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Negotiated Joint Command Relationships

Korean War Amphibious Operations, 1950

Donald Chisholm

BETWEEN THE NORTH KOREAN INVASION of South Korea at 0400 on 25 June 1950 and New Year's of 1951, U.S. forces successfully conducted four major amphibious operations in support of the United Nations: Pohang-Dong, Inchon, Wonsan-Iwon, and Hungnam-Wonsan-Songjin-Inchon-Chinnampo. Absent these operations, the battlefield outcome at any given point during this period would have been decidedly less advantageous to the UN forces.

The amphibious operation against a hostile shore is probably the most complex, technically and organizationally, of all military undertakings. It is a joint operation that necessarily involves sea, air, and land elements, each of which has its own specialized expertise, technical operating constraints and imperatives, standard operating procedures, and organizational interests. These disparate elements must be knit into a virtually seamless whole if an amphibious operation is to be successful.

The planning and execution of the Korean War's amphibious operations, though now a half-century distant, hold some useful lessons for the contemporary period. The white paper ". . . From the Sea," first promulgated in 1992 and refined in 1994 as "Forward . . . from the Sea," has not only become the U.S. Navy's doctrine, as the concept of "operational maneuver from the sea" has become that of the Marine Corps, but the geopolitical characteristics of the post-Cold War world appear to require frequent projection of force, and often by amphibious means. Korean War operations also offer insights into the practical problems of joint operations generally,

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insights useful in a time when virtually all military operations are “joint” to some degree.

This article considers one important aspect—command relationships at the highest levels, both intraservice and interservice, and their consequences for substantive outcomes—of the four major Korea operations. It directs attention not only to the role amphibious doctrine played in establishing these relationships but also to the *processes* of negotiation and bargaining that took place before and during these operations and gave content to those command relationships. Thus, it not only addresses the formal structures of command relations and their evolution but analyzes command relations as they were actually practiced. Issues include getting the right commander, with the relevant combat and amphibious experience, in the right place at the right time; and properly locating that place in the military hierarchy, assigning it responsibilities appropriate to the task at hand and discretion sufficient to the task.

Doctrine

The primary document of U.S. joint military doctrine states that “doctrine presents *fundamental principles* that guide the employment of forces. Doctrine is authoritative. It provides the distilled insights and wisdom gained from our collective experience with warfare. Doctrine facilitates clear thinking and assists a commander in

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determining the proper course of action under the circumstances prevailing at the time of decision.”¹ It also recognizes the importance of certain values to effective joint operations, among them individual integrity, competence, moral courage, teamwork, trust and confidence, delegation, and cooperation. Of these, teamwork (“cooperative effort by members of a group to achieve common goals”) and trust and confidence (“total confidence in the integrity, ability, and good character of another”) loom largest in the story of command relations that follows.²

Modern amphibious doctrine really began with the establishment of the Fleet Marine Force in 1933 and the creation the next year of the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations*—modified and adopted in 1938 by the Navy as FTP 167, *Landing Operations Doctrine*, and then adopted by the Army in 1941 as FM 31-5, *Landing Operations on Hostile Shores*. All of these doctrinal manuals were modified during World War II by amphibious experiences in the Central Pacific, Southwest Pacific, and European theaters. Between World War II and the Korean War, they were again adapted after further study. Consequently, when the North Koreans invaded the South, there was a corpus of thoroughly battle-tested amphibious doctrine—doctrine addressing, among many other factors, the structure of command relations, which is integral to the success of any such operation.

Doctrine reduces conflict over important issues and narrows the need for discussion at the time of execution by establishing prior consensus. To the extent that future situations resemble past experience in the ways that matter, doctrine provides an efficient guide to action. The more generally stated that doctrine, the more flexible it will be in application to a wide range of situations, some of which may not have been entirely anticipated. The more specific that doctrine, the greater its clarity—but at the cost of broad applicability. Thus, inevitably, doctrine is incomplete. Moreover, its actual application in any given situation will be governed by the specifics of that situation—including the characteristics of the forces and personnel actually available for employment. Doctrine may be substantially modified, even abandoned, by the commanders on the scene, should they wish, and consider themselves powerful enough, to do so.

Korea was the first war to be fought under the newly unified Department of Defense. The extremely bitter unification fight had left

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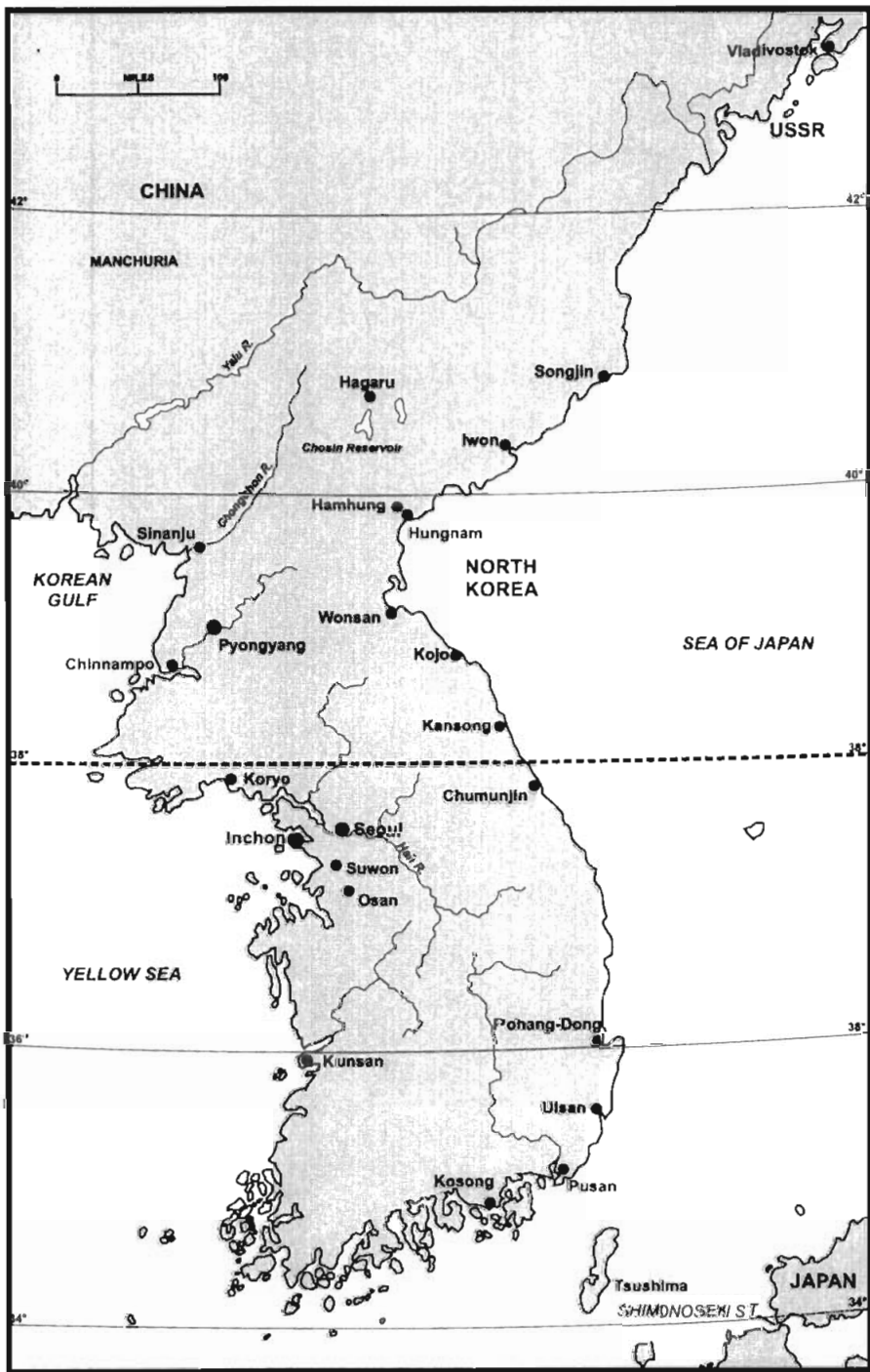
many senior officers in the Navy and Marine Corps deeply suspicious of the motives of their counterparts in the Army and the Air Force, suspicions that would profoundly affect their reactions to the latter's proposals and plans, especially as related to command of operations involving more than one service. The unification conflicts had also affected the internal harmony of the individual services, especially the Navy.³

As a final factor in seeking to comprehend not only the substance—the strategic and tactical function—of amphibious operations in Korea but also their organization, one also must attend to the personalities involved.

BLUEHEARTS

The tactical situation on the ground in Korea deteriorated very quickly following the North Korean invasion. The Commander in Chief, Far East, General Douglas MacArthur, determined in his visits to the battlefield in the first week of the conflict that it would be impossible to hold the line against the invaders; consequently, the United Nations forces would have to trade space for enough time to launch a counteroffensive. MacArthur never had in mind anything but an amphibious end-around that would exploit the enemy's deep penetration into the South and the weakness of the Communists' logistical support, believing that the "deep envelopment, based upon surprise, which severs the enemy's supply lines, is and always has been the most decisive maneuver of warfare."⁴ He was confident that if in that trading of space for time UN forces were compelled to "fall back to Pusan proper, the Navy could hold open our lines of supply and under its guns we could hold a beachhead indefinitely."⁵ Time constraints dictated that he work only with the forces and commanders at hand.

Thus was the concept of Operation BLUEHEARTS born. As promulgated by MacArthur's chief of staff, Major General Edward M. Almond, the plan called for the Eighth Army's 24th Division to land at Pusan on 2 July and move northwestward so as to halt the North Korean drive down the western side of the peninsula. The 25th Division would follow directly after, moving to the center of the peninsula. The masterstroke would be the landing of the 1st Cavalry Division at



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Inchon on 20 July, whereupon the 25th Division would drive north and close the noose around the Communist forces.⁶

These forces sounded better on paper than they were in fact. Each infantry division had only one tank company instead of the required battalion, and one antiaircraft battery, also instead of a battalion. Each infantry battalion was short not only its tank company but an infantry company; each divisional artillery battalion lacked one battery. Because of the weakness of roads and bridges in Japan, where it had been based, the Eighth Army had only light tanks.⁷ In June 1950 these divisions were at 93 percent of authorized strength, a number itself already far reduced from their 18,900 war strength. Training and cohesion had suffered from an annual turnover that exceeded 40 percent; equipment and ammunition were in poor condition.

Until mid-1949, the Eighth Army's principal focus had been occupation duties, and no serious effort had been made to maintain combat efficiency at battalion level or higher. In April 1949, MacArthur issued a policy directive directing the attention of the Eighth Army, as well as of Naval Forces Far East and Far East Air Forces, to an intensified training program that would lead to a cohesive and integrated naval, air, and ground fighting team. By mid-May 1950, all Eighth Army divisions had completed battalion-level training, and one battalion from each had been given amphibious instruction by a Marine Corps unit. Still, no unit had actually made even a practice landing, and thus none was prepared for making an amphibious assault should the need arise.⁸

To call, then, the planning process for BLUEHEARTS "dynamic" greatly understates the close interplay of events with the selection of objectives and of the means for their accomplishment.

On 30 June, the 24th Division was ordered to fly its division headquarters and two battalions to Pusan; because of airlift constraints, only 450 men were actually flown in, on 2 July. On 3 July, the Commander, Naval Forces, Far East (COMNAVFE), Vice Admiral Charles Turner Joy, promulgated his Operation Order 7-50, which directed the ships of Amphibious Group 1, designated Task Force 90, to move the 24th Infantry Division by sea to Pusan or some other designated port.

COMNAVFE reported directly to MacArthur. Joy's forces consisted, aside from TF 90, only of Task Force 96: the antiaircraft light cruiser USS *Juneau* (CLAA 119); five destroyers of Destroyer Division 91; the

submarine USS *Remora* (SS 487), on loan from the Seventh Fleet; ten minesweepers; and a few other auxiliaries. It controlled various Japanese-manned ships, mostly former U.S. Navy tank landing ships (LSTs), which were owned by Shipping Control Administration, Japan and had been used for logistic support of the occupation and for repatriating Japanese POWs from the Asian continent. Naval base facilities comprised a minor ship-repair facility at Yokosuka, a small supply section, an ordnance facility, and a hundred-bed hospital. The Naval Air Facility at Yokosuka supported two seaplanes (loaned by the Seventh Fleet) for search and rescue, which, along with one target-towing plane for anti-aircraft gunnery training, exhausted land-based air. Operations plans focused on passive defense, security under air attack, and evacuation of American citizens in an emergency, on the assumption that any future war would be with the Soviet Union and centered elsewhere. Day-to-day activities principally involved mine clearance of Japanese ports and showing the flag.⁹

On 27 June, the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet, Admiral Arthur Radford, had ordered the commander of the Seventh Fleet, Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble, to report to COMNAVFE. Struble's command, based at Subic Bay, was the primary U.S. western Pacific naval force. Its striking force was essentially a single carrier group: the carrier USS *Valley Forge* (CV 45), the cruiser USS *Rochester* (CA 124), and eight destroyers. There were three submarines—*Segundo* (SS 398), *Catfish* (SS 339), *Cabazon* (SS 334)—and a submarine rescue vessel, *Florikan* (ASR 9). Finally, there was a service group: the destroyer tender *Piedmont* (AD 17), the oiler *Navasota* (AO 106), the refrigerated stores ship *Karin* (AF 33), and the fleet tug *Mataco* (ATF 86). The Fleet Air Wing consisted of nine PB4Y-2 Privateers at Guam (with a small seaplane tender, *Suisun* [AVP 53], at Saipan) and nine PBM Mariner seaplanes at Sangley Point in the Philippines (two were at Yokosuka, and five were en route to Pearl Harbor).¹⁰

Admiral Joy duly assumed operational control of the Seventh Fleet, issuing Operation Order 5-50 as the basic order for Korean operations and also, on 3 July, Operation Order 8-50, directing a naval blockade of Korea south of forty-one degrees north latitude.¹¹ Struble was senior to Joy, and their relations had never been entirely cordial. Previously, this had not been a problem, given the separation of their commands. Now the Korean emergency had placed them in a close working relationship, which gave Struble considerable

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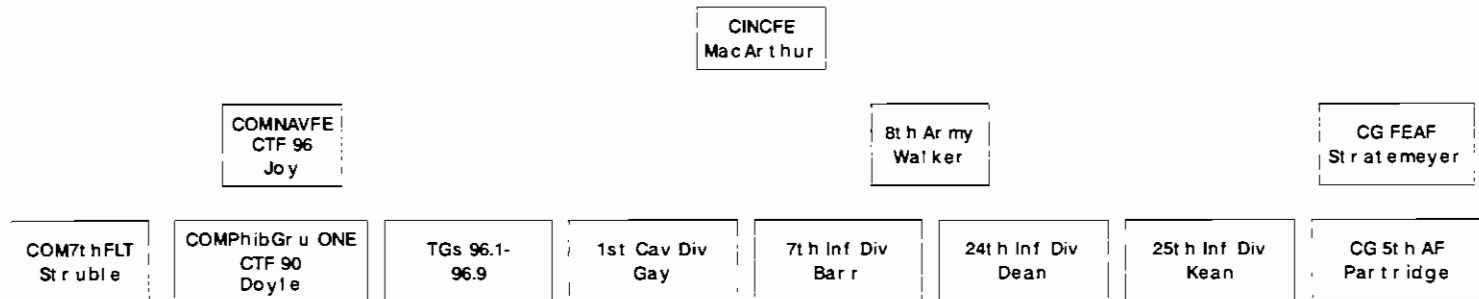
heartburn. Figure 1 shows the Far East command structure in effect on 1 July 1950.

