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GOOD-TIME CHARLIES OF CONGRESS

by Rep. Hugh Scott

BASEBALL-MAD MILWAUKEE

by Al Helfer

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SUICIDE MISSION

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Hill 1240 had to be taken, though it was held by 500 fanatical Reds and our attacking force numbered but 40 beat-up Marines. Only 16 survived, but the bloody hill was ours

Suicide Mission

by Bill Kreh

MY GOD, Captain, the Reds are coming at us like ants!" Sergeant Othmar Reller's voice was desperately urgent. "We can't shoot 'em down fast enough! What'll we do?"

At the command post of Dog Company, Seventh Marines, Captain Milton Hull listened to the sergeant's excited voice crackle over the hand phone.

"Do the best you can, Reller! We've got to hold this hill!" he barked into the phone and slammed it down. From nearby came the staccato reports of intense rifle fire.

It looked like a hopeless situation. Hull's tiny, battered force of Marines was pitifully outnumbered. The Reds

were coming with everything they had, trying to put them off the hill. The Marines were being butchered.

This was Hill 1240, near Yudam-ni in North Korea. It wasn't a big hill, but it was mighty important. Whoever held it controlled the lower ground and the approach to the town. The Reds knew it, and were fanatically trying to push the Marines off. It had to be held. The Marines needed every foot of ground they could possibly hold.

It was November 28, 1950. The Chinese Communists had just entered the war, and the U.S. Marines were being clobbered all over North Korea. Hordes of bugle-blowing, screaming Reds were driving the Marines back, and



slowly encircling them in the Chosen Reservoir area. It was a desperate situation. The bitter Korean winter wasn't helping any. Heavy snow hampered ground operations, and frostbite was taking its toll of casualties.

Hull had taken his company out on a patrol mission that afternoon. They'd gone out to try and capture prisoners for the Intelligence boys, but they'd run smack into a strong Communist force. For three hours they fought savagely. It was a hell of a fight—lots of casualties. By the time they'd fought their way back to the hill, Dog Company had lost a lot of men. Those who struggled back were nearly paralyzed with cold, and bone weary from the long trek and savage fighting.

When he got back to the command post, Hull had staked out his platoons below the crest of the hill. With all those Reds down there in the valley, it meant just one thing. They were massing for an attack. It would probably come that night.

He'd been right. It had started with light probing attacks early in the evening. Hull checked his platoon leaders—Lieutenant Ed Seeburger, Lieutenant Tony Sota, and Sergeant Othmar Reller. They all reported light casualties. The Reds were stalling for total darkness. That's when the big show would start.

Thirty minutes later, Reller called Hull on the phone.

"Captain, they're starting to come faster. Wave after wave! Sure as hell need more men here! I've had about 25 casualties!"

Hull sent Captain Dick Weber to Reller's outpost with as many men as he could spare. Reller's platoon had been weakened badly in the fighting that afternoon. Two officers had been killed, and Hull had put Reller in charge.

Weber checked in by phone a few minutes later. "Report that reinforce—" His voice cut off. There was silence. In a moment, Reller's excited voice crackled through. "He's been hit, sir! It's getting rougher out here every minute!"

Hull called for some mortar fire, and then left to check the platoon positions. It was now completely dark. Visibility was poor. In between the mortar bursts and small arms fire, he could hear the sound of hundreds of feet crunching on the frozen snow down in the valley.

With sudden fury, the Reds attacked. All hell broke loose. The shrill sounds of bugles, shepherd horns and whistles screamed through the night. Above it all, the Commies were chanting loudly in English as they charged up the hill. It was familiar to the Marines. They'd heard it before.

*Sonofabitch Marines
We kill
Sonofabitch Marines
You die.*

The Reds came up the hill in droves. The Marines would roll hand grenades down the hillside so they'd explode smack in the Commies' faces. Those Reds that got through felt the cold steel of the Marines' bared bayonets. Still they came. For two bloody hours, Hull raced from one position to another, shouting words of encouragement as he threw grenades at the oncoming Reds.

"Lay it on! Lay it on!" Hull shouted to the battered



THE MARINES started up the slippery, snow-covered hill, hoping their unexpected counterattack would surprise the Reds.

Marines. "Let the bastards have it! Give it to 'em good!"

