do our superiors job proficiently as well if needed? If that answer is a no then what can we do to pursue this goal? In my opinion it is not only the subordinate’s responsibility to ensure he or she is ready to step up if necessary but also the superiors to ensure they have an ample replacement incase the worst scenario happens. It should be just as much a priority as life insurance, call it “unit insurance” if you will.

The major takeaway I got out of this book also relates to unit readiness. As a logistician in a forward support company, we have a multitude of different MOS’s within the unit. From mechanics of all kinds and vehicle operators to petroleum specialists and culinary experts, the forward support company holds a plethora of non-combat MOS’s. *East of Chosin* showed us that Task Force Faith also held a multitude of soldiers in non-combat roles. However, these soldiers were forced to become like their infantry counterparts and defend their lines and themselves. During the second night of attacks, a battalion mess sergeant found most of his fellows cooks dead or severely wounded and took what was left of his section to help the infantry defend their

front. Another example is when the Battalion Motor Officer (although back then he was normally a combat arms officer) volunteered to lead a group of soldiers on the offensive against the Chinese. These examples show us that no matter the MOS, combat role or not, there are dire times when everyone must be a soldier first.

The modern day military shows us they agree all military members are soldiers first to an extent. Everyone who joins the military must graduate some sort of basic training and learn to shoot, move, and communicate. But once non-combat arms MOS's arrive to their units, how often do they continue to train on the basics of being a soldier? As long as I've been in the First Infantry Division, I've never heard or seen support units conducting training such as Advanced rifle marksmanship (ARM) training or convoy live fires. As much as some units strive to do combat training such as this, logisticians calendars are often too filled with their occupational specialty like vehicle services, keeping the DFAC running, and supporting battalion ranges. But if a unit such as the Iron Rangers ended up in a conflict such as the one of the Chosin Campaign, I am not confident how they would fare. As we know the 1-16 Infantry Battalion's motto is "Semper Paratus" which is Latin for "Always Ready," but are all of us always ready?

Jason Scaglione
Fire Support Officer, B CO, 1-16 IN

Reading "East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout in Korea, 1950" was shocking, disturbing, and inspiring at the same time. I was shocked that I had not heard of the tragedy before and that our military had suffered such immense loss that seemed to have been avoidable. I was disturbed at the feeling that events such as what transpired on the east side of the Chosin Reservoir could happen again. In the face of tragedy and loss, however, I was also inspired by the leadership qualities shown by so many in the midst of chaos.

With regards to reading and studying history, I believe the most important aspect will always be personal reflection. Reflection on what we have seen, heard, read, or experienced pushes us to progress, uncover unseen lessons, and apply them to our own lives. We need to learn from history in order to avoid making the same mistakes in the future. We need to ask the tough questions that can help us improve in future operations: What went wrong and at what point? Whose fault was it? What can we do to start fixing the issues and avoiding further loss? Lt Col (Ret) Roy E. Appleman clearly dedicated countless hours to determine what truly happened

to the U.S. Army's 7th Infantry Division on the east side of Chosin Reservoir and I believe it was a very good book for this battalion to use as officer development. I believe weekly discussions and a reflection paper were also effective ways to get the most out of the book, gather group ideas, and apply lessons to ourselves and our organization. Although it was disturbing to feel as though we could easily find ourselves in a situation similar to that of the 7th ID in 1950, it is leader development exercises like this that facilitate a unit's ability to respond much more efficiently. I have gained much confidence that 1-16 IN could have fared much better than the battalions forming the near-regimental combat team at Chosin. However, as we discussed every week at the book club meetings, it is vital that the leader development does not stop with the officers, but instead the lessons are spread to all levels.

Appleman writes that the main adverse factors that led to approximately 1000 American Soldiers losing their lives were: lack of communications, lack of effective ammunition and gas resupply, lack of air-recon intelligence on the withdrawal route, short daylight periods, a hastily decided upon breakout plan, depleted officer and NCO leadership for troop control, frigid weather, and the early withdrawal of the 31st Tank Company and the 31st Infantry Rear at Hudong-Ni. The unit continuously failed to take advantage of any opportunities to improve their radio communications. This lack of communications is correlated to every other aspect of the operation that went wrong. Having clear communications and common understanding is key to every operation in the Army. It is easy to criticize the units from the 7th ID after all is said and done, but the main factor that I believe the leadership could have done better is fighting for cohesion. There seemed to be a consistent lack of drive to consolidate and simultaneously plan their escape from a terrible situation.

With regard to whose fault was it, I believe reflections always need to start internally. Every leader and Soldier alike need to emplace themselves where they would most likely be in such an operation and first figure out what they could have done better, then they can focus on improvements from each position. The quote that stood out the most to me was, "In military affairs, a big part of the answer lies in the wisdom of command" (Appleman 305). As a leader, you need to fight for wisdom. You cannot rely on what you have already done or what you already know. You need to push for as much information as you can possibly get in order to best set you and your unit up for success. We did not see this priority within the leadership during the entrapment and breakout east of Chosin.

More so than anything, "East of Chosin" reinforced my concern for going into an operation blind. 7th ID did not receive all the intelligence they needed from the Marines they replaced, they did not use the necessary air recon assets, and overall they did not forcefully push for enough information to succeed in Korea. Approximately 1000 Soldiers died overwhelmingly due to hasty decisions. It is now our jobs as leaders to learn from history and always retrieve as much knowledge as possible before sending any Soldiers into harm's way.

Kevin Yang
Fire Support Officer, D TRP, 1-4 CAV

The encompassing title of "The Forgotten War" provides an appropriate and unfortunate designation for the Soldiers and Marines who were killed during the Chosin campaign. Yet, *East of Chosin* by Roy E. Appleman provides an in-depth testimony of the heroism and struggle that 31 Regimental Combat Team (RCT) endured. This paper will not reflect so much on 31 RCT's tactics and strategies against the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) but more so on the individual and collective leadership challenges encountered by Task Force Faith (TF Faith). There were several important themes narrated throughout the operation that illustrated TF Faith's ultimate defeat. Yet, these focal leadership lessons will be examined: communication and competency.

Communication

Failure in communication and information dissemination throughout the entire Chosin campaign has repeatedly been the most common adverse theme. Consequently, lack of communication precedes lack of synchronization. 31 RCT elements have failed to report critical events or coordinate substantial efforts against the CCF. Appleman states that LTC Faith made no attempts to achieve communications with higher headquarters or vice versa during the defensive operation in the inlet. This is quite odd considering LTC Faith must have understood his unit is essentially alone and surrounded by the CCF. Regardless, the higher echelon should be responsible and make any attempts to restore communications with its subordinate units. This would be most practical considering higher echelons typically have more resources available to synchronize and issue orders to coordinate such efforts.

However, seemingly no one had the prudence to fully utilize all the resources available within TF Faith. CPT Stamford, the 1-32 IN Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) leader, and his High Frequency radio, capable of transmitting far beyond any other organic radio, was TF

Faith's only means of communication by relaying messages to Marine pilots supporting in the area. Yet again, Appleman mentions neither CPT Stamford nor any principle staff officer requested or provided a radio frequency to CPT Stamford that would have streamline communications with higher headquarters. The lack of communication throughout the organization magnified disarray and coordination within TF Faith.

Communication was also essentially nonexistent in the tactical levels within the battalion (BN). Gaps between companies, particularly A CO and C CO, allowed the CCF to exploit the initial forward defensive perimeter held by 1-32 IN. The CCF exploitation could have been prevented had the 1-32 IN staff issued specific company areas of responsibility, especially regarding any gaps. In addition, the adjacent Company Commanders and Platoon Leaders (PL) could have taken the discipline initiative to establish communication with their adjacent units and thus further synchronize their tactical areas of responsibility to cover these gaps. Maintaining consistent communication with all levels is imperative to coordinate for any operation.