On 4 July, Joy ordered Rear Admiral James H. Doyle, commanding Amphibious Group 1 (and thus TF 90) to travel with selected staff members to Tokyo to plan amphibious operations. His command had spent early May 1950 conducting landing exercises in southern California for the benefit of U.S. Army Command and General Staff College observers.¹² MacArthur had requested that the Navy train his Eighth Army troops in amphibious techniques, and on 20 May Amphibious Group 1 had sailed for Japan, where it had reported to COMNAVFE and was designated Task Force 90. Its only ships were the command ship *USS Mount McKinley* (AGC 7), the assault transport *Cavalier* (APA 37), the assault cargo ship *Union* (AKA 106), the tank landing ship *LST 611*, and the fleet tug *Arikara* (ATF 72). However, Doyle himself had considerable amphibious experience, and his staff officers were virtually all veterans of World War II's Central and Southwest Pacific amphibious operations.¹³

Doyle, in Tokyo, was now directed to plan for the immediate combat-loading of the 1st Cavalry Division (actually an infantry formation, part of the occupation force in Japan) for an amphibious landing "somewhere in Korea." The following day, Inchon, the port of Seoul on the west coast of the Korean Peninsula at the mouth of the Han River, was selected as the objective, and planning proceeded. Simultaneously, Almond directed the commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division, Major General Hobart Gay, to expedite the Inchon landing "to the utmost limit." The division—diminished by 750 senior noncommissioned officers sent to the 24th Division—hurriedly drew its weapons and prepared to board ship in Yokohama.¹⁴ The 1st Cavalry Division's planning for the landing was materially aided by Colonel Edward Forney, U.S. Marine Corps, and his staff from Mobile Training Team A (or "Able"), whom Doyle had seconded to the division—in fact, they largely wrote its operation order.

On 7 July, Kunsan, a seaport about 120 miles south of Inchon, was identified as an alternate objective and incorporated in the planning. Only two days later, however, events on the ground made Pohang-Dong, on the southeastern coast, the most probable objective, and "intensive research on that area [was] started." Pohang-Dong was definitely selected as the objective on 8 July, and the draft plans for Inchon were filed for possible future use.¹⁵

Figure 1
Far East Command Structure — 1 July 1950



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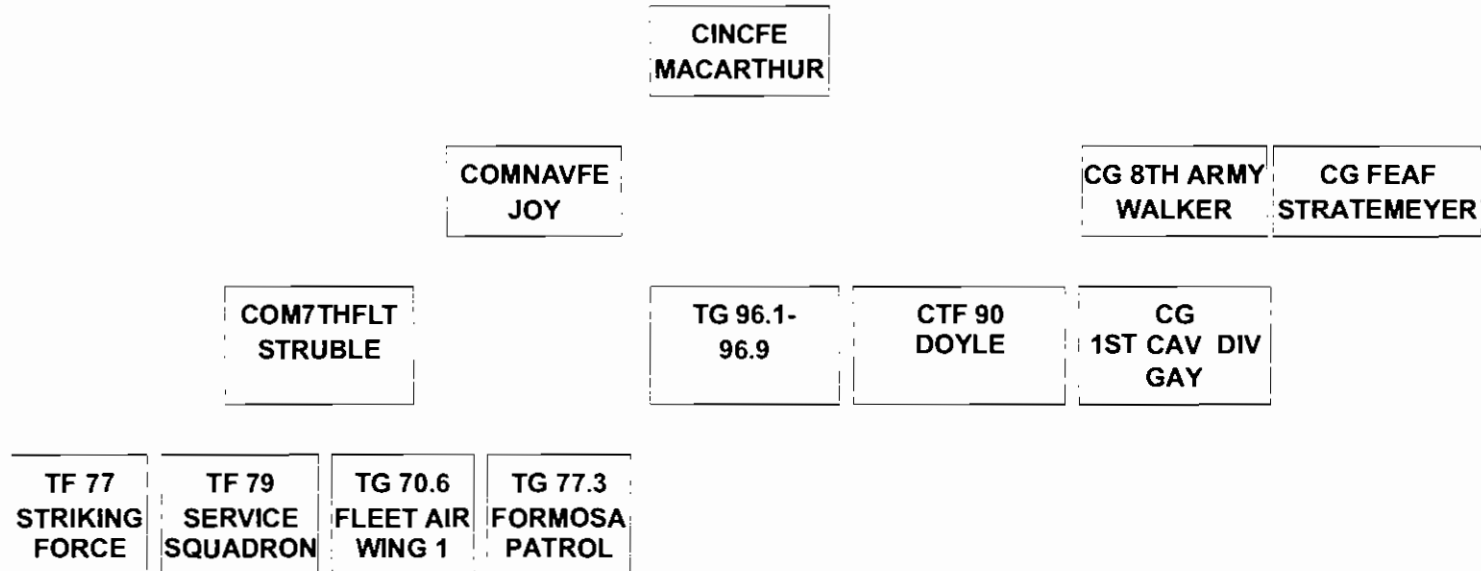
Conflict over Naval Command Relations. On 10 July, Struble sent to Joy, with an information copy to the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Forrest Sherman, a message outlining the role he proposed to play in support of the 24th Division and the pending amphibious operation: close support for two days, working through Doyle, embarked on *Mount McKinley*.¹⁶ Struble preferred air strikes on the west rather than east coast of Korea but was unenthusiastic about any such strikes, cautioning that operational losses would “reduce capabilities for later amphibious operations.”¹⁷ Thus commenced a campaign by Struble to alter a command structure that he believed inappropriate to the tasks at hand.

Joy replied (copy to Sherman) that the Seventh Fleet was to “conduct repeated air strikes against Wonsan and other selected targets from Sea of Japan [thus, the east coast] on day before landing. Cover initial stages of landing as necessary before retiring.”¹⁸ Radford, in Hawaii, had already supported Joy’s position in a message to the Chief of Naval Operations (copy to Joy): “Carrier strikes by a single carrier or accompanied only by British CVL [light carrier] are a calculated risk which will increase with each operation. Under present circumstances this risk must be taken.”¹⁹

MacArthur gave Joy additional instructions on 11 July. Loading of the ships of the Transport and Tractor Group, as it was termed by the operation order, commenced at noon that day; it departed for Pusan on 13 July.

At 0740 on 12 July, Joy issued his Operation Order 9-50, setting forth the overall command organization for the landing (Figure 2). Doyle, who as Commander, TF 90 reported directly to Joy, would command the attack force, landing the 1st Cavalry Division to seize the beachhead at Pohang-Dong, and then support its exploitation. Struble, who also reported directly to Joy, was to provide carrier aircraft over the objective area and close air support of ground operations of the landing force as requested by CTF 90, as well as to conduct additional carrier air operations as directed by COMNAVFE. The objective area was to be defined by CTF 90. Command relations between CTF 90 and the landing force were to be governed by current doctrine: “Command responsibilities for accomplishment of assigned tasks on shore passes to commander landing force upon establishment ashore [of] his command post, at which time he will come under command of CG [commanding general] Eighth Army.

Figure 2
Overall Command Organization
Pohang-Dong Landing, 17 July 1950



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The exact time [of] this transfer will be provided by despatch originated by commander attack force [Doyle]."²⁰

All this seems straightforward. It had not been. Ironically, perhaps, the conflict had not been *interservice* but *intraservice*. In any case, it had been considerable, and Joy's operation order was the consequence of this conflict. At 0940 on 11 July, Struble had sent to Joy (with Sherman and Radford as information addressees) a message protesting that "Doyle's tentative task organization . . . and your [message] apparently contemplate organizing a close air support group which will be directly under Doyle. I recommend that in the employment of heavy carriers the task force concerned not be placed under the amphibious commander but be directed to support his operations. Direct orders to carrier force concerned would then emanate through NAVFE."²¹ Three hours later, Sherman sent Radford, then in Tokyo, a message (marked to be seen only by the admiral personally) to ensure settlement of the command-relations problem in Struble's favor. His language was to the point: "COM7THFLT 1110400 [the "date-time group," converted to Greenwich Mean Time, of Commander, Seventh Fleet's 0940 message] is in accordance [with] accepted practice as to command relationships. I will not concur in placing carriers under command of COMPHIBGROUP ONE. If naval command relationships cannot be worked out properly and harmoniously am prepared to consider your recommendations for changes in personalities."²² On 12 July Joy instructed Struble (this time with Sherman, Radford, and MacArthur as information addressees) to cancel the air strikes scheduled for 17 July; "[I] desire [that] you plan [to] support Rear Admiral Doyle's landing for two days."²³ The resulting arrangement was that Doyle would request support from Struble *through Joy*, and Operation Order 9-50 so directed. Presumably, this would assuage Struble's objection to a *de facto* subordinate relationship to Doyle.

At noon on 13 July, Doyle finally issued his own operation order, designated 10-50, having received firsthand intelligence from a team of Amphibious Group 1 and 1st Cavalry Division staff officers that had flown into Pohang-Dong on the 11th.

Pohang-Dong—the Event. The heavy transports completed loading late on 14 July. Another advance party was flown in the next day to obtain up-to-the-minute intelligence on the enemy situation—it was

still unclear whether the operation would be an assault landing or an unopposed (“administrative”) landing—while the transport group and its destroyer screen passed through Shimonoseki Straits. In accordance with Operation Order 10-50, Task Force 77 of the Seventh Fleet sortied from Buckner Bay, Okinawa, at noon on 16 July.

On the 18th, the transport group rendezvoused with the “tractor group” off the objective. Air support operations commenced at 0525. At 0558, CTF 90 signaled the traditional “Land the landing force.” Fortunately, South Korean troops had held off the North Korean People’s Army some miles away, and it was to be an administrative landing. The first troops reached the inner harbor at 0715, and general unloading began two hours later. Direct air support ceased at noon, and Task Force 77 commenced strikes against targets at Pyongyang, Kansong, and Wonsan.²⁴

By 2400, 10,027 troops, 2,022 vehicles, and 2,729 tons of bulk cargo had been unloaded; “The landing was orderly and in organized units with [their] own equipment.” At noon on 19 July, Major General Gay established his command post and assumed responsibility for operations ashore. On 30 July Doyle closed TF 90 operations at Pohang-Dong. The operation had gone perfectly, excepting only that the second echelon of shipping had been delayed by two days by Typhoon Grace.

In the event, little air support had been required. However, that outcome had not been (and could not have been) known prior to the landing, and the back-and-forth among senior naval commanders had revealed an underlying theme in amphibious operations. It demonstrated the same conflicting imperatives that had characterized amphibious operations since Guadalcanal—the fast-carrier admirals were reluctant to tie down their forces to amphibious objective areas or to take direction from amphibious commanders (escort carriers to supply air support would not be available until later). Admiral Doyle, the amphibious commander in the Pohang-Dong case, found no problems in the command relationships established for it; Struble, however, the carrier admiral, intended to see that things were different for the next amphibious operation.

Operation CHROMITE

As is now well known, MacArthur did get his landing at Inchon. The earlier BLUEHEARTS plans, shelved because of the deteriorating

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ground situation for the Eighth Army and the lack of appropriate amphibious forces, were pulled down and fleshed out once the perimeter at Pusan had finally been largely stabilized—with the essential assistance of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, which arrived in mid-August.

By 23 July, by pulling together available operational, intelligence, and logistic data, MacArthur's assistant chief of staff for operations, Brigadier General Edwin K. "Pinky" Wright, and his staff in what was known as the Strategic Planning and Operations Group within Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE) headquarters, "had worked up three possible variants for a September landing which, in the form of draft plans, he circulated to the Far East Command staff."²⁵ One plan contemplated Inchon, one Kunsan, and the third Chumunjin (on the east coast). MacArthur elected to stay with Inchon, and he issued his Operation Plan 100-B on 12 August. The assault was set to go forward in mid-September, for three reasons: the assault forces required would not be available until then; the offensive had to proceed before the nasty Korean winter set in; and Inchon's tides restricted amphibious operations to only a few days each month (after mid-September, the next adequate tides would not occur until 11 October).

Organization and Command of the Landing Force. What forces would make the assault? The Eighth Army's units (the 24th and 25th Infantry Divisions and 1st Cavalry Division) were occupied in the Pusan perimeter. The Army's 3d Infantry Division would not arrive from the United States quickly enough.

In June 1950, the Marine Corps had no units of any size in the Far East, and consequently there were no trained amphibious troops immediately available to MacArthur. Fleet Marine Force Pacific, headquartered at Hawaii, consisted only of the grossly undermanned 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, California. The 2d Marine Division, on the Atlantic Coast, was similarly understrength. The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade—cobbled together from elements of the 1st Marine Division, principally the 5th Marine Regiment and Marine Aircraft Group 33—had sailed for Japan on 14 July. It comprised 463 officers and 6,109 enlisted (plus 42 naval officers and 179 sailors), leaving only about thirty-five hundred FMF personnel at Camp Pendleton. It went into the line at Pusan on 2 August.

On 25 July, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) finally approved a request by MacArthur on 10 July for a war-strength Marine division (less one regimental combat team, or augmented regiment). The Marine Corps had been authorized on 19 July to call up its reserves; Marine security forces throughout the United States were reduced 50 percent; on 27 July, Congress authorized extending all Marine enlistments expiring prior to July 1951; and authority was granted to redeploy units of the 2d Marine Division to the 1st Marine Division. The latter was to sail for the Far East between 10 and 15 August, incorporating the 1st Provisional Brigade on its arrival. Ultimately, the division would comprise about fifteen thousand officers and men. In building up the new division, the new commanding general, Major General Oliver P. Smith, gave initial priority to divisional units over attached supporting elements, and within the division, to combat units. The provisional brigade had taken most of the division's standard thirty days' worth of stores and equipment when it sailed. The requisite additional supplies were delivered under urgent deadlines from a variety of sources, including the Barstow, California, supply facility and Camp Lejeune, in North Carolina.²⁶

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was to be pulled out of the Pusan perimeter prior to the Inchon operation and revert to its prior identity as the 5th Marines. The 1st Marine Regiment would make it to Japan in time for the operation; the 7th Marines, being assembled from units scattered across the planet, would not. Thus, the Marines would land two regiments in the assault at Inchon. Who would make the follow-on landings? Only the 7th Infantry Division remained in Japan. It would come in the second and third-echelon shipping.

Who would command the troops for Inchon? MacArthur did not like the Eighth Army commander, Lieutenant General Walton Walker, nor was he even remotely satisfied with his performance to date. It seems likely that MacArthur's sentiments were reciprocated by Walker, exacerbated by a standing antipathy between Walker and Almond, MacArthur's chief of staff.²⁷ Walker's famous "stand or die" pronouncement to the Eighth Army had followed a private conference with MacArthur (Almond was the only other person in attendance) on 27 July, during which CINCFE had upbraided him. MacArthur's confidence in Walker had not improved since that discussion, and he was contemplating relieving him. It seemed unlikely,

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therefore, that the amphibious end-around would be placed under Walker's command. Who, then?

On 15 August, MacArthur directed Almond to head a special planning group that would prepare the basic plans for, and constitute the nucleus staff of, CHROMITE.²⁸ It became known as Force X, with MacArthur loyalist Major General Clark Ruffner as chief of staff and Marine colonel Edward Forney, of Mobile Training Team Able, as

Trust is an important lubricant of a social system.

Kenneth Arrow, Nobel laureate in economics

deputy chief of staff. Forney's personnel came with him to Force X, so at least some there knew about the actual execution of amphibious operations and had relationships with the Amphibious Group 1 and 1st Marine Division staffs.

Force X worked up a plan for a separate corps, to report directly to CINCFE until such time as the Eighth Army had made contact with it following the landing; it would then revert to Eighth Army control. Were the arrangement accepted, who would command this independent corps? Because Inchon was primarily an amphibious operation and a highly risky one at that, it made considerable sense for MacArthur to appoint someone with substantial combat experience, especially in that discipline. Further, a corps-level command rated a lieutenant general. Given MacArthur's predilection for choosing subordinate commanders well known to him, that individual would almost certainly come from his circle of personal acquaintances.