They did, but it was a one-sided fight. There was no end to the Communist attacks. The Marines were accounting for about ten Reds to one, but the enemy was fanatical. Several times, a wave of them would charge furiously with no weapons at all, snatching up the rifles of their dead comrades as they raced up the hill.

The full force of the enemy onslaught hit Reller's platoon. They were being badly beaten. When Hull got back to the command post, Reller was on the phone.

"Dammit, Captain, we can't hold much longer! I've got gaps in my line 20 and 30 yards wide that're not covered! They're going to start coming right through! Get me some more men, quick!"

Hull was about to tell him that he had no more men to send him when his runner, Corporal Walter Renard, suddenly gripped his arm.

"My God, Captain," he shouted, "there are Gooks all over the place! Look at 'em!"

Renard started shooting. Hull looked up to see several Reds come charging at him. He threw down the phone and grabbed his carbine. The Commies were dropped in their tracks, but more came right behind them. They were coming through the gaps in the line he'd just been talking about on the phone!

The Reds raced right past the huddled forms of Hull and Renard. They headed for the big tent that the Marines were using for an aid station. Inside the tent, corpsmen were working feverishly to evacuate the wounded. Apparently the Commies thought it was a supply tent. They'd try anything to get equipment.

Hull got the platoon leaders on the phone. "We're being overrun!" he shouted. "They're coming through the line! Pull together, dammit, pull together!"

The answer was the same from all of them. "We can't pull together, Captain! We need help, quick! We're being butchered!" The Reds had located the company's machine guns and had knocked them out with grenades. The riflemen were unprotected. It looked like the whole show was gone.

Suddenly, the night exploded (Continued on page 87)

IT WAS getting rougher every minute . . . Captain Hull gathered his small group of bleeding and bedraggled Marines together.

with brightness. It was a red signal flare. The Commies had set it off. It was a signal to their main force that they'd infiltrated the Marines' lines. That settled it. The Marines had to get out of there! In a moment, the whole hill would be swarming with Red troops!

"Pull out, quick!" Hull shouted into the phone. "Meet me down the hill at the road junction by the ammo dump! Let's get the hell out of here!"

Back down the hill, Hull gathered his small group of bleeding and bedraggled Marines together. There weren't more than 40 of them left, including only two officers besides himself. He cranked the handle on the field phone and reported back to Lt. Col. Raymond C. Davis, the battalion commander.

"I've only got about 40 of my original 220 men left, but we're well stocked on ammo. What'll we do, sir?"

The answer was short and to the point. "There's nothing between the enemy and our artillery batteries!" the Colonel spoke sharply. "I don't care how you do it, but you've got to get back up that hill and regain the high ground!"

No Time to Argue

There wasn't time to argue. Hull put down the phone and relayed the orders to his weary men. He divided them into two groups of about 20 men each. Lieutenant Sota would take the first group up. The other unit would follow right behind. Hull would go between the two.

It looked like a near-suicide mission. Up on the hill were more than 500 fanatical Chinese Communists. The Marines had one advantage—the element of surprise. The enemy wouldn't be expecting a counterattack so soon. It was the only thing that might enable the tiny group of Marines to push the Reds back off the hill. It had to be done as quickly as possible.

"Okay, let's go, men!"

With a shout, the Marines started charging up the slippery, snow-covered hill. It was a hell of a climb. They'd gone about 75 yards, when the first group hit the ground and began throwing hand grenades. The surprised Reds had spotted them charging up the hill, and they'd opened up with a deadly barrage of fire.

Hull swore out loud. He had to keep his men going, barrage or no barrage. He couldn't let them bog down, or they'd be wiped out in seconds. One thought kept running through his mind:

Keep those men going! We have to get to the top of that hill!

Crouching low, he sprang forward and struggled up the slope. It was against his better judgment, but he had to get those men back on their feet. He raced forward in the face of enemy fire, shouting at the top of his voice.

"On your feet, Marines! C'mon, let's get the Gooks! On your feet! We're going all the way! Follow me!"

Furiously, he leaped ahead, pausing only long enough to throw a grenade and then rush forward in the wake of the blast. As he passed, the men of the lead platoon leaped to their feet and charged in behind him. Their spirit hit a fever

pitch when they saw Hull at the forefront of the attack, charging the Reds relentlessly. Savagely, the tiny group fought its way up the hill.

Hull glanced behind him. His desperate charge had worked. His men were off the ground and right behind him!

"Lay it on!" he shouted. "Lay it on! Let the bastards have it!"