Competency

The extreme circumstance encountered by TF Faith exemplifies the necessity to be tactically and technically proficient in individual and collective tasks. While many of TF Faith's small unit leaders were extremely capable in Chosin, CPT Stamford and his TACP was a vital factor in the survival of TF Faith. His highly effective skills as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) demonstrate his ability to be a force multiplier. As a Fire Support Officer, I was personally invested in the lessons and story of CPT Stamford. CPT Stamford exhibited all the best characters of an officer and enabler: tactically proficient, exceptional leader, and provided expert terminal guidance to close air support in support of maneuver during severe situations.

I reflected upon my own abilities as a Fire Support Officer on whether I would be able to lead with the same fruition as CPT Stamford. I have come to realize through reading the accounts of TF Faith and experiencing my own field problems that I must be more aggressive and be willing to take tactical risks. Dropping the napalm on TF Faith during the initial breakout provides a stark reminder of the balance in accepting tactical risk. Shortly after reading the passage, I have contemplated whether CPT Stamford could have instead requested a gun run from the Corsairs in order to reduce the probability of incapacitation or possibly change the aircraft's final attack heading. Ultimately it reminded me of an episode during the National

Training Center when 1-16 IN encountered a massive enemy horde and mortar fire mission processing was lethargic due to communication problems with the Tactical Operations Center. Understanding the circumstances, I should have taken such tactical risk and requested for the forward Tactical Command Post to process the fire missions in order to expedite the support.

My experience as a Fire Supporter, having served in the BN and now in the CO level, revealed I must be as proficient and competent in not only Fire Support but also maneuver. In addition, Soldiers and NCOs respect junior officers who are competent yet still willing to learn. Conversely, one cannot expect to lead with one's incompetence. Incompetence will quickly lose the respect and confidence of his/her leaders and subordinates. Yet, the unit's collective aptitude is just as significant as the individual's. CPT Stamford's TACP portrayed expert technical skills in their equipment by remarkably fixing their vital radios during an engagement. This occasion only testifies the team's high level of collective competence. Therefore, TF Faith could have experienced a different outcome had CPT Stamford been incompetent as a FAC or his TACP were not experts and familiar with their radio equipment.

Conclusion

While TF Faith failed to establish consistent communication in multiple levels, its relative success is attributed to competent small unit leadership such as CPT Stamford. The lack of communication permitted a breakdown of command and control, little support, and no information dissemination. Communication is essential in operating as a cohesive unit and synchronizing multiple efforts. In addition, competency will be a major factor in gaining trust, respect, and credit with one's Soldiers. The small unit leaders of TF Faith understood the technical and tactical aspects of their profession and exhibited this competency with valor. These critical leadership lessons were reflected upon TF Faith's expense and struggle at Chosin and will certainly be utilized for this junior officer's future career and endeavors.

Battalion Staff

Davis DiDonato
Adjutant, TF 1-16 IN

As a junior officer I often wondered "What aspects have the greatest effect on a mission or what is the one mistake that will inhibit success above all others?" It wasn't until after starting my platoon leader time that I was able to answer this question. It was also, throughout this time I

started to notice trends on what was important to Officers and NCOs; most of whom had combat experience. Communication quickly became an area that I noticed was universally important. Communication consistently had the greatest impact on my training, and has been a priority for my superiors; as well as my subordinates during training. Therefore, as I reflect on *East of Chosin*, I'll also reflect on my time as a platoon leader; remembering the things that went well, and the things that failed. Personally, *East of Chosin* reinforced that "Communication is the key to success on the battlefield"- SFC Brown.

The 31st RCT had its problems; bad resupply, inexperienced leaders, terrible weather conditions, poor communication among others. While you could make an argument for any of these issues and the impact they had on the RCT's failure: my focus will be on communication; beginning with the momentum that was created from MacArthur's success, and the mentality that ultimately trickled down to the lowest level. He immediately painted a picture for soldiers of the 31st RCT that they would simply move north to the Chosin area, and would be home by Christmas. Those soldiers moved north with an impression that this war was already over, and they are simply waiting out the rest of their deployment. I believe this created complacency, and set the precedence for the 31st's ability to communicate. With this in mind, and looking at our current unit; there are several similarities between us. We both believe we have the finish line in sight, and that there is no war to be fought; meanwhile, we both have an enemy up north that is active. Furthermore, we as leaders might have underestimated the concern of our junior soldiers about our enemy. Just like the 31st RCT; our organization might have missed opportunities to communicate the situation to the lowest level.

Command and control, and the 31st's ability to relay information within their own ranks continued to demonstrate their struggle with communication. They were not able to maintain radio communication, get information to the perimeter; then back to headquarters, and were unable to talk to adjacent units. This may sound negligent on their part, but every Platoon Leader in 1-16 IN that was on that mountain before we moved to Razish should be modest. Every platoon leader at some point in that night, lost communication, had to reconsolidate during movement, and expressed some sort of confusion on the current situation. However, it's not anyone's fault; radios failed, darkness created confusion, and overall communication degraded through the night. Struggling to maintain communication is still a challenge even with modern

technology; therefore, when I think about the conditions that the 31st RCT were in 60 years ago: I'm surprised it wasn't worse.

During my brief experience as a maneuver officer, nothing affected the outcome of training like communication did; starting with communicating the plan to the NCOs, down to radios failing during missions. My first platoon sergeant addressed the importance of good communication often, and it was also a priority for my battalion commander. While *East of Chosin* reinforced that many aspects of the military are important; it personally affirmed that communication is the key to success on the battlefield.

Montray Fox
CBRNE, TF 1-16 IN

How fortunate it is to have hindsight when remembering the conflicts of the past. It is very easy to make sound judgment when one is removed physically, mentally, and even generationally from a particular subject of discussion. This became apparent during discussions of Roy E. Appleman's *East of Chosin.* After reading *Chosin* and writing this paper the two main facets I chose to focus on were the importance of trust and shared understanding within a chain of command, and what the Army as an institution values and the culture it has created and how that very culture played a part in the unfortunate destruction of the 31st Regimental Combat Team.

As a young officer stepping into this profession I often wonder at what level of command does a Soldier transition from being a name to being a number on a tracker. In this profession we don't believe in individualism, but we honor those who display disciplined initiative. We recognize those who display acts of valor, with medals and awards, only to remind them of what (for most) could've been the worst day of their life. One of the most important and insightful passages in Chosin details, "… after General Almond left to return to Hagaru-Ri, Lieutenant Colonel Faith and Lieutenant Smalley ripped their Silver Stars off their jackets and threw them into the snow" (pg 107). The emotions described by LTC Faith in this excerpt not only show his growing desperation, but also his annoyance and disgust with his chain of command. Empathizing with LTC Faith, I felt as though General Almond did not understand the gravity of the situation. The idea of General Almond not grasping the danger that the regiment was in - despite him being there seeing it firsthand - immediately makes me think that he was out of

touch with the Battalion. Or perhaps he believed blindly in the will of General MacArthur, whose own will became a testament to the danger of complacent thinking of the US Military at the onset of the Korean War.

Another lesson from *Chosin* that I came to understand is that the U.S. will not always inherently prevail over an enemy just because we have a slight technical advantage. The culture that has been adopted within the U.S. Army is that we fight and we win. While this is true, we must ask the question, "What happens when we don't"? One of the reasons so many non-military (and even some military professionals) do not know the story of the 31st RCT at the Chosin Reservoir is because the loss was a very big one and it was a big loss to the People's Republic of China (PRC). For a military force, claiming to be one of the most lethal in the world sends shockwaves across the globe and proving this to be true sends even more powerful shockwaves. But what happens when a chink is found in this proverbial armor? There creates danger in building up a culture that a group is the strongest force on the hill, even if it's true. It makes it increasingly difficult when we have not faced another force that has the ability to also be the king of the hill. The question of pride and how a modern mechanized battalion would fare against the PRC is a question that has gone through the minds of many military professionals. Though the right and best answers are "YES!" with unwavering resolve how can we truly know how they would perform? Many of the issues that plagued battalions during those times still plague many battalions today, chief among them being communication. Communication alone can completely transform the course of a battle, for better or for worse. This communication does not just include the communication from radio to radio, but also how soldiers communicate with one another and how superiors communicate to their subordinates.