The first criterion suggested a Marine general officer; the second profoundly limited the number of possibilities, the most likely being Lieutenant General Lemuel C. Shepherd, then Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific. MacArthur had met and spoken with Shepherd on 10 July regarding getting Marines into the Far East, and evidently they had got on well. Shepherd had been assistant division commander of the 1st Marine Division under MacArthur's overall command for the Cape Gloucester operation in World War II. Shepherd certainly was available—his FMF post was administrative. Moreover, by all accounts he wanted an active role at Inchon, not only for personal professional reasons but in the interests of the Marine Corps.²⁹

However, several days (the exact date remains uncertain) after Force X began its work, Almond had occasion to speak with MacArthur regarding logistics issues, and in their conversation the question of a designation for the landing force came up; MacArthur decided that it would be called X (that is, Tenth) Corps. Almond inquired as to who would command X Corps, for he believed it essential that whoever it was become involved immediately in the planning. MacArthur replied that he would think it over and let Almond know later in the day. When they met again, MacArthur told Almond: "It's you."³⁰

One may reasonably question this choice over Shepherd. Almond had no amphibious experience and precious little as a combat commander, and Inchon was one of the most complex amphibious plans in history. Several factors plausibly account for this selection, however. First, Almond had loyally served MacArthur as his chief of staff and was the officer personally closest to him. It may have been simply a matter of rewarding a subordinate, and in any case it was MacArthur who would hold the reins.³¹ Second, MacArthur's principal focus was not the actual amphibious assault but the subsequent land campaign, especially the capture of Seoul. MacArthur's World War II experience in the Southwest Pacific had included no amphibious assaults of the type that had characterized the Central Pacific; his landings had been but prefaces to the main efforts. Finally, the potential political difficulty of designating a Marine general officer to command Army troops in combat, in light of the imbroglio that had followed Holland Smith's relief of Ralph Smith on Saipan in 1944, may have played a part.³²

Whatever internal conflict MacArthur may have felt over appointing Almond to command X Corps was probably erased during Shepherd's second trip to Japan. On 24 August, Shepherd communicated to both Admiral Sherman in Washington and Almond his "grave concerns about the hazards and loss of life that would ensue if Inchon was found to be strongly defended at the time of landing"; he "strongly recommended" an alternate plan he had proposed for a landing farther south.³³ Later that day, Shepherd met with MacArthur, who turned on his famous charm and asked him to join his staff as an advisor for the operation. Shepherd wisely demurred, recognizing that such an appointment "carried considerable responsibility, but no authority or command; that in my position as CG, FMFPAC, it

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would be somewhat embarrassing if my counsel was not followed as had been the case in recent discussions of the proposed landing." He proceeded to reiterate his concerns about Inchon and to expound his alternate plan. After a thirty-minute disquisition on the merits of Inchon, MacArthur told Shepherd that "he wished he could give me command of the Corps, that if he had not already given it to Almond he would do so; that at a later date he would give me a comparable command."³⁴ In the event, Shepherd went to Inchon as an "observer" aboard *Mount McKinley*.

Conflict between Almond and Oliver Smith at the 1st Marine Division began almost immediately, as the usually taciturn Marine noted in his personal log on 22 August 1950:

At 1730 I reported to GHQ in the Dai Ichi building and found only Captain Ladd, General Almond's Aide. To get to the inner sanctum it was necessary to pass at least a dozen of the palace guards. The sentries near the office were armed with rifles at fixed bayonets and presented arms. After about an hour and a half, General Almond, GHQ Chief of Staff, arrived. He is to be the Commanding General of the new X Corps of which the First Marine Division is to be a part. The first impression of General Almond was not very favorable. He was supercilious in manner. He discussed the forthcoming operation with me. I voiced the objections noted above. With a wave of the hand he said there was no organized enemy anyway, that our difficulties were purely mechanical, and that the date was fixed. Then he questioned me as to my command experience. He insisted upon calling me "son."³⁵

At the briefing on CHROMITE held at general headquarters the next day, Smith found the "usual general staff form of briefing, correct as to form, but having nothing [in] particular to do with reality. For instance, for the crossing of the Han River, the Engineer admitted he did not have the bridging material, but the matter was brushed off by stating that the crossing of the Han River presented technical difficulties which were under continuing study. . . . The task assigned the First [Marine] Division did not have much relation to our capabilities, particularly the latter phases of our task." (After attending a second briefing at GHQ, Smith would resolve in the future to send his G-2 [staff operations officer] instead.)

At the first briefing, Smith urged that the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade be brought out of Pusan to join his division for the assault. He “was informed that relief of the Brigade from combat would be bad for the morale of the Eighth Army and would disclose our plans. I was also informed that relief of the Brigade from combat would be dependent on the tactical situation.” Also, because the 7th Marines could not possibly arrive before 0300 on the landing day, the regiment was “manifestly not available.” From Smith’s perspective, this “indicated a total lack of appreciation of the problem.” Other issues included the precise locations where the division would go ashore at Inchon (X Corps plans called for it to make all landings in the dock area, something Smith wished to avoid if at all possible) and the extent of prelanding naval bombardment—the Army, along with Joint Task Force 7 (below), wanted only the minimum, in order to maintain surprise.

Ultimately, on 3 September, because Walker was still loath to release the Marine brigade (now once again the 5th Marine Regiment) from Pusan, a conference was held in Almond’s office. “There was a rather heated discussion in which Admiral Joy tried to pin down General Almond on making the 5th Marines available.” Almond announced that the 32d Infantry of the 7th Division would be substituted if the 5th was not made available. Called on for his opinion, Smith

told General Almond frankly that in complicated amphibious operations such as the one we were to engage in, last minute substitutions could not be made; that it was unfair to the troops so substituted; that if the substitution were made, I would call off the Blue Beach landing and give the mission of the 5th Marines to the 1st Marines, and have the 32nd Infantry follow in. [I] told General Almond, however, that to make this change would be going beyond the point of a considered risk.³⁶

The impasse was resolved by a suggestion from Struble that the 5th Marines be pulled out of the line at Pusan and sent to Inchon, with a 7th Infantry Division regiment to remain on board ship as a floating reserve for the Eighth Army.

After the landing, Almond would become anxious to be able to declare Seoul in United Nations control by 25 September—exactly

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ninety days after the North invaded the South—for symbolic reasons; he believed that the Marines were moving too slowly. Almond then proposed to Smith that the 1st Marines make an enveloping movement against Seoul from the southeast. Smith declined on the grounds that he did not wish to separate his forces or have them come into Seoul from two opposite directions. He believed that the North Koreans would defend Seoul street by street and that it was wiser to keep the Marine units concentrated. This, of course, was close to refusing an order, and it was not conducive to good command relations.³⁷

Moreover, Almond would on several occasions bypass Smith in the chain of command, speaking with and issuing orders to units at the regimental level. On 24 September, Smith commented that he “had already had one instance where General Almond had given direct orders to [Colonel Lewis] Puller [commanding the 1st Marines]. I told General Almond that I would appreciate it if he would not give orders direct to my regimental commanders, that if he would issue his orders to me, I would see that they were carried out.” When they discussed the matter in private, Almond “denied that he had given direct orders to the regimental commanders. I told him the regimental commanders were under that impression. There the matter rested.”³⁸ For his part, Almond later commented that

his action was that of a commander who wants to succeed by coordinating his troops as much as possible. I always announced in advance, in both World War II and Korea, my intention to visit such and such units and I usually expected the CO [commanding officer] to be present. What I found out, especially in the case of General Smith, was I could go to the front line and find out for myself the conditions that existed more rapidly than I could get them through division headquarters.³⁹

It is tempting to write off conflicts between Almond and Smith as simply an unfortunate clash of personalities, as a manifestation of the distrust between the Army and Marine Corps, or as reflecting their different organizational viewpoints. All these factors undoubtedly played a part, but four other elements also deserve consideration.

Three relate to professional experience and expertise. First, Almond was a staff officer in an organizational culture emphasizing

and rewarding in-depth staff work; Smith had far more combat experience than Almond and lived in a milieu emphasizing and rewarding operational results. Second, Almond had no amphibious experience or expertise, whereas Smith had a great deal of both. These two elements led to fundamental conflicts about the structure of military problems and their appropriate solutions; Almond tended to stress schedules and paper plans, treating them as equivalent to the actual situation on the ground. Third, what combat experience Almond possessed (his World War I machine-gun battalion and, in World War II, 92d Division command) had taught him that precise coordination from the top was vital, that subordinate units could not be trusted to carry out their assignments without close direction. MacArthur's penchant for focusing on the broad canvas and leaving "details" to his subordinates created a permissive condition for Almond's modes. Fourth, where practical constraints conflicted with Almond's understanding of CINCFE's objectives, Almond pressed for the latter, behavior that someone less personally and professionally tied to MacArthur might not have displayed.

Another substantial conflict, between Almond and Major General David Barr, commanding the 7th Infantry Division, cannot be dismissed as interservice rivalry or as a matter of differing cultures. Ironically, Barr's reputation was as a "brainy staff officer," not as a battlefield commander. Still, Barr was "highly annoyed by Almond's driving intensity, dictatorial manner, and brashness and had such doubts about his battlefield competence that he asked Almond to find someone else to command the 7th Division at Inchon." For his part, Almond saw Barr as a liability. A staff officer of X Corps thought Barr "an inept, vacillating commander who exasperated General Almond continuously[;] . . . only their long friendship kept him from being relieved by General Almond."⁴⁰ Barr felt unable to refuse (as Smith had) Almond's directive to take the 32d Infantry in the enveloping movement against Seoul; nonetheless, when Almond ordered Barr to attack at night, Barr by his own admission "didn't put much effort into it." On the other hand, Barr had great respect for O. P. Smith and found Marine Corps amphibious operations "unsurpassed, near perfection."⁴¹

Command of the Attack Force. How would the attack force and other naval forces at Inchon be organized? Who would command them?

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MacArthur was less immediately concerned about this command structure than with that of the landing force, and he appropriately left it to the Navy. That, however, did not make the matter effortless to resolve.

Struble, of the Seventh Fleet, was anxious to command the overall naval portion of the operation, and he set to work toward that end. He believed that a command structure different from that at Pohang-Dong was required, because CHROMITE was an “invasion, not a mere division landing.” Joy, his superior as Commander, Naval Forces, Far East was less enthusiastic about that prospect, and a series of communications ensued among flag officers at the highest levels.

On 29 July, Admirals Sherman in Washington and Joy in Japan discussed by telex conference the prospective command organization and resulting flag officer requirements.⁴² As Sherman later summarized the conversation to Admiral Radford, commanding the Pacific Fleet, the two discussed the idea of placing a new echelon between COMNAVFE and the Seventh Fleet commander. Sherman refused to make “Struble subordinate to anyone junior to Joy [but] would concur in giving him higher responsibilities under Joy and letting aviation flag officers handle fast carrier forces. . . . Will consider personalities and comment further by despatch.”⁴³ Of this, Sherman advised Joy only that he “had communicated to Radford the highlights of our . . . telecon [telephone conversation].”⁴⁴ Sherman had effectively interceded for Struble, his protégé, to ensure that he would command all naval forces at Inchon.

MacArthur issued orders for CHROMITE on 20 August. By the 22d, Joy had in turn prepared a directive to the Seventh Fleet, but he had to wait to issue it until he received MacArthur’s directive to him. Struble was advised informally by Joy on 25 August that he would command the naval forces at Inchon. On the 26th, Joy proposed to Radford (copy to the Chief of Naval Operations) that in light of the prospect of future operations he consider sending the commander of Pacific Fleet amphibious forces with his operational staff to the Far East Command in a command ship (specially outfitted, like *Mount McKinley*, with the extensive communications suite required to control amphibious assaults).⁴⁵ The next day, Radford sent to Joy (Sherman as information addressee), “It is my understanding [from prior] conversations with you that two amphibious groups under

direction [of Commander] Seventh Fleet could adequately take care of future operations from an amphibious standpoint. If an additional flag officer is needed for planning and/or control of future amphibious operations[, I] request that you make recommendations and outline the organization that you desire.”⁴⁶ Joy replied that indeed he meant simply to request a second amphibious group commander and staff.⁴⁷

Three days later, Joy sent a message to Sherman (copy to Admiral Struble) inquiring as to whether under Navy Regulations he had the authority to “designate second in command of a joint [multiservice] task force. If not[, I] request authority [to] designate Rear Admiral James H. Doyle as second in command to Vice Admiral Struble for coming operation.”⁴⁸ The response came from the Secretary of the Navy later that day (copies to Radford and Struble): “You are hereby empowered to make details in command of a task force or other task command as is authorized for a commander in chief by Article Thirteen Forty Five Navy Regulations. This includes the authority requested in your 310349Z to CNO.”⁴⁹

Struble was formally appointed the overall commander at Inchon following the approval of the operation by the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 29 August. He had given some thought to the name for the organization; he decided on “Joint Task Force 7,” communicating that name to Joy orally (probably on 27 August).⁵⁰ As Commander, Seventh Fleet, Struble had authority over no elements outside that fleet; as Commander, JTF 7, however, he controlled all units of the seaborne invasion, including Task Force 90 and X Corps—“and any military man should recognize the soundness of central command for such an operation.” Struble “did not discuss the command relations with MacArthur, Almond, or the staff, because [he] had not made up the command part of his plan. Later [he] told Almond and informed him of [the planned] turnover from Joint Force Command to Com. General X Corps when he had established himself ashore.”⁵¹ Of course, given the forces and command personnel available, there were few other options for that critical aspect of command planning.

Struble believed that he followed a hands-off policy on day-to-day planning for the operation: “I could have had twice-daily conferences to review, etc., but *did not*. I had confidence in Doyle [CTF 90 and Commander, Amphibious Group 1] and Smith [1st Marine Division] and made the decision to tell them to proceed. I also made it

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clear that on certain phibgroup [amphibious group]—marine views I did not agree and told them what we would do on such subjects.” Struble later commented that “many of the elements of the phibgroup advanced planning were accepted and included—certain phibgroup-Mardiv [Marine division] ideas were not accepted—After my first complete meeting with Doyle and Smith I outlined to them the items that would be in my plan when issued and told them they could come to me at any time for further decision.” In fact, the Amphibious Group 1 and 1st Marine Division staffs had worked on their plans together, on the basis of verbal directives from MacArthur through Joy, until at least 26 August.

Although formally Struble reported to MacArthur through Joy, it appears that his status as a joint task force commander gave him direct access to MacArthur, without going through either Joy or Almond: “As CJTF-7 I had a right to talk to MacArthur and did. Vis-à-vis highly important decisions if I couldn’t make them myself—I would have included Joy in such a discussion. I did not use back door tactics.” At the same time, Struble “did not at any time during this period ask MacArthur for any decision.”⁵²

The CHROMITE command arrangement not only suited Struble as a resolution of his conflicts with Doyle and Joy but gave the Navy a mechanism for dealing with its conflicts with the Army and the Air Force. The assault landing force (the 1st Marine Division) would remain under Doyle’s command until its proper commander, Smith, established himself ashore. Smith in turn would command the follow-on force (elements of the 7th Infantry Division), while himself reporting to Struble. Thus, X Corps would effectively remain under Struble’s control until Almond’s command post was established ashore, when Almond would take it over, working directly for CINCFE. In essence this followed standard amphibious doctrine, although in a two-tiered fashion.