On they charged, right smack through the Reds. On all sides of Hull, the Marines were dropping, but for every one lost, at least a dozen Reds were wiped out. Not a man wavered once in the charge.

The Reds fell back under the furious attack by the handful of Marines. Hull's feet felt frozen, and every bone moving body ached. But he had to keep moving. Only a few more snow-covered yards, and his men would be at the crest!

Ten minutes after they'd started their desperate charge up the hill, the Marines reached the top. Their sudden attack had surprised the Reds enough to drive them off the crest, but they quickly rallied and brought the Marines under intense fire. Hull glanced around at his men. There were only 20 or 25 left. He had them dig in around the top of the hill.

A group of Commies slipped around the flank and opened up on the Marines from the rear with a machine gun. Sota and Reller were wounded.

"Hold fast!" Hull shouted. "It's only one gun. It can't kill all of us!" A well-aimed grenade put the gun out of action moments later.

Hull cranked the field phone and got battalion headquarters.

"Hill retaken," he reported wearily. "I've got about 25 men left. We can hold, but not for long!"

"Reinforcements on the way," came the reply. "We're sending a platoon. Watch for them. They'll be there in about an hour."

"Get down, Captain!"

Hull threw himself to the ground just as the Red who had popped over the hill suddenly opened up with his burp gun. The slugs kicked up the ground beside him. The Commie had hardly pulled the trigger before he was cut down by carbine fire from a dozen Marines. Hull whistled softly in relief, but as he did, another Red leaped up onto the crest of the hill. He was riddled almost immediately, too, but before he went down he let loose with a grenade. It plopped right into the center of the group of Marines who were bunched up there.

Hull Was Hit

There was a blinding flash. Then darkness. Dazed, Hull picked himself up from the frozen ground. His face and head were a mass of pain. A fragment had slashed open his forehead, and he was bleeding furiously. The blood froze on his face almost immediately. Other Reds were popping up over the crest of the hill in futile, suicide attacks. Grenades kept rolling into the group of Marines. It was like a nightmare.

"Hold 'em back, men!" Hull shouted through swollen lips above the explosions. "Let the bas—"

Something hit him with the force of a



MAJOR HULL, right, receives a medal and handshake from Maj. Gen. O. P. Smith.

triphammer. He went reeling backwards, clutching his left arm. He'd caught a slug in the shoulder. Fighting unconsciousness, he crawled back to the radio.

A sergeant looked up from the set, his teeth chattering with cold. "It's our reinforcements, sir," he said, pausing to spit blood on the snow. "They're at the bottom of the hill, but can't come up yet because it's too damn dark. They're afraid of hitting us. They want to know if we can hold 'til daylight."

Hull took the phone and glanced at the sky. Over in the east, it was beginning to brighten a little. "Yeah, dammit to hell, we'll hold!" he barked into the phone and handed it back to the sergeant.

The sergeant took a closer look at Hull with amazement. Blood was frozen all over the Captain's face, and his left arm hung helplessly by his side.

"Geez, captain, you're dying!"

Hull managed a feeble grin as he picked up his carbine and crawled to the edge of the crest. He could still shoot with one good arm!

For another bloody hour, the Marines battled furiously and held off the Reds. One by one, the Marines were getting picked off. Hull wondered how many men he had left. Daylight came slowly, and with it, the Reds began to pull back.

As it grew light, Hull could see the platoon of Marines, headed by Lieutenant Harold Dawes, making their way up the hill toward him. He could also see that the hill was littered with bodies. The Reds had paid dearly for their futile attempt to take the hill.

Dawes' platoon of reinforcements reached the crest of the hill. The first man to step into the small circle of ragged and bleeding Marines took one look and turned to Hull.

"Captain," he said with a grin, "It looks like you—all have been having your troubles!"

Hull smiled and looked wearily at his watch. It was 8 o'clock. The tiny group of Marines had gone through more than 24 hours of savage, desperate fighting. He glanced around at his men. There were only 16 left.

Slowly, they picked up their carbines and, led by the blood-covered Captain Hull, painfully started down the hill toward the battalion aid station. Some had to be carried. Others limped painfully on feet blistered with frostbite.

Cold, dirty and wet, the weary little group hobbled down the hillside over the sprawled bodies of hundreds of Communists. Bedraggled as they were, they went down the hill with an air of pride. Hill 1240 had been held.

END