In conclusion, shared understanding within a chain of command, and the cultural identity of the army are both very important facets to be learned and internalized from east of Chosin. Too often we look to our victories and immortalize them throughout history, but less than fondly remember our defeats. In order to learn from our history and continue to evolve as an Army it is important to take lessons from our fallen brothers and learn from their mistakes so we can continue to serve our families, our countries, and our brothers-in-arms. In order to do this we must know our enemy and not underestimate their power, but we must also communicate up and down with precision in order to paint a clear picture for our superiors and for our subordinates. As the 31st RCT learned, the fate of any military force rests on its ability to communicate.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

Keshav Iyengar
S6, TF 1-16 IN

In reading *East of Chosin* and educating oneself on Task Force Faith, many lessons come to mind regarding effective leadership and practice in warfare. These encompass a broad spectrum of elements including training, preparation, communication, morality, courage and decisiveness. The unanticipated lack of reinforcements, undetected Chinese infiltration, heavy casualties and extreme weather are just some of the events to examine. Ultimately, there is much modern military units can learn from the actions of the 7th Infantry Division during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir.

In the early stages of the battle, perhaps most notable was the undetected Chinese infiltration of the task force's perimeter. As a result of anticipated reinforcements and an assumption that they would not be attacked, the men did not establish adequate security around their perimeter. This act can be seen as complacent; despite what is anticipated, units should always prepare contingencies for the unanticipated. Establishing security is paramount to maintaining a stronghold and ensuring uncompromised operations. Additionally, Soldiers exhibited a lack of alertness. This may have been due to the extreme cold and Soldiers' lack of appropriate clothing, which significantly impacted resiliency against the conditions. In conversations with Captain Stamford, the author also notes that Soldiers may have been sleeping while on duty. This highlights the incumbency of discipline in combat; despite the difficulty in standing guard at night while in the freezing cold, thousands of lives depend on it.

Another point worth examining concerns leadership. There are several examples in the book that highlight superior and poor decisions made by senior leaders. For example, General Almond's decision to push his men forward after they had already sustained significant losses is arguably a poor decision. As a senior leader, the responsibility lies with Gen. Almond to determine whether his subordinate units are fit for combat. In this case, the heavy casualties coupled with a lack of resupply should have served as an indication that the unit was ill-prepared to continue North. However, Gen. Almond – in his brief assessment of the situation – felt the opposite. This decision later proved to have catastrophic consequences, as Chinese forces continued to inflict heavy losses. In contrast, upon assuming command, Lieutenant Colonel Don Faith's decision to retreat was arguably superior in judgment. Having lost enough personnel,

ammunition and supplies to be considered combat ineffective, the task force was not in any position to continue the fight. Col. Faith accurately assessed this to be the case, and his ensuing actions therefore directly contributed to the survival of many of the remaining Soldiers.

There are countless other lessons to be learned from examining Task Force Faith's role in the Battle of the Chosin River. While some Soldiers exhibited complacency, ill-preparedness and cowardice, others demonstrated courage, honor and selflessness. In addition, the extreme weather conditions, relentless Chinese offensive, lack of resupply, lowered morale and poor decision-making all contributed to the catastrophic loss of life. It is obvious that much can be learned from the circumstances surrounding the battle. However, it is incumbent upon leaders in today's military to remain cognizant of their susceptibility to the same outcomes. In other words, while hindsight permits near-perfect judgment, leaders today are not exempt from failure, poor judgment or complacency. To combat these, leaders can do a number of things, including actively involving themselves in training, understanding their Soldiers and equipment, and above all, learning from past mistakes.

Kevin Lin
A/S2, TF 1-16 IN

East of Chosin, this book tells the story of the tragic battle of the troops of the 31st Regimental Combat Team who fight their final battle by the icy shores of Chosin Reservoir. It is there they are surrounded by Chines forces, and it is there out of 3000 soldiers, only 385 survived the deadly battle. Those who died have not foreseen that they will be forever be buried in this foreign soil, and just few days ago they are told by General MacArthur that they will be going home by Christmas, which promotes high morals among the soldiers. So what goes wrong? How does this tragedy happen? Is it a lack of communication and poor command decisions, or were the soldiers purposely being sent there to be sacrificed so that the 1st Marine Division can successfully retreat of the place?

During the first night, November 27th, Chinese forces infiltrate their area undetected, and make a surprised attack on the task force elements which inflict heavy casualties. CPT Stamford later comments that it was largely due to the lack of alertness of the soldiers, and the lack of effort of the officers whom failed to correct their soldier, which allowed the enemy to bypass their defense (pg. 69). The next morning Maj. Gen. Almond, the X Corps commander visits the

1-32 IN, during his conversation with Faith and MacLean, he learns that neither of them know about the situation as they previously assumed that the forces they are fighting are the remnant of Chinese forces. In addition personnel of the 1st Battalion observe on the eastern skyline long columns of Chinese troops marching pass them going south the entire day (pg. 105). However, before MG Almond leaves the CP he awards Faith with a Silver Stars along with two others, and during the ceremony MG Almond told Col. Faith not to worry as the Chinese they see are only the stragglers fleeing north despite the report that is just given to him (pg. 108). Did Gen. Almond ignores the evidence that the Chinese forces that they see is not the remnant enemy forces or does he purposely want the 1-32 RCT to continue to fight the large enemy forces despite the heavy causality that will occur. It is mentioned that he visited the marine division before he makes his way down to Col. Faith's CP, therefore we can assume that he is aware the dire situation they are facing currently. With that in mind, it is possible that Gen. Almond made the decision to have Col. Faith's troops continue to fight the enemies despite the chance of success is low.

On the night of December 1st, The Chinese forces attack the convoy at Hill 1221 where they have set up a strong defensive position on the hill and a roadblock beneath it to block Faith's retreat. However, according to Maj. Jones states that Col. Faith is later hit by an enemy grenade and badly wounded during the joint attack that they have made against the enemy fire block at the saddle of Hill 1221 (pg. 275). The survivor of Task Force Faith is able to escape to Hagaru-ri where the 1st Marine Division is located. Later the author is trying to find evidence whether there is a rescue attempt carried out during the time that the convoy is attacked. CPT Drake, the commander of the 31st Tank Company, his tank company is supposed to been the ones in the rescue force states that he and his tanks did not participate in any relief force (pg. 297). In addition, the author concludes that there is no tank-infantry force, or any other kind of rescue force, that left Hagaru-ri to go to the aid of Task Force Faith's motor convoy on December 2 or any subsequent date (pg. 298). From those statements, it seems that there could have been a break in communication which caused the order for rescue force not been passed down. However, with several witness accounting that they have never being made aware of such order, we can also argue that the order of rescue force is never officially made by Col. Anderson. Therefore it is likely that they have made a decision to abandon Task Force Faith in order to give the marine a chance of successful retreat.

In conclusion, regardless whatever the decision made by our superiors, we as the soldiers should always carry out the order in our fullest in order to achieve the mission. Although there will be some necessary sacrifices to be made in the process, however the sacrifice made will be used to provide opportunities for our forces to achieve victory in the battle.

Timothy Nikolouzos
A/S4, TF 1-16 IN

The struggle of the 31st RCT had numerous challenges it needed to overcome, to at first ensure its mission success and later to ensure its survival. Some of these challenges were the nature of the war they were fighting in while others were self-inflicted by the Army, the 31st RCT, and the individual battalions. These self-inflicting wounds are the ones to learn from because of the direct control a unit has in making decisions associated with them.

