

## Ambush

**AMBUSH.** My impression is that it was October, probably the early part, in North Korea. We had marched maybe 15 miles up the road and then as frequently happened were told there was a NK penetration on one of the flanks. We would have to go back.

The company was marching south, single file on each side of the road. At the end of a long straight stretch the road bent to pass around a low knoll. An ideal place for a machine gun to cover that long straight stretch.

Suddenly there was rapid fire. POW..POW..POW.

Probably the worst reflex action that could have been taken was taken. The company almost as one fell into the shallow ditches at each side of the road. A machine gun would have the ditches zeroed in.

Everyone was in the ditches trying to see from where we had taken the fire. Except for one, Lee "Bogie" Wines still stood in the middle of the road struggling to get his bayonet guard out of the trigger guard of his M-1. As he had trod along, tired as we all were his bayonet guard had slipped into the trigger guard of his rifle, knocked the safety forward and began what would pass for automatic fire. I am sure Bogie felt a little sheepish as we all did as the road was regained and our march continued.

Near sundown as we neared our point of departure that morning the column halted AND collapsed. God, I was tired. I lay off the road and revelled in just laying there not doing anything. It did not last. A jeep drove up and braked hard to a stop. I think it was carrying Major "Mac." He yelled, "Have you started laying down that preparation fire for 'L' company?"

I didn't want to believe it but I did. I raised up and looked for the tallest hill around. Sure enough, rounds began to land near the top of that hill. I lay back and closed my eyes to get some last moments of rest. Several minutes passed and I became conscious that the 60mm mortar just feet away from me had gone silent. I opened my eyes and the crew had the tube off the base plate. The man holding the tube shook it gently while another held his hands under its muzzle as if to catch a very thin shelled egg. A misfire and armed and ready to go. I decided discretion was by far the better part of valor and deposited myself in a new location much removed from the hot misfire.

Shortly after this we did indeed assault this hill against no resistance and after getting hot chow at the bottom of the hill climbed it again and dug-in on top for the night. I stretched my shelter half between saplings and built a small fire. It was dangerous but I was cold, very tired and didn't care. A soft breeze rustled the trees until I fell asleep.