A principal point of dispute between Doyle and Smith, on one side, and Struble on the other was the extent of prelanding naval gunfire support to be provided. The two former commanders wished for up to ten days of gunfire; Struble would agree only to two days. Struble’s view prevailed. As to who would control the gunfire support, recollections differ. Struble later contended that he retained control of the gunfire plan, believing that the decision as to its duration required thorough planning; his operation plan “placed the

surface bombardment force under Doyle so he could coordinate the gunfire plans with phibgroup and mardiv planners. He was to submit two courses of action to me for my approval. . . . [He] never reported on these plans and requested that the gunfire force not be placed under his command. I then placed [Commander, Cruiser Division] 5 directly under me, and told him to prepare plans, consulting with phibgroup and mardiv. I retained command and control of these plans and their execution."⁵³ Doyle would remember things differently: "I have no recollection of asking Struble not to place the gunfire support group under my command and cannot imagine that I did so. . . . [T]he fire was controlled by me in the *Mt. McKinley*."⁵⁴

As with that between Almond and Smith, it is tempting to explain the conflicts between Doyle and Struble principally in terms of personalities. Certainly, they were no more than professionally civil to one another. There also appears to have been competition as to who would be remembered by history as *the* amphibious officer in Korea.⁵⁵ Some friction was undoubtedly generated by their respective positions in the operation, which led to different imperatives. More significantly, however, the two officers had come from distinctly different World War II amphibious cultures: Struble from Europe and the Southwest Pacific, Doyle from the Central Pacific. The former was used to working with, and largely under the control of, the Army; the latter was accustomed to the Marines, with the Navy dominating planning and operations. Finally, one supposes that Doyle, having managed the Pohang-Dong landing under his preferred command structure, now chafed under a new command setup that he did not want but had to accept.

Ultimately, a second amphibious group was sent to the Far East Command—Amphibious Group 3, under Rear Admiral Lyman Thackrey. Rather than give it a status equal to that of Amphibious Group 1, and Thackrey organizational equality with Doyle, Group 3 was made a task group within Task Force 90, under Doyle. It was to control shipping and unloading at Inchon after the assault phase, freeing Group 1 to focus on planning future operations.

At about this time, Admiral Sherman made a decision that reflected concern about the capacity of Vice Admiral Joy and his staff to handle the burdens imposed by the Korean War, burdens that had been unanticipated in the post-World War II allocation of responsibilities. Joy's staff was small, intended for occupation duties, and

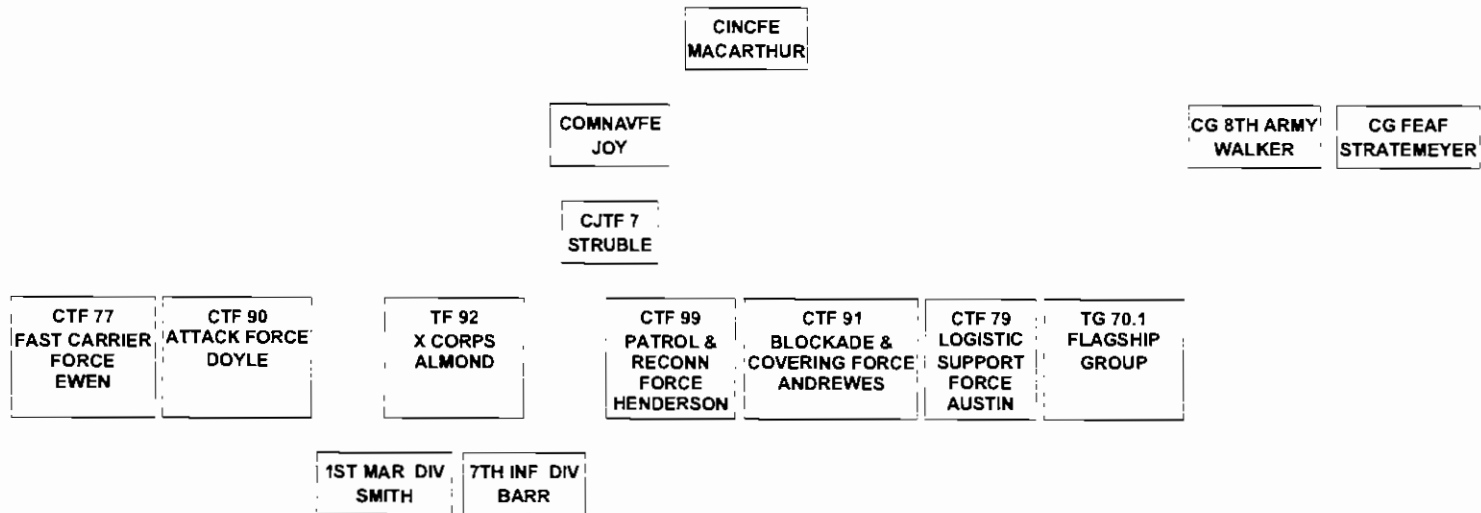
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Joy's World War II experience had been limited to cruiser fire-support units. Sherman also had lingering doubts about the Inchon operation itself. His answer was to augment Joy's staff. Consequently, on 28 August, following his return from a visit to Tokyo, he summoned Captain Arleigh Burke (whose World War II record was distinguished but whose career had nearly ended in the defense-unification struggle) to his office and asked him to report to COMNAVFE as his deputy chief of staff—"as a senior officer to advise him and take charge of the headquarters' wartime responsibilities." Sherman had another agenda as well: he wanted Burke to "send a personal radio dispatch to me directly at least once each day. I want you particularly to study the plan for this upcoming Inchon assault. If you think it likely to fail, let me know and I can block the operation." To that end the Chief of Naval Operations offered Burke a box with code wheels for enciphering those dispatches—Sherman would have the only matching set of wheels. A man of exemplary character, Burke agreed to go to Tokyo and send Sherman the reports, but none that he had not previously shown to Joy; if Joy had not concurred, Burke would transmit "another dispatch stating why Admiral Joy disagreed with my report and what I think of his objections."⁵⁶ Sherman acquiesced, and Burke departed for Tokyo, arriving on 3 September and plunging immediately into the pile of plans, orders, and dispatches related to the impending operation.

Struble issued his Operation Plan 9-50 on 3 September 1950. Copies went, of course, to Joy and MacArthur, and "neither objected to the orders in the plan nor the command lines established, though they had about two weeks to do so if they wished." Doyle had already issued, the day before, his CTF 90 Operation Order 14-50 for the landing. Figure 3 shows the overall command organization for the Inchon landing.

There was also the matter of Air Force participation in the assault at Inchon—for which neither sea service had any enthusiasm. The Far East Air Force had, since the beginning of hostilities in Korea, sought to bring all land-based aircraft under its direct control—especially the Marine aircraft group that had arrived with the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, but also naval aviation. This the Navy and Marines had successfully resisted. Struble now "declined both local fighter and B-29 assistance from the Air Force because [he] felt that naval air units assigned were better for the specific job in

Figure 3
Overall Command Organization
Inchon Landing, 15 September 1950



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hand”—that is, that Navy and Marine aviators were experts in air-ground support operations, and the Air Force was not. Also, of course, excluding the Air Force would preclude interservice conflicts over air priorities during the operation. In consequence, what was from the Air Force viewpoint essentially a “no-fly zone” was demarcated around the Inchon area, inside of which naval aviation had responsibility, and outside of which the Air Force was free to engage targets.⁵⁷ The fast carriers of Task Force 77, commanded by Rear Admiral Edward C. Ewen, would distribute about 40 percent of their aircraft sorties over Inchon-Seoul targets, with the remainder evenly split between targets north and south of the area. Close air support on D day was to be provided from the escort carriers (smaller and slower ships, built in World War II on freighter hulls) of Task Group 90.2. The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing—much to the chagrin of the Far East Air Force—remained directly responsible to X Corps, as its Tactical Air Command, under Major General Field Harris, USMC.

In the next several days, Burke worked with Joy’s staff on a plan to support the landing, reversing “the usual procedure of the top command’s issuing a general plan to the lower echelons for working out details; instead, Burke and his colleagues worked out a ComNavFE plan based on those of Doyle and Struble. ComNavFE’s responsibility would be coordination of the 71,000-man landing force and the hastily assembled 230-ship international fleet that would transport and support it.”⁵⁸ Burke worked effectively within the COMNAVFE staff and unquestionably added to its expertise and capacity.

Unfortunately, Doyle and Almond failed to work well together. Two days before the 23 August conference in Tokyo, Doyle had told Almond that he must brief MacArthur on the details of the Inchon landing; Almond had responded that MacArthur was not interested in details. Doyle insisted that CINCFE must be made aware of them in order to make his decisions, and Almond only reluctantly agreed.⁵⁹ Whether the difficulty began only at this time or had existed before, it continued unabated through the later Hungnam evacuation. Much of Doyle’s problem with Almond stemmed from the same source as Smith’s—disdain for Almond’s professional experience and judgment, as manifested in decisions Doyle found imprudent. Clearly Doyle also did not care for Almond personally, though this would not have mattered had he respected him.⁶⁰

In contrast, Doyle and Smith worked extremely well together, quickly becoming friends and remaining so in the decades following the war. Each had the highest respect for the other's professionalism and expertise, and they developed the utmost confidence and trust in each other. This was facilitated by their (and their staffs') close physical proximity aboard *Mount McKinley*. Moreover, Doyle and Smith shared antipathies toward Struble and Almond, based on similar judgments of their expertise and characters. Consequently, Doyle, Smith, and their respective staffs worked together quickly, efficiently, and informally in the planning for Inchon. This in turn established a solid foundation on which the work for the next operation might proceed.

CHROMITE—the Event. As history was to record, and Major General Smith commented in his personal log on the evening of 15 September, D day went “about as planned.”⁶¹ The preinvasion bombardment took its toll on the enemy; the assault against Wolmi-Do, a critical island commanding the main beach, commenced at 0630 on D day against moderate opposition, concluding by 0807. The main landings began at 1730 on D day. At 1800 on the next day (known as D+1), Smith established his command post ashore and assumed command of the landing force. General unloading had begun earlier that day. Second-echelon shipping, with the 7th Division embarked, arrived and commenced unloading on D+2; Commander, Amphibious Group 3 was designated to coordinate the evolution. At 1800 on 21 September, Major General Almond assumed command of all forces ashore in the objective area. Joint Task Force 7 was duly dissolved, control of its naval forces reverting to the Seventh Fleet. COMNAVFE had had little work to do—no coordinating had been required; Joy and Burke had remained at their command post in Tokyo, listening to the radio traffic.

Speaking to Rear Admiral Doyle years later, Major General Smith was less phlegmatic: “The only thing remarkable about this landing was that it was miraculous.”⁶² But to Doyle, it had been no miracle. In his 1950 report to the Pacific Fleet Evaluation Group, he remarked:

The assault itself was successful only through the perfect teamwork that existed between the participating naval and marine elements.

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The successful accomplishment of the assault on Inchon demanded that an incredible number of individual and coordinated tasks be accomplished exactly as planned. Only the United States Marines, through their many years of specialized training in amphibious warfare, in conjunction with the Navy, had the requisite knowhow to formulate the plans within the limited time available and to execute those plans flawlessly without additional training or rehearsal.⁶³

It is fair to say that the virtually perfect planning and execution of the Inchon operation occurred *despite* rather than *because of* the command relations in place. Probably, they were achievable only because of the high degree of professionalism and the practical World War II service of the Navy and Marine commanders and their staffs. Aside from CINCFE'S basic vision and the formal naval command relations established by Struble, substantive planning proceeded through the lower echelons (Amphibious Group 1 and the 1st Marine Division), whose plans and orders dominated those issued at the higher echelons—some of which were backdated, because the directives below them were officially pursuant to them. As the commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet observed,

the planning at attack force–landing force level was ideal with the two staffs planning together in the same ship (*Mt McKinley*) in Tokyo, facilitating rapid resolution of problems and decisions. . . . [However] X Corps plans, formulated with assistance of Marine TTU [Troop Training Unit, containing Mobile Training Team Able] officers on loan to the Corps commander, were late in initiation as a result of the late formation of Corps staff and its inexperience in amphibious planning. The troop planning sequence was, as a result, quite unorthodox and the reverse of [the] normal sequence with the corps plan being predicated on and promulgated after the landing force plan.⁶⁴

Moreover, as Admiral Radford found, command relationships were not entirely satisfactory in the execution phase. The problem was the physical separation of Struble and Almond. Struble was embarked on his flagship, the cruiser *Rochester*, but both MacArthur and Almond had elected to embark on *Mount McKinley*—the rationale being lack of space for staff aboard the heavy cruiser. This overburdened communications on the AGC and “caused many of the relationships

functions of CJTF [Struble] with X Corps [Almond] to devolve on Commander Attack Force [Doyle].”⁶⁵

Struble, however, found no fault in the command relationships for the operation, noting afterward that

the classic amphibious command structure as outlined in USF 6 [naval amphibious doctrine publication, 1952] was followed in the Inchon operation. The soundness of the command structure was again demonstrated. I recommend against any change solely for the sake of change, or for the purpose of satisfying preconceived but unproven notions. The existing command structure was evolved as the result of battle experience; let evolution dictate changes.⁶⁶

One might conclude Struble was attempting to stave off potential problems with other services, but in fact he was worried about reversion to the naval command structure that obtained at Pohang-Dong.

Operation TAILBOARD

The Wonsan landing, Operation TAILBOARD, was conceived before the Marines who went ashore at Inchon were in control of Seoul. MacArthur expected that the North Koreans would head north along the east coast once they became aware of the landing at Inchon, and as the Eighth Army began its breakout from the Pusan perimeter; a landing at Wonsan would cut off the retreating North Koreans. On 27 September, MacArthur received permission from the Joint Chiefs to cross the thirty-eighth parallel, permission he had requested in the belief that the apparent defeat of the North Korean People's Army and the unlikelihood that the Chinese would enter the war had created an opportunity to reunite Korea. (Preliminary Joint Chiefs and presidential approval had been communicated to him as *Mount McKinley* headed to Inchon.) In the rush of optimism following the success of CHROMITE, MacArthur was confident that the war would be over by Christmas.

Operation TAILBOARD was ill starred from conception. First of all, X Corps was not absorbed into the Eighth Army when, on 26 September at Osan, the two forces linked up. Walker and his staff had assumed that it would be and that Almond would return to Tokyo as CINCFE chief of staff; Almond had apparently thought the same.⁶⁷

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Walker's staff had presumed that Almond would be replaced by a "new corps commander, compatible with and willing to take orders from Walker." This merger, they believed, would improve coordination and control of United Nations forces in Korea by establishing a central command closer to the battlefield. Walker further assumed that X Corps would move northwestward in pursuit of the NKPA (North Korean People's Army) and, supplied through Inchon, would move on Pyongyang and Chinnampo, finally striking eastward to Wonsan. At the same time, I Corps of the Eighth Army would move northeast from Seoul toward Wonsan, supplied through Pusan initially and through Wonsan once that port was taken. These objectives accomplished, the Eighth Army would move northward, picking up two more ports, Sinanju on the west coast and Hungnam on the east.⁶⁸

MacArthur had other ideas. X Corps would remain independent and be withdrawn from the Seoul area—the 1st Marine Division would reembark at Inchon, and the 7th Infantry Division would move by rail and truck to be loaded onto shipping at Pusan. Both would land at Wonsan, from where they would attack westward toward Pyongyang. The Eighth Army, having moved into the Seoul area, would continue toward Pyongyang. This plan essentially replicated, farther north and with the "map reversed," Operation CHROMITE; it was intended to complete the destruction of the NKPA.

Moreover, MacArthur envisioned the triumphant entry of a still-independent X Corps into Pyongyang, much like that into Seoul. This would simultaneously reward Almond and withhold acclaim from Walker, whose Eighth Army, MacArthur believed, had performed inadequately in breaking out from Pusan during CHROMITE, while X Corps had shone.