One of the most egregious and frustrating events was the 31st RCT consolidation effort prior to the breakout attempt. As the 31st RCT attempted to reconsolidate itself after overstretching its lines, it found itself perpetually stuck in current operations. Once the battalions were able to accept the fact that they were facing an overwhelming Chinese force, little thought was given to anything else besides establishing hasty and area defenses; regrouping and survival were the only thoughts on everyone's minds. After the first day and night it seems acceptable to have that mentality; the issue is that the mentality kept persisting critically, with the leadership.

The leadership across the consolidated battalions and 31st RCT was unable to develop future operations to see what was lying in front of them. Communications, while not ideal, were established with via CPT Stamford's radio to the air support overhead who in turn could relay messages to other units on the ground. Little attempt was made to utilize what communication methods existed. This became painfully apparent when the ability to have reinforcements was available yet, not utilized due to a lack of communication between the units in need, higher headquarters, and units available to provide assistance. CPT Drake's tank company was in positon to move forward and aide the RCT; an attempt was made through his own initiative to reach the RCT yet that tank company was not moved forward to provide relief. The relief attempt that was mounted was a disaster itself and weak due to a lack of combined arms; the tanks assaulted infantry positions with no infantry support or air support as they moved forward.

Arguably the most significant event was the inaction on the third day of consolidation, the day prior to the breakout. It is described as a status quo period in the book with little change to anything. In my opinion, this is the prime period of when action needed to be taken. It was frustrating to read how time was written off as though the unit was waiting for something to happen; no initiative was taken to improve the situation. The remaining staff officers across the RCT and the battalions did not seem prepared to execute a breakout plan, something which should have been developed. This was detrimental to the breakout when the breakout was ordered resulting in a painful and ineffective retrograde to the fortified Marine positions to the south; a better organized plan could have saved more lives. It seems higher levels of leadership were stuck with the inability to make a decision, preferring to wait until support arrived rather than improving their own situation.

Additionally, there was not an attempt to move from defensive operations to offensive operations. Chinese positions to the south, along the direction of the retrograde, were not thoroughly probed or viewed by the scouts. The ability to accurately know of the Chinese positions could have enabled a smoother breakout and more importantly provided an opportunity for a turning movement on the Chinese to force them out of their positons clearing the road to the south. A successful turning movement on the Chinese is potentially an operation that could have saved the 31st RCT by clearing the path to the south and halting Chinese progression. A better reconnaissance of the enemy positions could have allowed more effective supply drops where there were more accurately dropped within a specifically marked zone instead of strung along the battlefield. Even probes to find a good path out on the ice could have been effective to push people, especially the wounded, away from the enemy and in a direct path to friendly lines.

There could be a whole analysis done on the options that 31st RCT could or should have done, many of which are mistakes learned by others in the past. It is not lost on me to consider the weather, sleep, food, and poor morale as factors in the difficulty of the 31st RCT to perform in combat during this period. The mistakes made seem to stem from leadership, at a field grade level and higher, failing to take the initiative to improve their situation and take the fight to the enemy. The book is full of stories of disciplined initiative by NCOs, junior officers, and junior enlisted. The book does not reveal the same of the senior officer and senior enlisted to act effectively. Many factors contribute to the situation the 31st RCT found itself in from being unprepared at the start of the fight to the demise following a litany of mistakes and inaction. This

particular instance in the book, in my opinion, is the turning point in which the 31st RCT with their remaining battalions had the ability to take control of their situation following the initial Chinese attack. The inability to take advantage of this status quo opportunity and force changes upon the Chinese by making the enemy react to them sealed the fate of the 31st RCT; at that point they put their fate in the hands of others to save them. The lesson I took away from the book, and one that reinforces what I already know, is that the initiative and opportunity to win needs to be seized when it presents itself. That ability to recognize when that is can make a significant difference.

Rob Scarminach
A/S3, TF 1-16 IN

East of Chosin, by Roy E. Appleman, is a historical narrative of officers who failed to properly estimate the operational reach of their formations. Prior to the encircling and entrapment of the 31st Regimental Combat Team and the other elements that would become TF Faith, the leaders and staff made a series of decisions that placed their units in an untenable situation. There are those who would place blame on higher echelon-Headquarters. Generally speaking, that argument tends to be facile; the decision to place an undermanned and undersupplied regiment so far north and with such a large area of responsibility is the epitome of uninformed decision making. Orders are orders, however, and 31st RCT had theirs. The responsibility, therefore, for the downfall of the 31st, falls on the Commanders and Staff present on the battlefield.

A Commander's Deliberate Risk Assessment is his interpretation of his formation's current Operational Reach, in its relation to operating environment. "Operational reach is the distance over which military power can be employed decisively… Combat power, sustainment capabilities, and the geography surrounding and separating friendly and enemy forces all influence it." (FM 3-0 *Operations*) Simply put, at any one time, the Operational Reach is based on the current status of the unit's warfighting functions. Furthermore, the Elements of Combat Power are the Warfighting Functions tied together by leadership. One can safely argue, therefore, that the Commander's contribution amounts to risk assessment, ergo his interpretation of his current Operational Reach and the operating environment. The leaders of the 31st RCT failed in this assessment.

Retrospectively, we have a far better grasp of exactly how dire the warfighting functions of the 31st RCT were. If you remove the facts we are enlightened with today, however, and consider only what a Company Commander or Staff Officer could have plausibly known then, it is still difficult not to place at least some of the blame on the junior commanders or staff.

Consider the intelligence situation of the 31st RCT. Now, intelligence is best understood as knowing yourself and knowing your enemy. It seems that the 31st RCT failed to consider and adjust for either.

Knowing yourself is a paramount leadership task, especially in the schema of Operational Reach. What the 31st RCT IN did know of itself was that about 25% of each company was a KATUSA (Korean Augmentee to the US Army) (p. 61, *East of Chosin).* The KATUSA program of 1950 amounted to little more than impressment of Korean nationals and near-immediate expedition to a fighting unit. As a result, most KATUSAs had no military training and few could speak English. Both are factors that are considerably limiting to a Company's ability. Essentially, a quarter of the formation could not understand commands and had a tentative grasp on how to use their weapons.

Take whatever the frontage an Infantry Company of 1950 could typically cover and reduce it by 25% and the result is a reality the Staff and Commanders of the 31st should have used in their running estimates. When they arrived in Chosin, however, they merely fell in on the fighting positions the 1st Marine Division (a Division fully manned by American Marines) were vacating, evidence of the fact that the 31st RCT did not account for how drastically ineffective a full-quarter of their formation was. Facing the Chinese Army, the decision to spread a formation that thin, and already reduced below 75% strength, is almost unfathomable.

The Commanders and Staff of the 31st also failed to know their enemy. The leaders of the 31st failed to realize, or quite possibly refused to admit, that by the time they were entering the Chosin battlespace, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was doing so as well. The blame for the intelligence picture does not lie solely at the feet of McArthur's Far East Command or the X Corps Headquarters either. For in the case of the 31st RCT, after losing contact with the I&R platoon, coupled with the numerous warnings of recent Chinese activity in the region from the Marines, there is no way the leaders did not at least have an inclination of the enemy force massing against them.

Consider also how limited the 31st was in terms of both Sustainment and Mission Command capabilities. For Sustainment, the 31st relied on a dangerously restricted main supply route flowing from the harbor they had recently disembarked. A small amount of pressure applied in key choke points on the supply road could, and did, essentially paralyze and freeze the supplies headed to the front. Tying this to intelligence, the PLA habitually and methodically surrounded their enemy defenses to get behind them, the intention being to halt the flow of supplies, the lifeblood of American forces, and to lie in wait to ambush those who retreated or came to help. That aspect of the Chinese tactics was likely far from common knowledge of Commanders and Staff of the day. The logistics picture, however, is still troubling disregarding enemy tactics. Pushing their undermanned unit that far out along a very tenuous supply chain is a perplexing decision. At a minimum, the Commanders at the Company or Battalion level have to prepare however they can for it. This means stockpiling and bringing as much supplies as can physically be carried. Further, noncommissioned officers must initiate and enforce a strict water, food, and ammunition discipline the very second cut-off occurs.

