

## Over-the-Beach Logistics

The success or failure of an amphibious operation often depends on how soon the assault forces get resupplied with ammunition, weapons, vehicles, food and fuel. It is equally important for naval logistics forces to keep supplies and troop reinforcements flowing into the beachhead. If they do not, the enemy might push friendly forces into the sea or prevent a breakout from the coast. At Inchon, the lack of adequate port facilities or sea room in which to stage logistics ships made it essential that the naval logistics forces rapidly move supplies "over the beach."

The Navy, the Marine Corps and the Army had developed sophisticated methods and organizations for over-the-beach logistics support based on their experiences in the Pacific in World War II. Naval Beach Group 1, commanded by Captain Watson T. Singer, included beachmasters and small boat units that, along with the 1st Marine Division's Shore Party Battalion led by Lieutenant Colonel Henry P. Crowe, directed the movement of supplies to the beach and then inland. Watson's group also included UDTs that cleared obstacles and Seabees responsible for reconstructing the harbor installations and initially operating the port. The Army's 2nd Special Engineer Brigade, which had supported MacArthur's campaigns in the southwest Pacific during World War II, took over port operations from the naval units.

On the afternoon of the 15th, the Seabees built a large pontoon dock and causeway at Green Beach on Wolmi Do. After the evening landing, some of

Singer's sailors and Crowe's Marines had to unload, organize and distribute the supplies from the eight LSTs temporarily immobilized on Red Beach on the evening's high tide. Bringing order out of the dark and chaotic night challenged Crowe, who came up through the ranks and was decorated for heroism at Guadalcanal and Tarawa. Enemy snipers in Inchon shot at Crowe's leathernecks and Singer's sailors, outlined as they were in the glare of the floodlights installed by the Seabees. Nonetheless, the men continued to toil throughout the long night to accomplish their vital mission. All of the LST captains withdrew their emptied ships on the morning's high tide.

By the 19th, one day after the 2nd Special Engineer Brigade took over port operations, the Navy, Marine and Army shore parties had unloaded every ship of the first echelon. Army engineers and the Seabees also had trains operating almost eight miles inland. Once the air strip at Kimpo was opened for business, Air Force transports flew in critical aviation gas and ordnance for the Marine aircraft operating there.

By the 22nd, the multiservice logistics forces had pushed ashore a staggering amount of material: 25,512 tons of cargo, 6,629 vehicles and 53,882 troops. As a result, MacArthur's assault forces were able to seize their lodgement ashore, defend it from counterattack and speedily break out of the coastal enclave.

Four "high-and-dry" LSTs disgorge supplies onto Red Beach on or about 16 September.

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plies and equipment. Another nine fully loaded LSTs soon replaced the first group on the beach and the resupply process continued unabated. Other logistics ships and craft disembarked material onto the pontoon dock installed by the Seabees!

Early on the morning of the 16th, a column of six North Korean T-34 tanks rumbled down the road toward *Inchon*. Two flights of VMF-214 Corsairs operating from *Sicily* pounced on the Soviet-built armored vehicles about a mile short of Marine lines. Even though enemy anti-aircraft fire turned one plane into a fireball, the other F4Us destroyed or heavily damaged half of the enemy force. Still, the intrepid Communist tankers kept on coming toward the ridge-line fighting positions of the 5th Marines. Suddenly, Marine Pershing tanks crested the rise, chose their targets and destroyed the rest of the T-34s with accurate fire.

The way now clear of the enemy, the infantrymen of the 1st Marines and the 5th Marines advanced and around 0730 linked up east of *Inchon*. South of town, the leathernecks occupied an abandoned coastal artillery position and captured a 120mm mortar battery. At the same time, General Smith ordered the 3rd Battalion, 1st KMC Regiment, into *Inchon* to mop up enemy troops and sympathizers, whose hiding places local civilians gladly revealed. Incensed by civilian reports



American troops inspect a Soviet-made T-34 tank destroyed by Marine fire on the road from *Inchon* to *Seoul*. Allied ground, air and naval gunfire defeated every enemy armor attack against the *Inchon* beachhead. NA 80-G-421 166

South Korean marines attach a prisoner-of-war identification tag to a North Korean soldier who tried to evade capture in *Inchon* by donning civilian clothes. The ROK marines, responsible for "mopping up" the city, also tracked down and severely dealt with Communists involved in atrocities. NA 80-G-426429