But how were the two commanders in the field to relate to each other? Clearly, Almond could not serve under Walker. One solution would be to make Almond commanding general of the Eighth Army and send Walker into retirement, but this would have political costs. MacArthur elected the temporary palliative of maintaining X Corps as an independent unit—the war was nearly over, from his perspective, in any case.⁶⁹ Given these premises, it was probably not unreasonable to continue the same formal command relationships that had obtained for CHROMITE, which was virtually a template for all other aspects of the new operation as well.

MacArthur formally announced his intention to land X Corps at Wonsan on 1 October; X Corps issued its Operation Order 3 that day, replacing it on 4 October with Operation Order 4, which was revised on 10 October. The planning process for Wonsan, practically a duplication of that for Inchon, had already been proceeding step by step with it. CINCFE Operational Plan 100-D had been promulgated on 11 September, under Almond's name; it envisioned landings in the Chumunjin area of Korea's east coast, predicated on the assumption that the Inchon assault had been successful. On 15 September, even as the 1st Marine Division was assaulting Inchon, COMNAVFE had issued his Operation Plan 112-50 for planning purposes;⁷⁰ Joy had based it on CINCFE's Operational Plan 100-D and on the second revision of his own earlier Operation Order 5-50, his general operating order. On 26 September, MacArthur had directed his Strategic Planning and Operations Group to develop a more detailed plan for operations north of the thirty-eighth parallel. The following day, on which CINCFE received approval from Washington, his staff presented Operations Plan 9-50, with Wonsan as the objective. On 29 September, following ceremonies in newly recaptured Seoul, MacArthur outlined its basic features to his subordinate commanders (Walker, Almond, Joy, and Stratemeyer) and set the landing date for 20 October.

Joy, supported by his deputy chief of staff, now-Rear Admiral Burke, "flatly urged that the plan be scrapped, in part because of his growing belief that Wonsan harbor might be heavily mined." He later commented that "none of us in COMNAVFE could see the necessity for such an operation since the 10th Corps [*sic*] could have marched overland to Wonsan in a much shorter time and with much less effort than it would take to get the Corps around to Wonsan by sea"—because the two available embarkation ports, Inchon and Pusan, were already overtaxed by the supply needs of the Eighth Army.⁷¹ Joy made his objections known to Major General Doyle Hickey, then the CINCFE chief of staff. Hickey was sympathetic but responded that the "General had made up his mind about the landing and there was no use trying to talk him out of it."⁷² Struble, for his part, would later comment that "certainly the place for the blow after Inchon, and the strategic place for it, was Wonsan. Whether, from a transportation angle, one or both of the divisions embarked might better have been sent up by road is certainly an Army and a

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ground force decision, that is hardly up to the Navy to get into.”⁷³ In other words, Struble was of no help to the landing force commanders on the issues of most concern to them.

Consequently, on 3 October Major General Smith of the 1st Marine Division, though he had not been given much detail on the X Corps plan, established a tentative organization for the landing force, with the 1st and 7th Marines in the assault, two battalions each. Two days later, Struble issued his Seventh Fleet Operation Order 16-50, for preliminary operations, stipulating that the assault was to be conducted by a reconstituted Joint Task Force 7. On 8 October, Joy made his Operation Plan 113-50 (a revision of 112-50, issued 15 September) effective for operations. On 9 October Struble issued his final plan—COMSEVENTHFLT Operation Plan 10-50, reestablishing JTF 7. Doyle issued his COMPHIBGRU 1 Operation Order 16-50 on 15 October.

Thus, Almond would command X Corps, again comprising the 1st Marine Division and 7th Infantry Division. Struble would again command Joint Task Force 7, made up of the Seventh Fleet (including Task Force 90, its amphibious element), the landing force, and additional auxiliaries. Doyle, as CTF 90, would be the attack force commander. As at Inchon, once Smith established his command post ashore, command of the landing force would revert to him. Similarly, when Almond established his command post ashore, command of X Corps would revert to him, and Task Force 7 would again be dissolved.

COMNAVFE, through CTF 7, would control all air operations in the objective area—“within a line run inland from Kosong to the southern end of the Korean Gulf, north along the mountain spine, and eastward to enclose Hungnam.”⁷⁴ Navy and Marine aviation would provide air support, with Far East Air Force to be involved if requested in an emergency by the commander in the objective area. However, unlike at Inchon, CTF 7, when relieved, was to turn over command of all land-based air (that is, the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing) to the Commanding General, Fifth Air Force.⁷⁵ Also, unlike for Inchon, the Advance Force (including the minesweepers) and the Escort Carrier Group were separated from the Attack Force, a decision that spread the planning load across more staffs—easing the burden but increasing the problem of coordination.

A conference had been held on 30 September at X Corps headquarters in Ascom City (a quonset-hut facility established by the Army Service Command three miles from Inchon) to discuss the landing at Wonsan. There its two division commanders learned that the plan assumed that the Eighth Army would relieve them by 3 October (in the event, the 1st Cavalry Division passed through the 5th Marines' lines on 4 October, and the Eighth Army as a whole relieved X Corps in the Inchon-Seoul area on 7 October). That corps would be required to prepare and embark in six to eight days and land at Wonsan on 15 October.⁷⁶ Major General Barr did not favor the plan, preferring either to align his 7th Division with the 1st Cavalry Division for a fast push northward from Seoul to Pyongyang, or to follow Walker's plan for X Corps to race to Wonsan from Seoul. Major General Smith did not mind an amphibious assault if it were executed in the right place, but he retained "quite a few reservations" about the overland attack from Wonsan to Pyongyang. Almond—who particularly feared guerrilla opposition in the rugged terrain between Seoul and Wonsan were X Corps to move in that direction—"turned aside" these concerns.

Unwillingness to discuss other possibilities, however, did not mean that planning for Wonsan was now firm—far from it. Events on the ground remained extremely fluid, their fluidity matched by that of the thinking about them at CINCFE. On 8 October, the 7th Division began its overland slog southeast to Pusan—except for its tank elements, which went by sea from Inchon. On the 9th, the 1st Marine Division commenced embarking at Inchon. That same day, Almond sprang a new landing site on Smith and Barr—Hungnam, some fifty sea-miles north of Wonsan. Developments had reduced the value of Wonsan considerably: as Smith noted, the "progress of the ROK's [South Korean units] had made a landing at Wonsan unnecessary. Also the opportunity to cut across Korea in order to help the Eighth Army seize Pyongyang is gone because of progress in the west. Apparently the [X] Corps is now trying to get a zone of action of its own on the east coast."⁷⁷

The next day, however, the Hungnam landing was dropped; Smith recorded at the time that "the next idea was to have the 7th Division land commercially [that is, administratively] and go to Wonsan ahead of us [the 1st Marine Division], then that idea was dropped. In accordance with Corps orders we are still working on plans to land in

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assault at Wonsan, even though at the moment the 3rd ROK Division is mopping up the city. Of course we can always change an assault landing into an administrative landing.”⁷⁸ By that time, the 1st Marine Division was loading its equipment on transports at Inchon, and most of the 7th Division had arrived at Pusan. Because of the tight quarters in Inchon harbor, outloading the 1st Marine Division was causing great interference with efforts to supply the rapidly advancing Eighth Army.

The ROK I Corps captured both Hungnam and Hamhung two days later, on the 12th. The 1st Marine Division finally sailed from Inchon on 17 October. Aboard *Mount McKinley*, Almond held a press conference, at which Smith observed, “It is rather difficult for him to explain what he is going to do. The North Korean situation is still deteriorating but it is still the plan to land us at Wonsan.”⁷⁹

On 16 October, MacArthur expanded Almond’s X Corps fiefdom, effective 1200 on 20 October: all UN and Republic of Korea personnel operating north of 39 degrees, 10 minutes north were to be under his operational control. In organizational terms, this further separated X Corps from the Eighth Army. Pursuant to this order, MacArthur created parallel, separate zones of action for X Corps and the Eighth Army—the central Taebaek Range became the boundary between the two forces. Thus all of northeast Korea went to X Corps as its field of operation; if Walker had any doubts about his importance in the scheme of things, they must have been dispelled by these orders. Moreover, reflecting the “end-of-war atmosphere” that now prevailed at his headquarters, MacArthur had already decided to make Almond commander of the occupation forces.

Unfortunately, Joy’s concerns about mines at Wonsan proved more than well founded—as many as four thousand Soviet mines of four different types (including magnetic influence) had been sown by the North Koreans under direct Soviet supervision, beginning in late July. Sweeping proceeded very slowly, with the loss of two U.S. Navy minesweepers as well as South Korean and Japanese-manned “sweeps.” Meanwhile the Marine division steamed slowly in race-track patterns along the east coast, and it was still doing so on 21 October, when Almond requested that a Marine battalion be put ashore forty miles south of Wonsan, at Kojo. Doyle, however, refused, because the area had not been swept. The landing was called off that evening. Moreover, Doyle still balked at a hurried landing of troops

at Wonsan—in an administrative landing, especially, he wished to take no risks.

Almond displayed considerable impatience with what he viewed as the timidity of the Navy commanders, particularly Doyle, and on 23 and 24 October he “lashed out his frustration at Admirals Doyle and Struble in a series of heated conferences aboard the [battleship] *Missouri*.”⁸⁰ The Attack Force continued to steam back and forth along its approach track (“Operation Yo-Yo,” the Marines called it) until 25 October, when at 1500 some LSTs started in toward the landing beaches, although minesweeping continued. Almond now proposed, and Struble agreed, that they should cease minesweeping at Wonsan and concentrate at Hungnam. Doyle talked them out of this plan, largely because the landing beaches would be unusable in heavy weather, while the inner harbor at Wonsan, once clear, would remain functional. The next day, general unloading commenced; the troops would remain aboard the transports until it had been completed. Smith observed, “There is no urgent tactical need for getting all the troops ashore at once. The [X] Corps takes a dim view of this procedure.”⁸¹ As is now well known, when the Marines landed they were greeted by the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and a USO troupe. By that time, the battle front was already fifty miles north of Hungnam.⁸²

Meanwhile, what of the 7th Infantry Division? Task Group 90.8 (Amphibious Group 3, under Rear Admiral Thackrey) had arrived at Pusan from Inchon on 10 October, and the 7th Division commenced loading that day. Thackrey issued his Operation Order 2-50 on 16 October for embarkation and movement to Wonsan. Sailing was delayed several times, because of the threat of magnetic-influence mines and the increasing possibility of Chinese attack. As early as 19 October, Joy asked Struble and Doyle for suggestions of areas where X Corps could be landed other than Wonsan. On 24 October, Doyle nonetheless directed Thackrey to proceed to Wonsan. The next day, as the Marines went ashore there, Doyle, Struble, and Almond met to consider what to do with the 7th Division. They decided to send Thackrey and the 7th Division, when they arrived at Wonsan, on to Iwon—about a hundred miles north of Wonsan.

On reaching Wonsan on 26 October, CTG 90.8 made plans for the Iwon landing, producing Operation Order 4-50. Two days later, Underwater Demolition Team 3 reconnoitered Iwon, and two

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destroyer-minesweepers swept the anchorage. They found it clear of mines. The first LST beached at 2230 on the 28th, the remainder the following morning. With some interruption because of surf conditions, Thackrey finished unloading on 8 November.⁸³

As had happened before Inchon, the plan of the landing force (1st Marine Division) was completed before that of the expeditionary force (X Corps), and naval plans were prepared and issued jointly and concurrently with it. Unlike Inchon, however, this time X Corps headquarters was established ashore in advance of the landing of either division, and since the landings of both divisions were administrative, no difficulties in executing command relationships resulted regarding assumption of responsibility for further operations ashore. Amphibious doctrine, then, had worked effectively for controlling command relationships at the beachhead, but during the planning phase it had not performed as well. Part of the difficulty stemmed from the subordinate position in which peninsular warfare placed the Navy, relative to the Army, in decision making. Moreover, command and control of air operations remained a source of friction between the Navy and the Air Force; once again it was resolved only through negotiations, and only for the operation at hand.

The Chinese Enter, the UN Retreats

Joint Task Force 7 was dissolved on 1 November, and Struble returned to Tokyo. Success of the land campaign against the NKPA suggested ever more strongly that the war might soon be over, and COMNAVFE began considering what a postwar naval force might look like. Unfortunately, the optimism infecting CINCFE led to an overextension and dispersion of the Eighth Army and X Corps (to which the U.S. 3d Division and ROK I Corps had been added) in the far north of Korea, a situation the Chinese Communists found entirely to their liking; as early as the last week of October, thirty miles above Hamhung, Republic of Korea forces were encountering and capturing Chinese troops. On 31 October, Marine night-fighter aircraft observed extensive vehicular traffic across the Yalu River, and the next day there was a tentative report of Soviet MiG-15 fighters in Korea. These developments were the preliminary indications that the war was entering an entirely new phase. On 2 November, CINCFE estimated Chinese forces in Korea at 16,500—a figure increased two

weeks later to twelve divisions, with a hundred thousand men. By the 23d, the estimate had again been revised upward, to between 142,000 and 167,000. By the end of November, thirty Chinese division had been identified in Korea, totaling possibly 250,000 troops, and Soviet MiGs were regularly operating across the Yalu from Manchuria.

TAILBOARD had strained command relations and placed extraordinary demands on Navy and Marine commanders and their staffs trying to accommodate changing battle situations as well as shifting preferences at CINCFE, but the redeployment of the Eighth Army and X Corps from late November 1950 into early January 1951 would prove far more demanding: it covered a much wider area of action, and it required revision and adaptation almost daily by commands and staffs. Although contemporary and historical accounts of the evacuations focus almost exclusively on operations at Hungnam, the matter was decidedly more complex; it involved two coasts, five widely separated ports, and both an army and an independent corps. That the evacuations were done so successfully was a consequence not only of the expertise of the key commanders and their staffs but also of command relations that allowed discretion.

Early Preparations. At COMNAVFE, planning began early in November for evacuating UN forces from the north. Joy on 13 November issued Operation Plan 116-50, which directed that any evacuation was to be conducted on the principle of “an assault in reverse.” It was to be an orderly activity, carefully controlled, *not* a Dunkirk or a Gallipoli. About this time, Rear Admiral Doyle told Joy that “he could not and would not come under Struble again.”⁸⁴ Joy acceded to Doyle’s demand, because of the importance of his amphibious expertise to the operation, relative to that of Struble’s. In the new command structure, Doyle’s instructions were “very far-reaching”—he would control all naval and air operations in the embarkation areas, including air and naval gunfire; gunfire support for UN ground forces; protection of shipping; and maintenance of the UN blockade of the Korean Peninsula.

By contrast, Struble as Commander, Seventh Fleet, was to be in a supporting role, resembling that in the Pohang-Dong landing. This was possible largely because of U.S. control of both the sea and air around the evacuation ports; the tasks of the Seventh Fleet could

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accordingly be restricted to providing air and gunfire support for the troops on the ground, when requested by Doyle as CTF 90. In fact, Joy believed that “the Hungnam evacuation could be handled satisfactorily without the support of Seventh Fleet since heavy opposition was not a probability.” Struble remained responsible, however, for coordinating naval air operations with those of the Air Force.

Joy recognized that “the command set up was admittedly not ideal but the proof of the pudding is in the eating for it worked smoothly at all times.”⁸⁵ Publicly, Joy stated that the “rather odd” command arrangement was “based on the overall threat confronting Naval Forces Far East”—there was genuine concern that the Soviets might enter the conflict, and the Seventh Fleet needed to be able to operate independently of the beachheads in such an eventuality—but that was not the only reason.⁸⁶ Joy would later privately remark that “one of the reasons for the command . . . set up at Hungnam was a matter of personalities. Doyle complained to me that at Inchon Struble was continually in his hair and interfering with his exercise of command. As Doyle was more valuable to the success of Hungnam than Struble I thought it best to keep them separated as much as possible.”⁸⁷ Struble was discomfited by the new arrangements, but there was little he could do about them directly, under the circumstances.