Ultimately, the most perturbing of the Warfighting Functions for the 31st Infantry Regiment was Command and Control. By the time the Chinese forces initially set upon them, the 31st RCT had a tentative, at best, communications plan. They could speak to aviation overhead, but lacked any communication to higher headquarters, and adjacent and subordinate units were restricted to the use of runners or any non-verbal capabilities they could muster. This all adds up to an impressive limitation of the unit's Operational Reach. The understandable responses of collocating Command Nodes and consolidating Friendly Lines in order to ease the stress of controlling the fight and integrate supporting sectors of fire, were only hesitatingly and begrudgingly implemented by the 31st after they been partially overrun by the PLA. Furthermore, integrating the 31st Regiment's impressive organic indirect fire capabilities would have been nearly impossible, given the Command and Control situation. Calling for fire with the enemy interspersed amongst friendly lines is nearly impossible given even the best communication scenarios. Given the situation that the 31st was in, it is surprising more people were not killed via friendly fire.

All things considered, the Commanders' and Staff's ability to fight as a consolidated and unified force was virtually nil. If a PACE plan was implemented, it was poorly employed. The PACE plan must be practiced diligently, so that in a fight the unit can progress through the plan

almost as an afterthought. The length of time it took the imperiled elements of Lt. Col. Faith's 1-31 IN to get air support on the first night, and the convolution of the reconsolidation, are evidence of how unpracticed the unit was on its PACE plan. A common misconception of the PACE plan is that the plan is employed in event of failure of the primary plan, in order to return the unit to the primary plan. In training, units often suffer a leadership failure when a decision is made to halt operations for the purpose of fixing a deficiency in the primary plan, instead of driving on and exercising the A-C-E of the PACE plan.

The juxtaposition of what happened to the 31st to what happened to the 1st Marines is a good example of the differences in how much importance the two organizations place on Operational Reach. The author, Lt. Col. Appleman, even takes care to include in *East of Chosin* the anecdote of the Marines warning the Soldiers not to head any further North without a full Regiment. Essentially the Marines survived the incident because they took better care than the 31st to position their forces in regards to the reality of their Operational Reach.

Ultimately, the specific inadequacies of the 31st in terms of the Warfighting Functions and in regards to the task they were given are nearly innumerable. Accomplishing the impossible, however, is part of being the American Army. The call for the Army is being able to go anywhere and accomplish anything with little sustainment and minimal guidance. During the interwar years, however, the Army tends to swell its ranks with malingerers and interlopers. The once great units grow fat and impotent on massive supply chains and the insatiable appetites of leaders who have no thirst for fighting nor autonomous ingenuity but instead praise sycophancy and blind capitulation to orders. The interwar years transform the Army so severely, in fact, that the travesties of leadership and tragedies of heroism, like that of the 31st RCT, are a common occurrence during initial contact with the enemy at the onset of hostilities. Simply put, a unit unprepared for hardship, persevering, and fighting to win with its organic weapons and systems will always overestimate its Operational Reach. That is why the onus of responsibility for what happens to a unit is placed on the shoulders of the Commanders and Staff present on the ground. McArthur and General Almond failed the 31st RCT for putting them in the situation they did. The outcome of that battle, however, is the result of the 31st RCT's Commanders and Staff failing to properly assess their Operational Reach in relation to the operating environment.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

Brice Scott
MEDO, TF 1-16 IN

As the United States Army ascends compared to the rest of the world from year to year, there are times in which it has and always will descend and have setbacks. This is said to be true regarding a myriad of tactical faults, administrative issues, and results of death. These certain failures are minute when it comes to the over-arching cause of what the United States Army offers in a time of war and peril to its allies as well as to its own freedoms. As *East of Chosin* depicts, there are numerous letdowns as the narrative speaks for itself, and such letdowns can still be said and seen in today's Army.

Being a leader and displaying leadership is a task that many Army Officers tend to take pride in and exalt in the highest order. It is in those orders that they administer to the lowest level that could make or break themselves, a unit, and the greater Army. As seen in this description of a unit's fate, orders were given and received to the 31st RCT. The successes of those orders were to be executed according to their higher echelons. Making that happen, however, was a different narrative. The same could be said almost 70 years later, today. All soldiers have the utmost responsibility to trust their leadership. As a Platoon Leader, it is incumbent that one does everything in its power to give clear and concise orders to achieve the lowest mission success. As one moves up the totem pole of leadership, it is those orders that become a part of the greater scheme of mission success—whatever that may be. Sometimes today, though, orders can and are altered at each echelon to the leader's liking. But, does that truly show how one is a leader if they did not trust the orders in the first place?

The thought of non-stop pushing and moving forward to reach one's goal is an Army tradition that will always stay consistent. With the 31st RCT, it was their duty and responsibility to push forward and defeat the enemy. No matter how cold, starving, or injured a soldier was, this narrative portrays what the Army lives by and that is to selflessly serve one another in harsh conditions. At some point, shouldn't there be a stop to such madness that surrounds chaos? The 31st RCT attempted to do so in its "Breakout" to reconsolidate and allow for the injured to receive care. However, that did not work out to their advantage, and instead, led to their demise because it was too late. The mindless taskings and high operation tempo that one sees in today's Army is just like the battle at the Chosin reservoir—endless. One can never stop how the Army runs because, then, it will not be the greatest military force in the world. The Army will not stop

to achieve greatness, but at times, one can always take a tactical pause. To achieve mission success and the greatness that the United States Army embodies, it must allow time for those to reconsolidate and reorganize to realize what they are fighting for.

With every life, there is death. It is inevitable. Fighting for a greater cause is one's life such as serving in the Army may result in death. That, too, may be inevitable for some. It is through the tactical faults and administrative issues that may cause one's death. Or, it may be the result of fighting a greater force on the other side of the battlefield. For the 31st RCT, that was the result. The redundant question that is asked is, was this unit sacrificed for the greater good of the Korean War? Pundits may go both ways. In one way, the answer is yes, because this display of courage in the face of defeat allowed for forces to continue to fight. Others may answer no and that the 31st RCT's failures tactically and administratively allowed for them to fail in such aspects. The ultimate sacrifice was then paid for many in the later days of November and early days of December 1950. Today, death is still a part of war. Whether that be due to a greater force when one comes face to face with the enemy or the unit's tactical and administrative failures, death can and will occur. It is how the unit communicates, trusts, and carries out their duties and responsibilities that depicts whether one stays alive or gets carried back home by six uniformed personnel.

More than anything else, the United States Army has developed and progressed over the last 70 years from the Korean War. It is within its greatest values to never give up, stay the course, and never leave a fallen comrade. Courage, bravery, and hints of leadership pieced together allow for units such as the 31st RCT to thrive and be a strong, lethal force. Though there are orders that may not be fully executed down to the lowest level, continuous, high operation tempo that remains constant, and death being seemingly inevitable, the United States Army has and continues to fight then and now; as it always will and should.

