

KOREAN WAR PROJECT

**TACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, CHINESE
COMMUNIST FORCES IN NORTH KOREA
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS**

IN REPLYING ADDRESS
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.
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HEADQUARTERS U. S. MARINE CORPS

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From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: Tactical Observations, Chinese Communist Forces in
North Korea

1. ORGANIZATION.

The Chinese Communist Army Divisions encountered by the 1st Marine Division have a T/O strength of 11,000. However, in operations in North Korea the battle strength of a Chinese Communist Division has averaged between 7-8,000 personnel.

The triangular organization consists of 3 rifle regiments with a strength of 3,243 each. Each rifle regiment is comprised of 3 rifle battalions with a strength of 853 each, an artillery battery, a mortar company, a transport company, a guard company, and communication and service platoons. Animal transport is basic but motor vehicles may be allocated by higher headquarters.

The rifle battalions consists of 3 rifle companies and one HMG company. The HMG company consists of 2 HMG platoons and 1 mortar platoon. Equipment consists of 3 82mm mortars and 6 HMG's. The platoon consists of 3 squads w/only the squad leader and assistant squad leader armed w/rifles. 2,000 rounds of ammunition is carried w/each HMG. 20 horses are assigned the HMG company. The rifle company has 120 rifles, 6 LMG's and 3 60mm mortars.

Weapons used by the division are a mixture of U.S. M1903, Japanese type-38 (6.5mm), Chinese Generalissimo Mauser (7.9mm) and Russian M/91 (7.62mm). Mortars consist of U. S. 60mm and 81mm and Russian 82mm. The artillery battery is equipped with type-94 Japanese 75mm howitzers for mountain operations. Either Japanese field guns or Russian 76mm field guns may supplant the howitzer and ample U. S. types are likewise available.

2. PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT IN CCF INFANTRY REGIMENT

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Rifles | 1080 |
| Submachine guns | 150 |
| Light machine guns | 135 |
| Heavy machine guns | 27 |
| 60mm mortars | 27 |



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| | |
|------------------------|--------|
| 81mm or 82mm mortars | 27 |
| 122mm mortars | 1 or 2 |
| 75mm type-94 howitzers | 4 |
| AT guns | 2 |

3. ENEMY TACTICS

The CCF encountered by the 1st Marine Division has proven to be well trained and well led. Extensive use has been made of patrols, listening posts and sentries to observe our movements and determine our positions. By these means careful determination is made of our dispositions and the greatest strength of the attack is directed against our flanks or at other weak points in the defense such as boundaries between units. At the same time that attacks are directed against the flanks, additional units are pushed past the flanks for the purpose of establishing road blocks. In other cases road blocks have first been established thus cutting off ground communication to forces which are then brought under attack.

X The CCF has consistently favored attacks against our positions at night-time. Patrols are utilized during the night to locate mortar and artillery positions as well as CP's. During the attack, the enemy sounds bugles and blows whistles in an attempt to demoralize and confuse our troops. Green and red flares are fired, probably as predesignated signals for attacking and maneuvering. Attacks have generally been preceded by a red flare signal followed by 3 blasts of a police-type whistle. In attacking the enemy uses part of his troops to go as close as possible to our position in order to use hand grenades while at the same time covering their advance with covering automatic weapons fire. CCF infiltration techniques are excellent. While under fire enemy troops crawl from one firing position to another, displaying no reluctance to engage in close hand-to-hand combat.

In the mountains, the CCF have used an inverted V formation for ambushing U. S. units on roads. When the unit entered the trap, fire was directed at the head and rear vehicles to effect a road block while another CCF unit sealed off the escape route at the open end of the V. In such situations, the CCF selected positions well down on the slopes with CP's above. All positions were well dug in and good fields of fire established for weapons.

A CCF prisoner reported that U. S. units fired rifles and machine guns intermittently throughout the night and were prone to build fires which clearly indicated their positions in the darkness. The POW stated that the CCF were very adept at night attacks and favor them. Such nervousness and disclosure on the part of our own forces enabled the CCF to infiltrate readily

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and attack from close quarters, quickly overcoming automatic weapons with grenades, and to penetrate CP's.

Road blocks have frequently consisted of large ditches dug across a road, as was used in North China against the Nationalists.

Molotov cocktails and pole charges have been used against our armor as well as a form of bangalore torpedo attached to a bamboo pole.

Attacks by the CCF against the 1st Marine Division have always been made in greatly superior strength. A numerical strength in excess of 6 to 1 was employed against units.

Interrogation of U. S. POW's indicate CCF using "chemical-type" grenades. This grenade is described as a "Potato Masher" type, with a charge burst (described as low order) which emanates a yellowish smoke which aggravates coughing and sneezing. It is believed that this so-called "chemical-type" grenade is merely one in which picric acid is used as the explosive charge in place of TNT. Such an explosive sometimes gives a low-order explosion which emits a yellow smoke. The picric filler was used by the Japanese during World War II in mortar and artillery ammunition and frequently exhibited this low-order burst effect.

4. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

The CCF are using the conventional Chinese quilted, cotten padded, winter uniform. This is of a mustard green color and is reversible with a white inside lining. The officers have red braid piping around the sleeves and collar and a red stripe along the side of the trousers. Captains and senior officers carry pistols while platoon leaders are armed with the TSMG.

E. A. Pollock
E. A. POLLOCK
By direction

Distribution List

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|--------------|------|----------------------|-------|
| CG FMFLANT | (5) | CG MCTrng & Repl Cmd | (150) |
| CG FMFPAC | (5) | CG FMF Pac Trps | (100) |
| Comd't MCS | (5) | CG 1stMAW | (5) |
| CG 2ndMarDiv | (75) | CG 2ndMAW | (5) |