On 27 November, CINCFE ordered the Eighth Army forces that had crossed the Chongchon River in the western lowlands to withdraw back over it. By the next day the Eighth Army was in full retreat, and MacArthur notified the JCS that UN forces had gone over to the defensive. The Air Force made a tremendous effort to support these forces, and CTF 77 sent aircraft across the peninsula to assist.

On 28 November, at Burke’s urging, Joy alerted Doyle (then in *Mount McKinley*, anchored at Hungnam) to the possibility of a general emergency requiring evacuation of UN forces from Korea to Japan. Doyle immediately ordered his staff to commence detailed planning for withdrawal of troops from Korea, either as an administrative evolution or a general-emergency withdrawal, based on COMNAVFE Operation Plan 116-50. Doyle’s CTF 90 Operation Order 19-50 was issued the following day for planning purposes, to be effective when directed.⁸⁸ It called for half of TF 90 to conduct redeployment operations on the east coast under Doyle, and the other half on the west coast, under Thackrey. Overall responsibility would remain with Doyle, and Amphibious Group 3 would report to Doyle as the

Western Redeployment Force, Task Group 90.1. On 30 November, Doyle put all TF 90 ships (mostly in Japan, at Sasebo) on two-hour notice and began deploying them.

On 1 December, the Joint Chiefs of Staff instructed MacArthur to withdraw X Corps and "coordinate" its withdrawal with that of the Eighth Army, which would effectively end X Corps's independent status.⁸⁹ That day, Almond ordered a general retirement of X Corps to Hamhung.

The next day, the Air Force gave Major General Field Harris, commanding the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, "autonomy in the conduct of air operations in support of X Corps, and instructed him to proceed without reference to Fifth Air Force except when reinforcements were needed."⁹⁰ The plight of X Corps prompted Harris to recommend strongly to CTF 77 (Ewen) a concentrated effort in its zone; however, Far East Air Force requested that air support remain split between X Corps and the Eighth Army. Joy responded by directing CTF 77 to give priority to close air support over other operations. On 30 November, however, CTF 77 had pointed out to Struble that while sorties in support of X Corps had been successful, about two-thirds of those for the Eighth Army had been wasted. Accordingly, Struble told FEAF on his own authority that "in view of unsatisfactory [ground-to-air] control in the west he would adjust his distribution of effort, and asked to be advised when the situation improved."⁹¹ Consequently, 2 December was the last day that TF 77 split its efforts between east and west; thereafter it turned exclusively to X Corps. On that day, in fact, Struble turned down an Air Force request for strikes against the Yalu River, on the grounds that X Corps needed them more. On 3 December Joy made clear that close air support remained the principal concern of TF 77.

Almond had ordered the 1st Marine Division to concentrate at Hagaru, the 3d Division to reassemble at Wonsan, and the 7th Division to retire to Hamhung. The ROK I Corps was directed to fall back on Songjin, prepared for further movement by land or sea.⁹² Initially it was thought that X Corps would defend the entire east coast from Wonsan to Hungnam, but because most X Corps forces were north of Hungnam, it was decided to concentrate the corps there.⁹³ Thus, the 3d Division would have to move from Wonsan to Hungnam. On 2 December, Doyle advised Joy that TF 90 was prepared to lift the 3d Division from Wonsan to Hungnam or Pusan.

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Doyle's staff spent the first nine days of December planning and making preparations for a possible redeployment of X Corps through Hungnam. On 2 December he issued annexes to Operation Order 19-50 filling in details for the various component operations (with similar annexes for Operation Order 20-50, which covered the east coast specifically and was issued on 13 December). The staff planned both for defense of a perimeter around Hungnam and for evacuation through either Hungnam or Wonsan, consulting with Struble's staff along the way.

High-Level Conferences. On 7 December, a conference was held in Tokyo, attended by General MacArthur, General Lawton Collins (for the Joint Chiefs), General Stratemeyer, Vice Admiral Joy, Vice Admiral Struble, and Lieutenant General Lemuel Shepherd (who had just arrived on his fifth visit to the Far East). The group discussed a new plan for the Eighth Army to defend Seoul and a line on the Han River for as long as possible, then to retire to Pusan (once again), while X Corps was ferried south to Pusan. Walker, however, did not wish to try to hold the Han, because of the terrain, and MacArthur supported him. When X Corps arrived at Pusan, it would be dissolved, the 3d and 7th Divisions placed in the I and IX Corps, respectively, while the 1st Marine Division would go into reserve. Shepherd was surprised that "no adverse comment was made to Walker's proposed withdrawal plans without a fight"; he told his colleagues that "if the Eighth Army would take up a strong defensive position, it could inflict tremendous losses on the Chinese Communists just as X Corps was doing; that with our artillery, tanks, and especially aircraft, we could slow the Chinese Communist advance down together with his lengthening supply lines [to] a point where it would be too costly for the enemy to advance further." The others objected that the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Chinese dictated the withdrawal.⁹⁴

Officially, Admiral Sherman, the Chief of Naval Operations, had "suggested" that the Pacific Fleet commander "consider sending Shepherd to help Joy [in] connection [with] Marine matters."⁹⁵ However, Admiral Radford had given Shepherd oral instructions "to take command of the naval phase of the operation should he consider it desirable." On Shepherd's arrival in Tokyo, at a 6 December conference, Vice Admiral Joy "gave reasons for asking me out.

Thought one of the senior commanders would be relieved and if I were present, I might get the job.”⁹⁶

Doyle only learned a quarter-century after the event that Radford

had directed that if the evacuation was not moving properly under me, command would shift to General Shepherd. This arrangement apparently had the agreement of both Joy and Shepherd. In view of the facts that Turner Joy had directed that I command the entire operation and that Lem Shepherd had observed my conduct of the Inchon landing, if I had known of Radford’s instructions at the time, I would have been insulted, because to me those orders cast doubt on my competence to command the withdrawal. Fortunately, I knew nothing of the scheme. Certainly, neither Turner Joy, who was my friend, nor Lem Shepherd, one of the Lord’s own, would ever have taken advantage of the deal proposed.⁹⁷

It may be speculated that “back-channel” communication from Struble to his friend Sherman back in Washington had cast doubt on Doyle’s capacity, and that because directly “suggesting” a change in the command relations would have constituted interference with Joy’s prerogatives, Sherman had taken this indirect approach—to be activated only should the operation go poorly. This would also account for the dubious explanation Joy gave to Shepherd for the latter’s presence. We shall never know for certain, for Sherman died in the spring of 1951, leaving only cursory personal papers bearing on the matter.

Nonetheless, Shepherd’s presence in Korea through 16 December was a tonic for the Marines and indicated to CINCFE the importance the Navy attached to the situation. He was able to expedite solutions to various problems the Marines were facing, and he interceded with the Far East Command headquarters on several matters. His presence may also have made some senior Army officers uncomfortable: in his report to Admiral Radford, General Shepherd expressed his opinion that “GHQ Far East is at present in a jittery state with a defeated attitude” and that “MacArthur will soon be washed up.”⁹⁸

On 8 December, Admirals Doyle, Struble, and Joy, General Shepherd, and Rear Admiral John M. Higgins (commanding Cruiser-Destroyer Group 5) met on *Mount McKinley* to discuss the redeployment of X Corps from Hungnam, which they now believed would be

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required.⁹⁹ That evening a dispatch was received from MacArthur “ordering X Corps to complete withdrawal from North Korea and evacuate Hungnam.”¹⁰⁰ The next day, Doyle conferred with Almond; the overall plan for movement of X Corps was firmed up, and the decision to redeploy X Corps to Pusan was announced.¹⁰¹ That same day, the 9th, Almond closed his command post at Hamhung and opened it at Hungnam. Joy directed Shepherd to remain in Hungnam as his representative on Marine matters “and for counsel and advice in connection with the amphibious evacuation being planned.”¹⁰²

The 9 December order to Doyle formally established what Joy had already decided. CTF 90 was assigned the following missions:

1. Provide water lift for and conduct redeployment operations of U.N. forces in Korea as directed.
2. Control all air and naval gunfire support in designated embarkation areas.
3. Protect shipping en route to debarkation ports.
4. Be responsible for naval blockade and gunfire support of friendly units East Coast of Korea including Pusan.
5. Be prepared to conduct small-scale redeployment operations including redeployment ROK forces and U.N. POWs.
6. Coordinate withdrawal operations with CG Tenth Corps and other commands as appropriate.
7. Support and cover redeployment operations in the Hungnam or other designated embarkation areas in order to provide for the rapid and safe redeployment of own and friendly troops in Korea.¹⁰³

One searches in vain for any reference to the Seventh Fleet and its responsibilities.

At Hungnam, Doyle established a division of labor with X Corps. Almond assigned Colonel Forney, who had become X Corps deputy chief of staff, additional “responsibility for operating the port, withdrawing units to the staging areas, embarking the troops, loading with supplies and evacuating the refugees.” Doyle established a loading control plan in close coordination with Forney, who stationed himself in the dock area while Doyle and his staff remained aboard *Mount McKinley* in the harbor at Hungnam. Under Forney, a major from Shepherd’s party ran the plans and operations section of the loadout-control organization. A radio net was established linking all relevant units. Forney also had a loading section and a Navy

liaison unit, each supervised by an Army officer. The operating arm of the control team was the Army's 2d Engineer Special Brigade (trained specifically to run ports), which operated the dock facilities, furnished working parties, assigned and handled the lighters, and the like. Doyle's staff directed the movement of ships in and out of Hungnam—how many, which ships, in what sequence, etc. As Doyle commented later, "The process was centralized, uncomplicated, and continually adjusted."¹⁰⁴

X Corps established the sequence for withdrawing combat units, and Almond cooperated "fully and ensured that his subordinates followed his example." However, the sequence of withdrawal had had to be adjusted, for Almond initially proposed that elements of the 1st Marine Division be kept back to hold the perimeter.

Doyle had his own naval gunfire asset, in Task Group 90.8, under Rear Admiral Roscoe Hillenkoetter—the heavy cruisers *Rochester* and *St. Paul* (CA 73), four destroyers, and three rocket-firing landing ships (LSMRs). The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, supplemented by Seventh Fleet carriers on request, provided his air support. Although the Far East Air Force did yeoman work with its C-47 and C-54 transports during the withdrawal from Chosin, its combat activities did not extend into the area controlled by Doyle.

Wonsan and Songjin. Because no enemy pressure was being exerted on Wonsan, it was decided to move the 3d Division overland by rail and truck to Hungnam; this was largely accomplished by 4 December. Consequently, only four thousand personnel and twelve thousand tons of gear had to be lifted by sea. Doyle sent the ships of Transport Division 11 to do the job. All friendly forces, except one South Korean marine battalion, were clear by 7 December. This permitted Doyle to reallocate shipping to Songjin to load elements of the ROK I Corps. Those transports departed Wonsan 6 December, arriving at Songjin on 7 December. The beach at Wonsan was completely clear by late evening on 9 December, and the last ship sailed from the harbor the next morning.

The total lift from Wonsan comprised 3,834 troops, 7,009 refugees, 1,146 vehicles, and 10,013 tons of bulk cargo. Withdrawal of the ROK I Corps from Songjin was completed at 1600 on 9 December, and on 10 December that command began unloading at

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Hungnam. Shortly thereafter, as Almond had requested, most of the South Korean troops were lifted to Samchok.

Doyle considered the Wonsan operation as essentially a test of his preliminary plans for the larger redeployment from Hungnam:

The troops ashore described around the city an arc whose radius they progressively reduced as supplies and personnel within the beachhead loaded and left. The fire support ships isolated Wonsan by shellfire, fired any observed missions requested, and at night provided random harassing and interdiction fires on pre-selected targets and fired star shells for battlefield illumination.¹⁰⁵

The plans worked. The commanding officer of the 1st Marine Division Shore Party, responsible for clearing the beach, described the operations as “uneventful.”¹⁰⁶ Once the 3d Division arrived at Hungnam, it established the defensive perimeter through which the 1st Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division would pass.

Hungnam. The initial elements of the 1st Marine Division came down from the Chosin reservoir area into the perimeter on 11 December, just as “final plans for naval gunfire and naval air support were completed in coordination with ComCruDiv 1, CG Tenth Corps and operations officer TF 77.”¹⁰⁷ Doyle assumed control of air defense in the Hungnam area, advising Struble of specific air support requirements. Doyle elected not to use antiaircraft artillery, because of the air cargo operations and congested harbor.

By the end of 14 December, 99 percent of 1st Marine Division personnel, 95 percent of its vehicles, and 97 percent of its bulk cargo had been loaded. At 1500, Doyle relieved Major General Harris of air control within the embarkation area. By 2000 on 16 December, two-thirds of the ROK I Corps had been loaded for Samchok; on the following day its twenty-five thousand personnel and seven hundred vehicles and other equipment departed.

At 1435 on 19 December, the commanding general of the 3d Division assumed responsibility for the defense of Hungnam, and Almond and his staff moved aboard *Mount McKinley*. Doyle, who found Almond arrogant, told him pointedly, “You understand, General, that these troops are now under my command.”¹⁰⁸ The next day, the 7th Division completed loading, and at 2108 its commander

departed. Phased withdrawal of the troops continued apace with the loading at the docks, and D day was set tentatively for 24 December. On 22 December, plans and instructions for final embarkation on D day were completed and distributed. The following day, D day was confirmed as the 24th, and by midnight all preparations for pulling the last troops off the beach were complete. On D day, all beaches were clear of troops by 1436, and at 1457 sortie from the harbor commenced.

During the loading and final embarkation period, 105,000 U.S. and South Korean military personnel, along with 91,000 civilians, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 tons of bulk cargo were loaded out of Hungnam on a total of six assault-transport, six assault-cargo-ship, thirteen civilian-manned Navy-transport, seventy-six time-charter-ship, eighty-one LST, and eleven dock-landing-ship loads. All proceeded to Pusan. On 25 December, *Mount McKinley* arrived at Ulsan and at noon Joy relieved Doyle of further responsibility for re-deployment operations on the east coast of Korea. Disembarking Almond and his staff, Doyle proceeded to Yokosuka, Japan, on 26 December.

The operation at Hungnam had been a remarkable success. The only deaths during the entire period had been those of two Army personnel aboard ships due to methyl alcohol poisoning and of several men killed by the premature explosion of an ammunition dump on the D-day embarkation beach.

As fate would have it, although X Corps now came under the Eighth Army, with Almond still in command, Almond never had to serve under Walker—who was killed in a highway accident involving a South Korean weapons carrier on the morning of 23 December. As had previously been arranged between MacArthur and Collins, General Matthew Ridgway immediately assumed command of the Eighth Army.¹⁰⁹

The West Coast. What of the west coast and the Eighth Army? “Because of the limited port facilities on the west coast, Doyle considered that the Army would have to be under extreme hardship before it would call for a sealift from the small harbors that were available on North Korea’s west coast” and therefore sent “mostly small, shallow draft ships to the west coast.”¹¹⁰ However, the Eighth Army’s expeditious withdrawal southward threatened to leave the port of Chinnampo exposed, necessitating its evacuation. Consequently, on

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3 December Joy passed on to Task Group 90.1, the Western Redeployment Force, an urgent Eighth Army request for shipping at Chinnampo. The Amphibious Group 3 staff reacted with confusion; Transport Squadron 1, which had been ordered to Inchon, wisely changed course and went to Chinnampo on its own. Additional naval forces joined to seaward of that port and sailed up the long river approach at night—no mean feat in a twisting, eighty-four-mile swept channel. Orders to the transport squadron finally came at 0425, and by 0930 all of the transports had made the port. By 1230, the transports had begun sailing independently, and destruction of the port by gunfire began. Embarkation operations were complete by 1800 on 5 December; 5,900 South Koreans were on their way to Pusan in amphibious shipping, and nineteen hundred Army port personnel were steaming to Inchon in civilian-manned Navy and Japanese-manned shipping.¹¹¹

There was also the matter of Inchon. On 7 December, Thackrey had received orders from Joy to prepare to redeploy all unneeded Army stores; some outloading had already begun. Joy arranged for Army units to request shipping directly through Thackrey; CINCFE formally advised the Eighth Army of this channel the next day. Though the Army had indicated it would make its way overland, Thackrey worked up contingency plans for a sea lift, including emergency removal of troops to the islands immediately off Inchon should the Chinese press too hard.