Michael Stickley
A/S3, TF 1-16 IN

Many valuable lessons can be learned by reading *East of Chosin* written by Roy E. Appleman. This book describes the battles that took place at the Chosin Reservoir in late November of 1950. In my opinion, an underlying theme throughout the book is a story of success and another of failure. Success took place on the western side of the Chosin with the 1st

Marine Division, and failure to the east with the 31st RCT. At the Chosin Reservoir, the 31st RCT was to protect the right flank of the 1st Marine Division along the eastern side of the frozen reservoir while the Marines attacked to the North Korean border (Appleman, 1987). According to historical accounts highlighted by Appleman, Task Force Faith was caught by the surprise Chinese attack in the extreme northern position of the 31st RCT (Appleman, 1987). Upon the eventual collapse of the 31st RCT, the men were unable to retreat effectively due to extreme cold weather conditions and rigorous terrain. In the end only 385 survivors were able to make the trek across the frozen reservoir to relative safety within the 1st Marines perimeter (Appleman, 1987). In understanding the difference between success and failure on the battlefield as it applies to *East of Chosin*, I believe it is especially important to objectively analyze the differences between these two units. With that in mind, it would be reasonable to conclude that planning efforts by the staff of the 31st RCT could have prevented the eventual collapse of the unit if they were given the opportunity and their concerns voiced throughout the chain of command.

There were several key contrasts between the 31st RCT and the 1st Marine Division that Appleman highlights in his reflection of factors affecting both units. I will attempt to discuss a few here. The first factor that he discusses was the issue of manning. The 31st RCT consisted of an ad hoc force of approximately 3,000 men "who were hurriedly loaded into trucks, most of them nearly 100 miles from their assigned Chosin Reservoir destination. They had no chance to plan the movement or to provide adequate supplies" (Appleman, 1987, p. 337). On the other hand, the 1st Marine Division was overstrength and consisted of approximately 25,000 regular and reservist Marines (Appleman, 1987). That is a sizeable difference in force strength. In addition to the lop-sided numbers, approximately one-fourth of the 7th Infantry Division consisted of KATUSAs while the Marines had no KATUSAs amongst its combat ranks (Appleman, 1987). At that time the KATUSA program was not what it is today. Many of the KATUSAs who were assigned to the 7th Infantry Division had very little training, if any at all. According to many of the leaders present in the Korean War, often times the KATUSAs proved to be more of a liability rather than an asset in combat (Appleman, 1987).

The second critical contrast between the 31st RCT and the 1st Marine Division was the issue of communication. As anyone with the slightest background in military history understands, it is of dire priority to have means to communicate with your element and any adjacent units. Without it there is no command and control. As Major Lynch, Division G-3 aide

to General Hodes, stated, "It was a case of the blind leading the blind so far as command and control was concerned…Usually source was uncertain other than we got the picture that the units up forward were eyeball to eyeball with the Chinese" (Appleman, 1987, p. 306). Failure to establish effective communication is a common and reoccurring theme when looking into examples of defeat in military history. So if we all know that communication is important, why then does is continue to be an issue? I will discuss this later on in the paper.

The third critical contrast that I would like to highlight was the issue of logistical support to the 31st RCT. The 1st Marines had established strong points along the southern portion of the Chosin Reservoir which guarded logistical supply routes extending to the west (Appleman, 1987). As Appleman states, "The Marines had been able to stockpile considerable ammunition…before the CFF attack. The Army units had not been able to stockpile ammunition, gasoline, or food supplies" (p.338, 1987). In any fight, whether conventional or not, lack of logistical support can be the difference between success and failure. Whose role was it to communicate this deficiency and why was the red flag not raised prior to the placement of the 31st RCT?

Given the few contrasts of the 31st RCT and the 1st Marine Division highlighted above, I conclude that many of these stark failures could have been identified by a competent and robust staff that was given the opportunity to communicate these deficiencies to the chain of command. The role of the s-shops is to identify areas of concern through the military decision making process (MDMP) and communicate any deficiencies to commanders in the form of running estimates. For example, the manning issue could have been expressed through the S1 shop, the lack of communication with Marine CPs to the west through the S6 shop, and the failure to stockpile necessary supplies for the 31st RCT through the S4 shop. The reason these deficiencies weren't communicated was due to the fact that the mission was rushed, and it was possible that the command climate refused to acknowledge dissent given the notion that the 7th Infantry Division was told it would be home by Christmas. One could make an argument that the failure of the 31st RCT could have been placed on the shoulders at several different echelons of command. Responsibility starts with the echelon that was directly involved in emplacing the 31st RCT. The 7th Infantry Division's role as a higher HQ for the 31st RCT was to support their subordinate unit and sound the horn through the chain of command upon identifying glaring concerns. I believe they were bought into the notion that this would be an easy mission and they

truly believed they would be home by Christmas. In short, meticulous planning failed to occur and poor judgement resulted in the defeat of the 31st RCT.

Afterword

By Jon Meredith, Commander, TF 1-16 IN

Many organizations struggle with culture. They struggle to define it, understand it, and most of all, to change it. Military organizations usually attempt to change their culture through a combination of training and leader development. This seems like an obvious and simplistic answer. The actual execution of changing a culture is very difficult. How do you get your young leaders to think, buy in, and participate? Read2Lead and the discussions it caused in my formation had a dramatic impact on our culture. Leaders outside the battalion are shocked by the willingness of my Officers to engage in intellectual professional conversations with superiors. My Officers feel like their opinions are valuable and important. This did not occur by accident.

Our Read2Lead book was *East of Chosin* by Roy Appleman. This book was particularly appropriate given that 1-16 IN had just rotated to Korea. We structured our program through seven weeks of small group discussions at the company level. A Field Grade Officer attended each discussion. At the end of the seven weeks, all the Lieutenants wrote a reflection paper on what they learned from the book. Reading the reflection papers, you can tell the Officers had an emotional reaction to what occurred in the book. It resonated deeply with them because they could picture our battalion in the same predicament.

The emotional reaction to the book was also readily apparent in the small group discussions. The Officers had to continuously ask themselves, “Could my unit do this and could I lead them through it?” For many, the answer was “no”. That “no” was a tough pill to swallow. That self-assessment was the beginning of a transformation from well-intentioned amateur to professional Soldier for many of my leaders. Read2Lead had a profound effect on my formation because it showed my leaders the price of failure. We would not be where we are, or as ready as we are, if we had not used Read 2 Lead.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

Original Guidance for the Read2Lead Event

Read2Lead: East of Chosin (Version 2)

1-16 IN Leader Development Event

1. Purpose: The purpose of the 1-16 IN Read2Lead: East of Chosin event is threefold: to conduct small group leader development, to facilitate professional discussion amongst the officer corps of the battalion, and to use hard lessons learned to improve our organization.

2. Overview of Program: Read2Lead is a facilitated reading series on a selected professional reading or books. The Battalion Leader Development Council (LDC) reviewed several proposals and presented recommended reading to the BN Commander. The LDC then coordinated with the Center for Advancement of Leader Development and Organizational Learning (CALDOL) to sponsor the event.

3. Execution: Company and Staff leadership receive the book first in order to allow them to read ahead and collect their thoughts on the program and prepare for execution. Two weeks later the remaining officers are issued the book and the company and staff leadership execute a five to seven week reading program at the pace of their small group. The Commanders can use their own discussion questions or utilize some of the discussion questions developed by the Leader Development Council. Discussions are executed once a week over a six-seven week period. Each week individuals read 4-5 chapters and at the end of the week the company/staff holds a discussion group about the reading. At the end of the six-seven week period the battalion will host a final event to share thoughts from across the discussion groups.

4. The Final event will occur during or after Week 7. This event will be a social event of all Officers of the Battalion where they will come together to talk about their thoughts from the previous 7 weeks. Discussion questions for this event will be developed during the course of the Read2Lead series. Following the conclusion of the seven week period each platoon leader owns a one to two page (Arial 12) reflective essay that will be consolidated by the battalion and submitted to CALDOL and juniorofficer.army.mil.

5. Selected Reading: *East of Chosin: Entrapment and Breakout In Korea,* by Roy E. Appleman

6. Book Synopsis: In November, 1950, with the highly successful Inchon Landing behind him, Gen. Douglas MacArthur planned the last major offensive of what was to be a brief "conflict": the drive that would push the North Koreans across the Yalu River into Manchuria. In northern Korea, US forces assembled at Chosin Reservoir to cut behind the North Korean forces blocking the planned march to Manchuria. The book describes the tragic fate of the troops of the 31st Regimental Combat Team which fought this engagement and presents a thorough analysis of the physical conditions, attitudes, and command decisions that doomed them.

