

SIGINT IN THE DEFENSE OF THE PUSAN PERIMETER
KOREA 1950

On 13 July 1950, Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker, Commanding General of the Eighth Army, had assumed command of all ground forces in Korea. While the 24th Division under Major General Dean was delaying the North Korean invaders at Taejon, reinforcements under General Walker were moving up to meet the enemy.

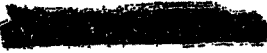
The 25th Infantry Division moved into line along the southeastern portion of the peninsula, with the remnants of several ROK divisions, while the 1st Cavalry Division on 22 July relieved the battered remnants of the 24th to the westward. A series of delaying actions continued as Walker traded space for time--all the while moving dangerously closer to the vital port of Pusan on the southern tip.

The enemy offensive gathered momentum, with the greatest advances made on the extreme western side, where only some weak elements of South Korean militarized police were in front of it. By 25 July this North Korean advance had turned and started east in a strategic envelopment of major importance. To block it, Walker put in the remnants of the 24th Division, plus another infantry regiment. A succession of shifts slowed but did not stop the Red tide. By 31 July, Walker's command of American and ROK troops was squeezed into a perimeter beachhead some ninety miles long on its western face and sixty miles across its northern front, with Pusan at the southern tip. Inside this box, with the sea at their backs Walker's Eighth Army--three American divisions (including the battle-weary 24th) and five ROK divisions (reorganized and equipped) slugged it out against at least thirteen infantry divisions and one armored division of Communist North Koreans. Pusan provided adequate base facilities and reinforcements began to come in.

Throughout the long defense General Walker kept husbanding a mobile reserve, which shifted to meet each serious threat with local counterattacks. It was a splendid example of the use of interior lines and greater mobility to fend off an enemy force which was superior in numbers but which

was unable to assemble at any one time sufficient logistical support to exploit a break-through.

SIGINT was of vital assistance to General Walker in deploying his mobile reserve in defense of the perimeter by revealing the enemy commander's intended plan of attack. The typical message to units of the First Army Group, used as an example, was intercepted 26 July, decoded, translated and transmitted to Headquarters, Eighth Army, by 29 July. A copy of the substantive portion of the message is attached.



(b) (1)
(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

~~TOP SECRET COPSE~~

North Korean^a

[] 299/50

Fm (U): (DAEDONG KANG B)
To (U)

26 Jul 50
Very urgent

I give the following order for the (?units directly under?) the 1st Army Group at once to (?strike?) and pursue the enemy and enter the enemy's flank and rear.

1. One infantry battalion of the 6th Infantry Division, one (?battery?) of the 76-millimeter gun battalion, and one battalion of the MOT'AJIK'I^b regiment will be left in the Mokp'o [] area; the rest of the division's main force will (?begin?) the (?operation?) starting this morning.

2. The MOT'AJIK'I^b regiment minus one battalion will [] the enemy who (?are in?) the (?southern ports?) and from [] will [] Po(?song?) Sun(ch'on), Yosu, and Yonsanp'o. After the regiment enters Ch'amyok, Pu [] and Kwangju (?the various battalions of the 6th Infantry Division?), [], one []^c of the 6th Infantry Division and the 76-millimeter gun (?battery?).

3. The 4th Infantry Division after [] in the (?region of?) (?Ko?)ch'ang and An-ni, will (?move?) eastward and (?reach?) (?Ko?)ch'ang, Hyopch'on, Hyonch'ang-ni, Chung-dai-ri and Kosu-dong, and will [] the enemy [] and will [] the frontal (?main force?).

4. The 4th and 6th Infantry Divisions, if (?conditions?) permit, will (?have?) the infantry mount vehicles in order to (?increase?) the speed of the infantry (?main force?).

5. The orders (?given to?) the 6th^d Infantry Division will be [].

6. Receipt of the orders (?will be confirmed by a reply?). After the infantry divisions [], they will report (?by radio?).

(Signed) []^e Commander
KIM CH'AIK
(and) (?Chief of Staff?)
KANG KON

(b) (1)
(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

- a - Based on further study of text and includes paragraphs 5 and which were originally published as [] 300/50.
- b - As in text. Perhaps motorized.
- c - Could be regiment or battalion.
- d - Duplicate text reads "4th and 6th."
- e - KIM CH'AIK has at times signed as "Front line Commander."