As for the Eighth Army itself, the initial estimated need was to lift between three and five thousand personnel from Inchon. This number was exceeded by 18 December, and by the end of the month 32,428 troops, 1,103 vehicles, and 54,741 tons of cargo had been moved out of the harbor by sea. In the last five days of the operation, starting on New Year's Day 1951, Amphibious Group 3 lifted another 37,485 military personnel, 301 vehicles, and 6,403 tons of cargo. To these figures must be added 64,200 civilians taken south. The port was closed and its facilities blown up on 5 January. In comparison to the coverage the public press accorded operations at Hungnam, those of Thackrey's group at Inchon were virtually ignored—only one accredited press correspondent went to Inchon.¹¹² However, the withdrawal from Inchon proved a considerable accomplishment in its own right, and, when combined with the efforts at

Chinnampo, Wonsan, Songjin, and Hungnam, the overall achievement can only be considered extraordinary.

What was to be done with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing following its redeployment was a matter of discussion. When X Corps had existed as an independent formation, the wing had had the sole responsibility for supporting it. Certainly, Almond had considered it an organic element of his command, and notwithstanding other problems with the Marines, he had backed it in disputes with the Air Force. Now, however, land-based air operations would come completely under the Fifth Air Force. On 10 December, General Shepherd urged Harris to "exert every effort to maintain the Wing itself in the operational picture and it was determined to take up the matter with Major General Partridge, Commanding General, 5th Air Force, on the same afternoon."¹¹³

Doyle would later remark that though official historians made Task Force 90's efforts seem "orderly and efficient," in actuality "inconsistency and variation were the norm, and ingenuity and experience got things done." In consequence, "changes, immediate decisions, and on-the-spot coordination were the order of the day."¹¹⁴

Doyle's action report as CTF 90 for Hungnam made little mention of command relations, other than to indicate the scope of CTF 90's responsibilities. However, in his action report for Seventh Fleet, Struble could not help but criticize the command structure for Hungnam:

During the Hungnam operation, Commander Seventh Fleet was in a supporting role to Commander Task Force 90 who retained responsibility for redeployment operations. Based on my experience in the Inchon, Wonsan, and Hungnam operations, I consider that the formation of a joint task force under the fleet commander is a better solution to the command problem involved. Such a solution provides a unified command afloat for the thorough coordination of the various task forces engaged in related operations.¹¹⁵

Less than two days after the last ships cleared Hungnam, Admiral Sherman was already considering command relations for future amphibious operations in the Far East. In a message to Radford, the CNO opined that it

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is a matter of long term importance to the Navy to have amphibious force commanders function actively and to give them appropriate rank relative to Army and Marine commanders in the same amphibious operations. In this connection [IX Corps commander, Major General] Milburn[,] Almond[,] and [Major General John B.] Coulter are about to get three stars. Accordingly I plan designation of COMPHIBSPAC and COMPHIBSLANT [the amphibious "type commanders" for the Pacific and Atlantic Fleets, respectively] as vice admirals in near future. Believe it essential that [COMPHIBSPAC, Vice Admiral Ingolf N.] Kiland go forward [to the combat area] and exercise active operational command if he is to be effective as COMPHIBSPAC and [I] definitely feel that in the amphibious business promotion should go to [an] officer who has exercised command in whatever operations are being conducted. Accordingly [I] request you consider again sending Kiland to Far East as soon as practicable to function there as COMPHIBSPAC even though he may be withdrawn whenever situation stabilizes. Desire telecon [a telex conference on] this subject today 2100 with only you[, Lynde] McCormick and me present.¹¹⁶

However, in more general terms, Admiral Radford, in command of the Pacific Fleet, evaluated the command relationships established by then-current amphibious doctrine as sound. He recommended "no change to current doctrine for amphibious command. . . . Present command structure was evolved as a result of battle experience, is eminently satisfactory, and should remain in effect until change is dictated by some future major development in the field of amphibious warfare." He especially cautioned that "the success of amphibious landings in Korea, planned and executed in an unorthodox manner in many respects, must not set unconsidered precedents for the future."¹¹⁷

A Surfeit of Difficulties and Complications

Excepting perhaps the Wonsan operation, all of the major Korean War amphibious operations of 1950 may be judged both tactically and strategically successful. As this article has attempted to show, these successes derived in major part from a well-developed and understood body of amphibious doctrine, which paid attention to command relations. Indeed, the fundamental structure prescribed by that doctrine worked effectively to reduce conflict, promote

agreement among the services, and allocate responsibility. For example, there were no problems about when command would pass from the attack force to the landing force commander; also, the role of the Air Force was resolved readily, if not to that service's satisfaction. Even though no doctrine had been evolved for evacuation of major formations from the beach, the analogy of a "reverse" amphibious landing provided what proved a sound basis for working out relationships.

None of this, however, translated to a complete recipe for appointing commanders and establishing the relationships between them. These procedures still had to be worked out, and they remained an issue throughout the processes of planning and executing the amphibious operations—formal orders only *began* the process of establishing their exact character. The command relations established for one operation were not viewed as permanent by the senior officers involved, who maneuvered in the run-ups to succeeding operations to alter those they had found troublesome. Moreover, it might fairly be said that the operations succeeded at the tactical level despite the presence of certain commanders, and only because their subordinate commanders were extremely competent and extraordinarily professional.

Noteworthy problems in command relations occurred both across services and within them. Although these conflicts played themselves out most obviously as clashes of strong personalities, the underlying problems had to do far more with differences in expertise with respect to the practical military problems at hand, as well as with the interservice rivalries and intraservice difficulties that preceded and surrounded the war in Korea. The trust—"total confidence in the integrity, ability, and good character of another"—prescribed by modern joint doctrine for relations among commanders in joint operations simply did not obtain in certain key relations.¹¹⁸ In the end, given the limited number of senior officers available for any such operation, these factors will always loom large.

Baldly put, Admiral Doyle did not respect Admiral Struble for his amphibious expertise, nor did he trust him personally, and apparently this view was reciprocated. Struble also evidenced an unwillingness to delegate responsibility to his subordinate commanders, notwithstanding his assertions to the contrary. General Smith, in contrast, worked extremely well with Doyle during the amphibious operations, according him the utmost respect for his amphibious

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expertise and naval professionalism; Doyle had a like opinion of Smith (who concurred with Doyle's evaluation of Struble). This close relationship contributed materially to success at Inchon and Hungnam. Struble's conflicts with Doyle were also related to the former's problems with his superior, Admiral Joy, who was Doyle's friend. In the end, for Hungnam, Joy opted for command relationships that allowed Doyle to operate independently of Struble, largely on the belief that Doyle's expertise was more important to success in that instance than Struble's. Struble, for his part, felt it necessary and appropriate to seek support in these conflicts directly from the Chief of Naval Operations, who weighed in on his side, issuing the rather odd order to General Shepherd to relieve Doyle at his own discretion. All of this was complicated by Admiral Radford's poor opinion of Struble and Admiral Sherman's apparent unwillingness to make more than "suggestions" to Radford.

Similarly, neither Doyle nor Smith found General Almond competent in the tasks—especially tactical—with which he had been entrusted by MacArthur, and each determined to depend on his own considerable professional expertise. For his part, Almond found it very difficult to work with Doyle and, especially, Smith. One of the serious consequences of this poor relationship was that Smith felt obliged to resist what he perceived to be inapt if not dangerous orders from Almond. Quite apart from personality issues, which were ample, Doyle's and Smith's problems with Almond fundamentally stemmed from the latter's lack of combat command experience, his staff mentality, and his overweening personal loyalty to MacArthur. General Barr of the Army had difficulties with Almond comparable to those of his Marine counterpart and reacted in a similar manner.

Douglas MacArthur's lack of confidence in General Walker had in the first place led to the anomaly of an independent X Corps, which in turn made possible the appointment of a commander like Almond, who shared his superior's disdain for Walker, setting the stage for conflicts with Doyle and Smith. Given the amphibious character of the operations in prospect, it might have been far more sensible for MacArthur to appoint Shepherd—expert, available, willing, and personally known to him—to command whatever force would be principally responsible for them. Had that occurred, many of the difficulties that ensued during and after Inchon would probably have

been more easily solved if not entirely obviated. Certainly, command relations within X Corps would have been much more harmonious.

On one hand, MacArthur's considerable experience with amphibious operations in the Southwest Pacific theater in World War II gave him substantial insight into the practical problems of that kind of warfare. On the other, because until late in that war his resource needs were lower in priority than were those of the Central Pacific campaign, MacArthur had made do with jury rigs and hand-me-downs; his mostly coastal landings were characterized by short time-frames for planning, frequent changes, and landing forces (principally Army troops) often minimally trained in amphibious techniques. Success under these conditions in World War II—he was blessed with a skilled, energetic, and resourceful amphibious commander in Vice Admiral Daniel Barbey—may well have desensitized MacArthur in the Korean War to the myriad difficulties associated with translating his broad strategic vision into a series of operational movements, and concomitantly to the importance of the specific individuals placed in command positions.

Further, of the three amphibious cultures that developed in the Navy during World War II—Central Pacific, Southwest Pacific, and European—it was the first that dominated the postwar development of amphibious doctrine. This body of experience emphasized naval control and was predicated on assaults against islands. For MacArthur, amphibious landings had manifested themselves as subsidiary, if vital, components of Army ground campaigns; in the Navy's memory, amphibious operations had been at the very core of the larger naval campaign in the Pacific. These key differences seem likely to have led to conflicts in planning operations, irrespective of the individuals in key command positions.

Certainly, there was a surfeit of difficulties and complications in command relations at the highest levels during the Korean War amphibious operations. The question naturally arises as to whether these complexities were statistically unusual if not improbable, or whether such problems arise in all such joint operations. The answer lies outside the scope of this article. But, even if the former, the basic fact remains that command relations in such operations are not governed entirely by doctrine; they are likely never to be solely a function of the imperatives of the military situation; and they will inevitably reflect interservice rivalries, intraservice conflicts, and

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strong personalities. Like many problems of organization, these are probably enduring and structural, matters that defy permanent solution. Doctrine goes a long way toward resolving them, but in the end—in actual practice—it provides only a foundation for the informal processes of accommodation and adjustment that structure command relations.

Notes

1. U.S. Joint Staff, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication 1 (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 10 January 1995), p. vi. (Emphasis original.)

2. *Ibid.*, p. vii.

3. On the unification battle, see Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: The Fight for Naval Aviation* (Washington, D.C.: Naval Historical Center, Department of the Navy, 1994); and Gordon W. Keiser, *The U.S. Marine Corps and Defense Unification, 1944–47* (Baltimore: Nautical and Aviation, 1966).

4. Letter, General Douglas MacArthur to Cdr. Malcolm W. Cagle, 19 March 1956, Cagle Papers, box 3, Operational Archives, Naval Historical Center [hereafter OA, NHC]. In addition to being U.S. Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE), following the United Nations resolution formally creating a command for Korea MacArthur was United Nations Commander in Chief (UNCINC). His headquarters was usually referred to in dispatches as Far East Command (FECOM) or GHQ. For the sake of simplicity this article uses only CINCFE.

5. MacArthur-Cagle letter, 19 March 1956.

6. Letter, Hobart R. Gay to Roy Appleman, in Roy C. Appleman, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu (June–November 1950)* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1961), as quoted by Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950–1953* (New York: Times Books, 1987), p. 88.

7. James F. Schnabel, *U.S. Army in the Korean War: Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1972), chap. 3, pp. 10–12.

8. See Blair, pp. 46–8, for a description of the training process.

9. James A. Field, *History of United States Naval Operations—Korea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1962), p. 46.

10. Commander, Seventh Fleet reported normally to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet. However, the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Sherman, had agreed in February 1950 that “when the Seventh Fleet was in Japanese waters, or in the event of an emergency, and the Seventh Fleet was made available, he would report to CINCFE for operational control. This simply meant that under the two circumstances envisaged, the commander of the Seventh Fleet in an emergency would be under the operational control of CINCFE, and in peacetime when in Japanese waters, would be under COMNAVFE for any joint training exercises that were mutually agreed upon.” Letter, Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble to Cdr. Frank Manson, 9 January 1956, Cagle Papers, box 3, OA, NHC.

11. Commander, Naval Forces, Far East [hereafter COMNAVFE], War Diary, 24 June 1950 to 31 July 1950, OA, NHC. Actually, Radford was both Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (or CINCPAC, a unified command equivalent to CINCFE) and CINCPACFLT.

12. Commander, Amphibious Group 1 and Northern Attack Force Task Force [hereafter TF] 13, Operation Order 4-50, "Demon III (Satan at San Clemente; Mephisto at Aliso)," Command and General Staff College Demonstration, 11-12 May 1950, OA, NHC.

13. Commander Amphibious Group [hereafter COMPHIBGRU] 1, War Diary, date-time group 240001Z [0001 Greenwich Mean Time, 24 June] June 1950 to 152400Z July 1950, OA, NHC.

14. Appleman, p. 88.

15. COMPHIBGRU 1 War Diary, 24 June to 15 July 1950, OA, NHC. As Doyle later put the matter: "I was informed in July that MacA wanted a landing at Inchon. But before I was half way through the plans for it, it was called off because the Eighth Army had been pushed far down the peninsula and Walker asked for the 1st Cavalry to support him." Letter, Vice Admiral James H. Doyle to Robert D. Heinl, 8 October 1966. Heinl Papers, box 1, Marine Corps University Archives [hereafter MCUA], Quantico, Virginia. Although the Inchon landing was called off, the basic plans for putting troops ashore were used for Pohang-Dong, and the 1st Cavalry Division continued to use the "Bluehearts" appellation. See 1st Cavalry Division War Diary, July 1950, Enclosures, Operations Plan 7-50, Military Branch, National Archives.

16. One might reasonably suppose that Struble simply believed it vital to keep the CNO in the loop on important operational matters. However, it appears that he wished to have his old friend (whom he had also served as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations) on his side of any conflicts with Joy, and, as later message traffic indicates clearly, Sherman was willing to oblige.

17. Message, date-time group 100409Z-NCC 6560, 10 July 1950, Commander, Seventh Fleet [hereafter COM7THFLT] to COMNAVFE, OA, NHC.

18. Message, 100755Z-NCC 6573, 10 July 1950, COMNAVFE to COM7THFLT, OA, NHC.

19. Message, 100824Z-NCC 6567, 10 July 1950, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet [hereafter CINCPACFLT] to Chief of Naval Operations [hereafter CNO], OA, NHC.

20. COMNAVFE Operation Order 9-50, 12 July 1950, OA, NHC.

21. Message, 110400Z-NCC 6820, 11 July 1950, COM7THFLT to COMNAVFE, OA, NHC.

22. Message, 111239Z-NCC 15378, 11 July 1950, CNO to CINCPACFLT, OA, NHC.

23. Message, 120033Z-NCC 7038, 12 July 1950, COMNAVFE to COM7THFLT, OA, NHC.

24. COM7THFLT, War Diary, 16 July 1950 to 1 August 1950, OA, NHC. The entry for 18 July notes: "At 0148K [designating the local time zone], TF 77 changed course to avoid units of TF 90 operating in area and resumed course at 0226K."