TF 1-16 IN Read2Lead: *East of Chosin*

7. Reading Progression:

    a. Week 1 (19-25FEB): Setting the Stage, Preface & Chapters 1-4. (pg. 1-56)
    b. Week 2 (26FEB-04MAR): The First Night, Chapters 5-6 (pg. 57-122)
    c. Week 3: (05MAR-11MAR)The Second Night, Chapters 7-10 (pg. 123-167)
    d. Week 4: (12MAR-18MAR) The Third Night, Chapters 11-14 (pg. 168-194)
    e. Week 5: (19MAR-25MAR) Breakout, Chapters 15- 16 (pg. 195-232)
    f. Week 6: (26MAR-01APR)Trapped, Chapters 17-21 (pg. 233-304)
    g. Week 7: (Final Event) Could it have been Prevented, Chapters 22-23 (pg. 305-334)

8. Discussion Questions Overview: Questions for each chapter are consolidated for use by unit commanders and are to provoke conversation not direct it. These questions are a guide unit commanders can use and should not limit the scope of the discussions by the small groups. Discussions can focus on moral/ethical issues, decision making, and leadership. Discussion groups should be held in an area that allows for minimal distraction and should last 30-45 minutes per meeting.

9. Discussion Questions:

    a. Week 1: Setting the Stage, Preface & Chapters 1-4. (pg. 1-56)
        i. Should someone have questioned McArthur's judgement? (pg. 3-11)
        ii. If you were going to questions a superior's judgment, how would you do it?
        iii. When your judgment is questioned how do you handle it?
        iv. Was LTC Faith fit to lead? (pg. 20-21)
        v. Why did the 31st RCT rush to move forward at Chosin? (pg. 28-31)
        vi. How would you describe the relationship between the 31st RCT Commander (Maclean) and the commanders of subordinate units? (pg. 28-34)
        vii. Who do you think is at fault for the loss of communications with I&R Platoon? (pg. 36)
        viii. How were Communist forces able to catch American forces off-guard? Were indicators there that an attack was imminent? Why were American forces not prepared? (pg.50-51)
        ix. What's the importance of communication with higher and adjacent units? Why is it important? Who is responsible to fix it? (pg. 51-52)

    b. Week 2: The First Night, Chapters 5-6 (pg. 57-122)
        i. Were American forces fixated on seizing terrain or on enemy forces? Why is that? (pg. 57-58)
        ii. What factors did the personnel composition and training of the 31st RCT play in their mission readiness? (pg. 59-61)
        iii. Could anything have prevented the first breakthrough at A/1-31 IN? (pg. 65-69)
        iv. Should CPT Stamford (Forward Air Controller) take command of Able? (pg. 67-68) Why do you think CPT Stamford ended up in Command?
        v. Why do you think Faith was still planning an attack? What were the contributing factors? (pg. 71)

vi. Can bad Soldiers be good Soldiers? How do you make a bad Soldier into a good Soldier? (pg. 85)
vii. Do we listen to the advice and counsel of our peers? Why do we sometimes not listen to good counsel? (31st Medical CO) (pg. 86)
viii. Did it matter that CPT McClymont lacked any combat experience? How did he perform defending the 57th FA position? (pg. 89-98)
ix. Why did COL MacLean not have situational awareness? What could COL MacLean have done to gain situational awareness? (pg. 99-102)
x. Did MG Almond (X Corps CDR) know how bad the situation was for the 31st RCT? (pg. 107-108)
xi. Was it right for MG Almond to give LTC Faith a Silver Star? Why did Almond do it? (pg. 107-108)
xii. Why do you think LTC Faith threw away the Silver Star? Was he right in his decision? (pg. 107-108)
xiii. When a plan fails
xiv. How would you handle someone not following a lawful order like the one SGT Howle gave? (pg. 115-117)
xv. Is the use of morphine or performance enhancing drugs during combat ethical? (pg. 117-118)

c. Week 3: The Second Night, Chapters 7-10 (pg. 123-167)
i. Why is there so much confusion on who ordered the withdrawal of 1-32nd IN? (pg. 130-131)
ii. What assessment do you think the Company Commanders had of the situation on the second night? Do you think they offered that assessment to LTC Faith? (pg. 131-132)
iii. Would you let the enemy POW go? What are the other options? (pg. 135)
iv. Was COL MacLean right for moving forward to recon for 1-32nd IN? (pg. 141-146)
v. Did MacLean's deserve a Distinguished Service Cross? (pg. 147)
vi. Prior to the start of the battle do you think the unit leadership was aware of the 31st RCTs weaknesses in equipment? (pg. 154-55)
vii. Is it ethical for a Chaplin to kill? (pg. 158-159)
viii. Why do you think the 2-31st stalled and then routed at the roadblock? (pg. 161-162)
ix. Were Chinese forces oriented on the enemy or on terrain? Why is it important to understand what the enemy is oriented on? (pg. 162-163)
x. Was is the higher echelon's fault to maintain communication with the 31st RCT or was it the 31st RCT's fault? (pg. 165)
xi. Whose responsibility was it to reinforce or relieve the 31st RCT? (pg. 165-167)
xii. Could General Hodes have done anything else to assist the 31st RCT? What could he have done? (pg. 167)

d. Week 4: The Third/Fourth Night, Chapters 11-14 (pg. 168-194)
i. How do you feel about the 7ID Commander's (MG Barr) visit to TF Faith? (pg. 176)
ii. Why do you think MG Barr visited TF Faith? (pg. 176-177)
iii. Why do you think higher headquarters did not establish communications with TF Faith? Who should have been held responsible? (pg. 178)

iv. Should TF Faith take the Wounded with them or leave them behind? What would have done? (pg. 180-181)
v. If the General Officers understood the situation on the ground for 1st Marine and the 31st RCT, why did GEN Almond (X Corps) order a Marine regiment to reinforce 31st RCT? Did the leadership understand the situation on the ground? (pg. 180-182)
vi. Why were the 31st Rear and 31st Tank Company withdrawn? Who was responsible for its withdrawal? (pg. 185-187)
vii. Why do you think the men of 31st RCT kept fighting after 80 hours of combat in sub-zero temperatures? (pg. 194)

e. Week 5: Breakout, Chapters 15- 16 (pg. 195-232)
i. LTC faith orders a breakout without coordination or guidance from higher after he realizes the unit has run out of other options. As a subordinate leader of LTC Faith how would you take LTC Faith's breakout brief? Would you question the order? (pg. 196)
ii. If you were LTC Faith, would you fight, surrender, or was there another option?(pg. 195-196)
iii. Is surrendering American forces ever an option? (pg. 195-196)
iv. Is killing an American Soldier to prevent panic or set an example to the other men justified in the right situation? (pg. 214 and pg. 227)
v. Would you have left the wounded if it meant more able bodied men could escape? (pg. 215)
vi. How would you prevent discipline from breaking down? (pg. 214-222)
vii. Whose responsibility was it to recon the route? How would you ensure subordinate units know and execute their assigned tasks? (225-226)
viii. What would you do with the Korean refugees fleeing to American lines and away from the CCF advance? (pg. 226)
ix. Are we obligated to assist civilians on the battlefield? (pg. 226)