25. Robert D. Heinl, Jr., *Victory at High Tide: The Inchon-Seoul Campaign* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1968), p. 33.

26. General Oliver P. Smith, aide-memoire, Korea 1950-51, "Expansion and Outloading of the Division," Oliver P. Smith Papers, MCUA, Quantico, Virginia, pp. 3-10.

Following the North Korean invasion, Secretary of the Navy Francis Matthews canceled all his regularly scheduled conferences; neither he nor the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Sherman (no admirer of the Marines), would see General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, for several days. Cates believed this was "an intentional measure to exclude the Marine Corps from early participation in the war." On 29 June, Cates cornered Sherman in a Pentagon hallway and asked why MacArthur was not asking for the Marines. Sherman replied, "What do you have?" Cates could provide a provisional brigade (a regimental combat team plus an air group). Sherman promised, probably reluctantly, to inform MacArthur and Vice Admiral Joy. Interview with Clifton B. Cates, 10

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March 1996, box 16, Heint Papers, MCUA, Quantico, Virginia. On 2 July MacArthur sent to the Joint Chiefs a formal request for the brigade; the JCS approved it the next day. On 10 July, Lieutenant General Shepherd, commanding Fleet Marine Force Pacific, convinced MacArthur to ask for the 1st Marine Division and an air wing. Shepherd and his aide, Victor H. Krulak, drafted a message, which MacArthur sent the next day. See Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1984), chap. 8; and Lemuel C. Shepherd [Gen., USMC, Ret.], Oral History, 27 July–4 August 1966, 13, 16, and 22 February 1967, Oral History Section, Marine Corps Historical Center. Shepherd wanted the Marines to go to Korea in at least division strength so they would not be merely a “bob-tail brigade attached to an Army division” and would have enough strength and combat support to act as an independent entity.

27. “One of Almond’s numerous high echelon functions for MacArthur was the interception and transmission of calls to and from the field generals. Although this service was a duty imposed by the supreme commander, Almond’s intercession generated open enmity with General Walker of the Eighth Army. Walker’s own loyal staff members believed that Almond was deliberately undermining and isolating their commander from MacArthur at every opportunity. . . . The relationship between Almond and Walker . . . eroded as their mutual animosity intensified.” Shelby L. Stanton, *Ten Corps in Korea* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1996), p. 31. As Vice Admiral James H. Doyle put it, “Almond and Walker didn’t get along for nothing.” Robert D. Heint, notes from interview with Vice Admiral James H. Doyle, 31 July–1 August 1950. Heint Papers, box 28, MCUA, Quantico, Virginia.

28. “Chromite” was the term used at CINCFE for the Inchon landing, but the Navy and Marine Corps did not use it. See Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble, “Comments on Field Manuscript” (circa 1960, referring to Field, *History of United States Naval Operations—Korea*), OA, NHC.

29. See Struble’s comments in his letter to Robert D. Heint, 3 September 1966. Heint Papers, box 1, MCUA, Quantico, Virginia.

30. Lieutenant General Edward Almond, Army Oral History Interview, 28 March 1973, p. 29. We have only Almond’s recollection of the decision to appoint him X Corps commander and how it came about. No one else was present, and MacArthur never talked about it for the record.

31. Shepherd believed that “Almond talked himself into getting X Corps” and that Sherman had not pushed MacArthur “very strongly” on the idea of X Corps as appropriately a Marine command. Heint notes to interview with Shepherd.

32. On this controversy, see Samuel Eliot Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, vol. 8, *New Guinea and the Marianas, March 1944–August 1944* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1953), pp. 330–2; Jeter A. Isley and Philip A. Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War: Its Theory, and Its Practice in the Pacific* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1951), pp. 342–51; and Robert Sherrod, *On to Westward: The Battles of Saipan and Iwo Jima* (Baltimore: Nautical and Aviation, 1990), pp. 88–93. For General Holland M. Smith’s perspective, see Holland M. Smith and Perry Finch, *Coral and Brass* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1949).

33. General Lemuel C. Shepherd, USMC, “Korean War Diary” covering 2 July to 7 December 1950. Shepherd Papers, box 2, Personal Papers Section, Marine Corps Historical Center, p. 34.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

35. General Oliver P. Smith, Personal Log, 2 August to 31 December 1950. Smith Papers, MCUA, Quantico, Virginia. Smith was older than Almond, and his date of commission was senior to Almond’s.

36. *Ibid.* As a practical matter, the 7th Division was a division in name only. As Blair notes, "Ever since the beginning of the Korean War the 7th Division had been something of a madhouse. First, GHQ had stripped it of about 1,300 key noncoms and officers to beef up the 24th and 25th Divisions. Next upon the departure from Japan of the 24th, 25th, and 1st Cav[alry] Divisions, GHQ had ordered it to redeploy into the areas vacated by those divisions, all over Japan. Then, upon its assignment to Inchon, the 7th had to build up its strength from about 8,700 to 18,000 men, with disparate cadres and fillers from Okinawa and the States, in about six weeks. Next, the division had to absorb 8,600 South Koreans. Finally, the division had to attempt some training" (p. 276).

37. Smith, Personal Log. See entries for 23 and 24 September 1950. Blair (p. 289) goes so far as to assert that had Smith been an Army officer rather than a Marine, Almond would have relieved him on the spot.

38. Smith, Personal Log. Smith Papers, MUA, Quantico, Virginia.

39. Almond, Army Oral History, p. 51.

40. Blair, p. 275.

41. Robert D. Heinl notes to interview with Major General David Barr, USA (Ret.), 12 October 1966. Heinl Papers, box 28, MUA, Quantico, Virginia.

42. Message, 281508Z, 28 July 1950, CNO to COMNAVFE, OA, NHC. This message set up the telex conversation for the next day.

43. Message, 291561Z-NCC 18238, 29 July 1950, CNO to CINCPACFLT, OA, NHC.

44. Message, 291659Z-NCC 18239, 29 July 1950, CNO to COMNAVFE, OA, NHC.

45. Message, 260446Z-NCC 2743, 26 August 1950, COMNAVFE to CINCPACFLT, OA, NHC.

46. Message, 271335Z-NCC 3294, 27 August 1950, CINCPACFLT to COMNAVFE, OA, NHC.

47. Message, 280103Z-NCC 3461, 28 August 1950, COMNAVFE to CINCPACFLT, OA, NHC.

48. Message, 310349Z-NCC 4669, 31 August 1950, COMNAVFE to CNO, OA, NHC.

49. Message, 311029Z-12380, 31 August 1950, Secretary of the Navy to COMNAVFE, OA, NHC.

50. Letter, Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble to Robert D. Heinl, 27 October 1966. Heinl Papers, box 1, MUA, Quantico, Virginia.

51. (Both quotations.) Letter, Struble to Heinl, 3 September 1966. Struble compared the joint task force at Inchon to the command arrangements in World War II between Admiral Thomas Kinkaid (commanding the Seventh Fleet) and General Walter Krueger (commanding the Sixth Army) in the Philippines.

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*

54. Letter, Vice Admiral James H. Doyle to Robert D. Heinl, 26 October 1966. Heinl Papers, box 1, MUA, Quantico, Virginia.

55. Doyle believed that Struble was annoyed by the publicity that he and Smith had received after the successful landing at Inchon and that he had directed his public information officer to put out a release to the effect that he (Struble) had been the "overall amphibious commander."

56. E. B. Potter, *Admiral Arleigh Burke* (New York: Random House, 1990), pp. 336-7.

57. Letter, Struble to Heinl, 3 September 1966. Struble "was wary of elaborate coordinating arrangements with the Air Force unless Air Force units were to render significant help to us. They were unable to do so."

58. Potter, p. 338.

59. Heinl notes to interview with Doyle, 31 July-1 August 1966.

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60. Burke had a similar experience with Almond. Concerned about the possibility that typhoons would batter JTF 7 as it rounded southern Kyushu into the Yellow Sea if it left as scheduled on 12 September, on 9 September he went to General MacArthur's office. He was stopped by the general's staff. When Burke insisted, he was referred to Almond, who said, "condescendingly, 'You can tell me what you want to bring to General MacArthur's attention.'" Burke refused and returned to his office. Shortly his phone rang, and he was asked to return. Burke explained his concern to MacArthur, who decided to advance the assault shipping's departure by one day. Potter, pp. 338–9.

61. General Oliver P. Smith, Personal Log, 2 August to 31 December 1950. Smith Papers, MCUA, Quantico, Virginia.

62. Robert D. Heintz notes to interview with Vice Admiral James H. Doyle, 31 July–1 August 1966. Heintz Papers, box 28, Marine Corps Archive, Quantico, Virginia.

63. Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, "Interim Evaluation Report No. 1," 25 June to 15 November 1950, Annex AA, Commander, Amphibious Group 1 (CTF 90), "Report of ComPhibGru Operations for 25 June 1950 to 1 January 1951," file A12/31-wt, serial 002 of 17 January 1951, p. AA8, OA, NHC. Early in July 1950, Admiral Radford had determined to "keep a record of our naval problems and how we solved them"; thus was born the Pacific Fleet Evaluation Group and its eighteen volumes of reports on naval activities in Korea, 1950–51. Arthur W. Radford, *From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam: The Memoirs of Admiral Arthur W. Radford*, ed. Stephen Jurika, Jr. (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, 1980), pp. 232–3.

64. "Interim Evaluation Report No. 1," Combat Operations Sections, Amphibious and Ground, Project no. I.C.2, Amphibious and Ground Attack Forces, p. 724.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 725.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 724.

67. Almond, Army Oral History, pp. 58–9.

68. Blair, p. 330.

69. This explanation comes from Blair, pp. 331–2. Doyle later recalled "the remark made by General MacArthur after Inchon—that he might remove Walker from his command because of slow movement north." James H. Doyle and Arthur J. Mayer, "December 1950 at Hungnam," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings*, April 1979, p. 46.

70. COMNAVFE, Operation Plan 112-50, 15 September 1950, OA, NHC. Oplan 112-50 is dated 15 September 1950 and filed under Operation Plan 113-50, dated 1 October 1950. Notwithstanding Almond's assertion (see his Army Oral History interview) that he learned of the Wonsan plan only on 1 October, he obviously knew from the very beginning of planning for it. Oplan 112-50 had the usual distribution list, which included all of the relevant subordinate commands in the Far East Command.

71. Blair, p. 333.

72. Letter, Admiral C. Turner Joy to Cdr. Malcolm Cagle, 30 April 1956. Cagle Papers, box 3, OA, NHC. MacArthur several years later averred that he "was never apprized of any Navy objections to the seaborne landing at Wonsan. Nor was I ever advised that an overland movement to Wonsan would be quicker and more effective than a seaborne landing. Terrain and supply difficulties would have overwhelmed any such argument." MacArthur-Cagle letter, 19 March 1956, Cagle Papers, box 3, OA, NHC.

73. Struble, "Comments on Field Manuscript," p. 36.

74. Malcolm W. Cagle and Frank A. Manson, *The Sea War in Korea* (New York: Arno Press, 1980; originally published by Naval Institute Press, 1957), p. 222.

75. COM7THFLT Operation Order 16-50, Annex C, "Coordination of Air Force and Naval Air Operations," 5 October 1950, OA, NHC.

76. Smith, Personal Log, p. 51. Smith noted that "the ROKs may get to Wonsan before we can mount out."

77. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
80. Stanton, p. 153.
81. Smith, Personal Log, pp. 64–5.
82. That the landing forces could be safely landed even at that late date had largely been made possible through behind-the-scenes work by Rear Admiral Burke, who on 2 October had acted on his concerns about mines at Wonsan. Burke used informal ties developed with Japanese officials to secure the services of nineteen minesweepers, which were employed at Wonsan. Potter, pp. 343–4.
83. CTG 90.8, Commander X Corps and 7th Infantry Division Group and Commander Amphibious Group 3, "Iwon, Korea: Report of Landing, October–November 1950," OA, NHC.
84. Heintz notes for interview with Doyle, 31 July–1 August 1966.
85. Letter, Joy to Cagle, 30 April 1956, Cagle Papers, box 3, OA, NHC.
86. See Message, 051952Z-NCC 9179, COMNAVFE to COM7THFLT 6 December 1950. Joy advises of an "unconfirmed report received stating Soviet Air Force preparing large scale air attack on Japan and Formosa in conjunction Chi Commie [communist Chinese] ground action in Korea. No evaluation assigned this report at present but attention [is] directed [to] potential danger." The next day Joy told Struble by message that "although it is not apparent what Soviets would gain by coming into this scrap now, [the] possibility [of it is] increasing. COMNAVFE preparing plans based on Soviet interference before, during and after embarkation." Message, 070756Z-NCC 9823, 7 December 1950, COMNAVFE to COM7THFLT, OA, NHC.
87. Field, p. 292; Cagle and Manson, p. 182; Letter, Admiral C. Turner Joy to Cdr. Malcolm Cagle, 20 April 1956, Cagle Papers, box 3, OA, NHC.
88. COMPHIBGRU 1 War Diary, OA, NHC.
89. Field, p. 287. Walker had insisted to Collins that X Corps be absorbed into the Eighth Army, and Collins had agreed. Blair, p. 530.
90. Field, p. 268.
91. *Ibid.*
92. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
93. COMPHIBGRU 1, Action Report, 9 to 25 December 1950, OA, NHC.
94. Shepherd, pp. 111–2.
95. Message, 032257Z-NCC 11967, 3 December 1950, CNO to CINPACFLT, OA, NHC.
96. Shepherd, p. 86. That the idea of Shepherd relieving a senior Army commander was indeed on Joy's mind is reflected in a message of 9 December 1950 in which he reported to Sherman that "Army 8 had only 2 casualties today. Too bad. A Marine general could now be overall commander in Korea." Message, 091310Z-NCC 839, 9 December 1950, COMNAVFE to CNO, OA, NHC.
97. Doyle and Mayer, p. 49.
98. Shepherd, pp. 116–7.
99. COMPHIBGRU 1, Action Report, 9 to 25 December 1950, OA, NHC.
100. Shepherd, p. 92.
101. COMPHIBGRU 1, War Diary, December 1950, OA, NHC.
102. Shepherd, p. 93.
103. COMPHIBGRU 1, Action Report, 9 to 25 December 1950.
104. Doyle and Mayer, p. 50.
105. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
106. Shepherd, p. 97.

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107. COMPHIBGRU 1 (CTF 90), "Report of ComPhibGru Operations for 25 June 1950 to 1 January 1951," Annex AA of Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet, "Interim Evaluation Report No. 1," file A17/31-wt, serial 002 of 17 January 1951, OA, NHC, p. AA19. [See also note 63 above.]

108. Heintz notes to interview with Doyle, 31 July–1 August 1966. [See also note 63 above.]

109. See Blair, pp. 552–3.

110. Cagle and Manson, p. 181.

111. COMPHIBGRU 3, War Diary, December 1950, OA, NHC.

112. Similarly, in his otherwise superior and comprehensive history of naval operations in Korea, Field devotes only four paragraphs to the west coast operations in December 1950, while Cagle and Manson grant those activities two and a half pages.

113. Shepherd, p. 96.

114. Doyle and Mayer, pp. 50–1.

115. Action Report of Seventh Fleet, 1 November 1950–26 December 1950, OA, NHC.

116. Message, 261515Z, 26 December 1950, CNO to CINCPACFLT, OA, NHC. Kiland did go out to the Far East, relieving Doyle as ComPhibGru 1 and CTF 90, in late January 1951. Doyle, promoted to vice admiral, became COMPHIBSPAC.

117. "Interim Evaluation Report No. 1," pp. 714, 716. [See notes 63 and 107.]

118. Joint Publication 1.

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