f. Week 6: Trapped, Chapters 17-21 (pg. 233-304)
i. Was LTC Faith what would you have done at the CFF roadblock? Why do you think LTC Faith rushed the attack on the CFF roadblock? (233-234)
ii. Why do you think Major Robbins calls the Chinese chinks/slant eyes? Does the modern U.S. military still do this? Why/why not? (pg. 237) (Note: This question is to drive discussion of the use of language in the dehumanization of enemy combatants)
iii. Was LTC Faith right to shoot ROK Soldiers trying to escape? Was LTC Faith right to shoot the ROK Soldiers when American Soldiers were also fleeing? (pg. 240)
iv. Did the men who survived the battle the ones that fled the fight and were the men who stayed behind and followed orders the ones who died? What obligation did leaders have: keep their subordinates alive and get them out or stay and carry out orders? (pg. 240-243) (Note: this is not to disparage the efforts of the survivors who made it out, the intent is to discuss obligation for the small unit (platoon) versus the obligation to supporting higher echelons (CO/BN/BDE)
v. What would you say to a group of demoralized Soldiers in an effort to get them to do something that they might deem impossible? (pg. 248)

vi. What does the statement "When LTC Faith was hit, the Task Force ceased to exist" mean? How can one person mean so much to an organization? (pg. 251)
vii. Even though CPT Stamford (Forward Air Controller) did not have a formal leadership role in 31st RCT why did he have such an impact on the RCT throughout the operation (pgs. 51-260)
viii. What impact do informal leaders (people not in formalized company leadership positions but with leadership ability) have in your organization?
ix. Does paralysis to make a decision or take action ever effect your organization? What do you do to get through situations like that? (pg. 264)
x. Knowing what you know from the reading about LTC Faith, how do you think he would feel about being awarded the Medal of Honor? Why do you think that way? (pg. 277)
xi. What is the "accepted structure and roles of a military unit" and why does the Army have it? Does it work or is there another better way to organize a military unit? (pg. 284)
xii. Why in some cases did the CFF bayonet wounded U.S. Soldiers and in other cases medically treat them and release them? What does this show of human nature? (pgs. 286-290)
xiii. Do you think Army and Marine official reports would purposely lie about the efforts to relieve the 31st RCT? Do we ever falsify reports to make a situation look better than it actually is? Do leaders ever think something is happening when in actuality it is not? Why do organizations and people to that? (pgs. 293-299)
xiv. Why is there so many things unknown about friendly or enemy forces east of Chosin even 70 years later? (pgs. 300-302)
xv. Was the price of blood worth any perceived time the 31st RCT bought for U.S. / ROK forces to the south? (Of the estimated 3,000 only 385 effective men could be formed into the provisional battalion and served under the Marines for the rest of the campaign) pgs. 302-303)

g. Week 7: Could it have been Prevented, Chapters 22-23 (pg. 305-334)
i. Was the 31st RCT sacrificed to allow the Marines to survive? Was the cost of the blood of the 31st RCT "worth it"?
ii. Which senior leaders would you hold accountable for the failure to rescue the 31st RCT? Do you think no one should be held accountable? Why? (pgs. 3-340)
iii. What are some important lessons you learned from reading East of Chosin?
iv. Is there anything that you learned that you might implement in your organization?
v. Why does the American military (or society, or culture) focus on victories instead of defeats? Should we study and focus on our defeats as much as we do our victories?
vi. Why does the U.S. military never train to withdraw from the battlefield? Should we ever train to withdraw under pressure?
vii. Why to command and support relationships matter? Why do we spend so much time at the staff level to work them out?
viii. At what level of leadership did the operation fail? Was it at the PLT, CO, BN, RCT, DIV, CORPS level? Was it a combination of levels? (Note: In chapter 22 there are numerous accounts and none of them agree on what level leadership failed)

ix. What do you think of Major Jones' reflection that there were no "what ifs" and that the fate of the 31st RCT would not have ended in any other way? (pgs. 320-321)
x. "No doubt all leaders, as well as those in my status and the men caught in this tragedy, carried this haunting conscious, if they escaped. Was it right? Was it wrong? As some point in time all played Pilate in washing their hands." (pg. 320)
xi. MAJ Curtis, S-3 of 1-31 RCT stated 35 years later: "I should have remained with the truck column, regardless of the consequences." What effect can decisions we make as leader have on us later in life? Are there decisions you have made as a leader that you now regret? (pgs. 321-322)
xii. Why are we as officers important to our organization? What do officers "do" for an organization? (pg. 329)
xiii. Could we, given the same situation and equipment, but with all of us in our current leadership roles have done any better than the men of the 31st RCT?
xiv. How do you feel about CPT Stamford not receiving the Medal of Honor for his actions throughout the operations? (pg. 331)
xv. Major Curtis and CPT Bigger were asked to write each other up for Silver Stars, but by mutual agreement they both declined. Do you think they should have wrote each other up for the Silver Star? (pgs. 331-332)
xvi. Why is it important to ensure that Soldiers who deserve awards receive them in a timely matter? Do we as an organization ensure that we do this? (pgs. 331-333)

10. Author Background: Roy E. Appleman retired as chief, Branch of Park History Studies, Washington Office, on July 26, 1970. Receiving the A.B. degree (magna cum laude) from The Ohio State University in 1928, he also attended Yale Law School and was awarded an A.M. degree from Columbia University in 1935. He was first employed as a sites survey historian by the Service in 1936, and in July 1937, entered on duty as regional historian, Region I, Richmond, Virginia. Appleman's NPS career was interrupted by service in both World War II and the Korean Conflict, serving as combat historian and captain with the Tenth Army on Okinawa and as lieutenant colonel with the X Corps in Korea. In 1947 he married professional librarian Irene White; they have three children. Author (or co-author) of several military history studies, including South to Naktong, North to the Yalu and Okinawa: The Last Battle, Appleman also co-authored a book on the U.S. flag. Appleman played a key role in creation of the Eastern National Park & Monument Association, a cooperating association of the National Park Service. He served as ENP & MA's first executive secretary until 1951, drafting the articles of incorporation and establishing the first six sales outlets. Since then, ENP & MA has donated in excess of $10 million to assist NPS programs. – Bio courtesy of the National Park Service Website.

About the Center for the Advancement of
Leader Development and Organizational Learning (CALDOL)

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"If you do anything the way the Army is already doing it, you're wasting my time.
If you don't fail sometimes, you're not trying hard enough.
If you don't fundamentally change the way the Army learns and [the way it] educates its leaders, you've betrayed my trust."

- BG Dan Kaufman, USMA Dean, 17 September 2002

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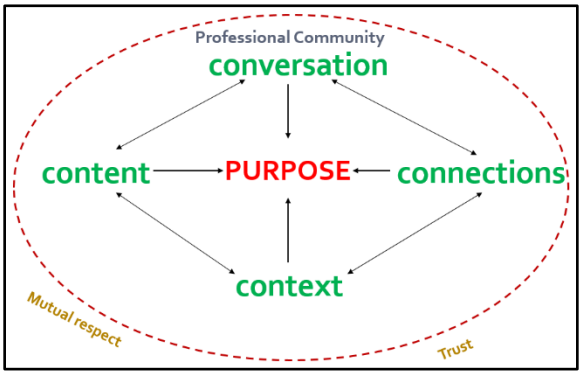

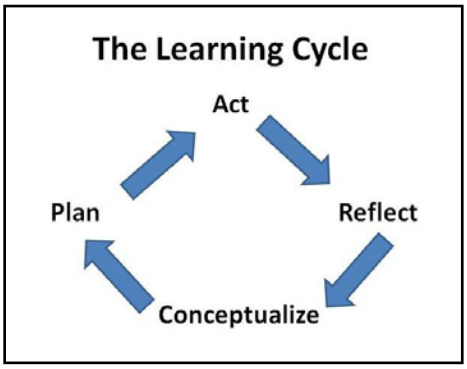

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Iron Ranger 6 talks about the context of the battle from *East of Chosin* with the battalion Staff

Iron Ranger 3 and Delta Troop discuss *East of Chosin* at the Rodriguez Live Fire Complex (RLFC) Dining Facility

Officers from Bushmaster Company discuss the Read2Lead curriculum during dinner chow at RLFC

C Company discusses the Read2Lead book *East of Chosin*

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