

LOOK OUT BELOW!

By REV. (Lt. Col.) FRANCIS I. SAMPSON

To bring you up to date — Father Sampson, chaplain of the 101st Division, U.S. Army paratrooper corps, chuted into Normandy on D-Day and later into Holland, and after the war's end and a year in an Iowa parish he returned to his duty with the Paratroopers.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The years 1946 to 1950 were interesting years for a chaplain in the Army, often difficult and trying, but not momentous.

I mentioned in the last chapter that combat was a sort of spiritual rest period, for most men had been given a glimpse of eternity as death came with sudden insistence to comrades close by; each man, in his own way, had reached for the sustaining hand of God.

But the war was over now, and the new generation of draftees resented peacetime duty. The indolent missed the corner drugstore and pool hall, and the ambitious felt that they were losing valuable time and college credits while in the Army.

With startling swiftness the civilian population changed its attitude toward the very Army that had preserved its freedoms. The soldier was no longer a hero, he was a pest. He was despised and prayed for; he was scarcely even respected. Morale hit an all-time low.

My first assignment after returning to the service in 1946 was to the 82nd Airborne Division under the command of Major General James M. Gavin. Gavin, who was until recently the Chief of the Research and Development Section in Washington, gave the same inspiring and dynamic leadership to the 82nd as his famous predecessor, General Matthew B. Ridgway, had given.

Gavin's keen analytical mind knew that America was not out of danger by a long shot, even though Germany and Japan were beaten. He knew that the hammer and sickle might be used not only in honest labor, but to strike one's neighbor and to stab him in the back.

My predecessor in the 505th Regiment of the 82nd Airborne had left a pair of shoes far too big for me to properly fill. He was Father Phillip M. Hannan, who left the service after the war to study Canon Law at the Catholic University of America, then became Chancellor, and is now Auxiliary Bishop of Washington.

Father Hannan had written a history of the regiment's war action, but someone at headquarters had carelessly mislaid the only copy. That bit of carelessness was not only a disservice to the regiment but deprived all of us the pleasure of reading a wonderful war story.

In September of 1947 I was sent overseas to the 11th Airborne Division which was stationed in northern Japan. This time my predecessor was Major General Joseph M. Swing, who had led it through the entire Pacific War. Their wartime jumps on Leyte and Corregidor were two of the most daring and successful jumps, though hazardous and costly, in the history of the airborne.

When the 11th had jumped in on Los Baños prison camp in the Philippines to liberate the Americans there, a priest prisoner had watched these paratroopers descending (like God's direct answer to their prayers) and commented to his fellow prisoners, "They look like angels from Heaven."

The name stuck and the 11th Airborne Division is known to this day as the "Angels." It was to be my outfit for seven of the next ten years. My affection for the men of this division was to become as great as that which I had had for the Screaming Eagles of the 101st.

The two years of occupation duty in Japan were wonderfully pleasant. We were stationed on the island of Hokkaido, near the city of Sapporo. Hokkaido is Japan's northernmost island and the least populated.

The terrain and climate are not unlike those of Maine, and the hunting and fishing opportunities were all that a sportsman could ask. The streams were loaded with trout, and you could almost hunt ducks with tennis rackets. Bear, wild boar, deer, and caribou were thick but clever enough to challenge the hunter.

The military camp itself was brand new, built under the direction of General Swing, and was the finest army post I have ever seen. Platoon-sized barracks, an enormous field-house for indoor football, tennis, or horseback riding, a tremendous gymnasium with a fine indoor swimming pool, two outdoor pools, a fifteen-hundred-seat theatre, an Olympic ski slope with two lodges, a magnificent golf course, several clubs for enlisted men and officers, a six-hundred-seat chapel that was the showpiece of the camp, all these facilities made life for the soldier in Hokkaido pleasant.

The only really unpleasant aspect of life on Hokkaido was the fact that Russia had moved large numbers of troops and plants onto the islands just a few miles north of us, and their attitude had become decidedly unfriendly.

The Japanese are in their way a wonderful people. It may become known as the "Fire

Chief" for wherever the fighting was hottest, Mike would get in his aggressive and well-trained unit.

The 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 11th was quickly formed into an ROT with attached units to enable it to fight unassisted by the division. We left Sapporo by train for San Francisco and pulled out of the Golden Gate on the 23rd of September, bound for Sapporo, on the island of Hokkaido, Japan.

We made a fast crossing, for it was assumed that any danger of submarine attack was non-existent. Four days were spent equipping us and loading the big C-118 "Flying Boxcars." We were not going to jump in but would be airlanded at the Sapporo airport even though that airfield had not yet been secured entirely.

The marines had given us the green light to "come on in," and when the machines gave the green light it means that they will hold the ground for you no matter what the cost.

It might not be amiss here to say a word about those marines. If a paratrooper is envious of anybody in the service, it might be the marines. This body of men possesses a discipline, a determination, a spirit of self-sacrifice, and an esprit de corps that "just won't quit" and, believe me, they won't quit until the last machine is dead.

I had never seen them in battle before, but I had read the Battle of Saipan at this time, and the Choson Reserve after the war, are examples of marine fighting, then I would hate to be on the opposite side. I wonder what some people mean when they call marines "glamour boys" or "publicly housed." They could never be attracted to the glamour or given the publicity they have earned and deserve.

One day Major Jenkins, our G-4 (the same Jenkins that was the 801st regimental G-4 in Normandy and Holland) managed to tune in on a conversation between a marine company commander and his battalion G-4. "Listen to this, Father," Jenkins said. I listened.

"Sir, I've had a deck already" the company commander said. "Deck" means about fifty men.

"So?" was the cryptic reply.

"Sir, there are goods swarming all over this hill. We've got to have some help."

"You ain't going to get any help, not for a while anyhow. Davis and his men got into the city. We're pushing in behind them."

"Sir, we can't hold on without some help and quick. Despite the urgency of the information the company commander sounded just factual, almost casual.

"Listen, Dick! You plant your big backside right in that goddam when you are. When we get back, you better be there. Got that?"

"Yes, sir! Nothing more. I'm all ears when the battalion commander did get back, he found Dick still there, maybe alive, maybe dead, but still there. I'm sure of that.

Jenkins looked at me. "That's the real war, huh? How Errol Flynn could tap up a part like that!" he said.

On our first day in Seoul a Korean doctor by the name of Kim (at least seventy-five per cent of Koreans are named Kim) came to me and asked me to request General Bowen to take him on as interpreter. Kim had been cleared by our intelligence officer. The general said he didn't need another interpreter but that I could keep him if I had need of him. So Kim became my interpreter.

Morale was low, traffic accidents and serious incidents were on the rise. The men refused to enter into the vigorous training program with sufficient enthusiasm to really profit from it. Every means was exerted by the division's excellent leaders to snap the men from their apathy. Even the prestige of paratrooper wings and jump boots had lost its fascination for the average civilian.

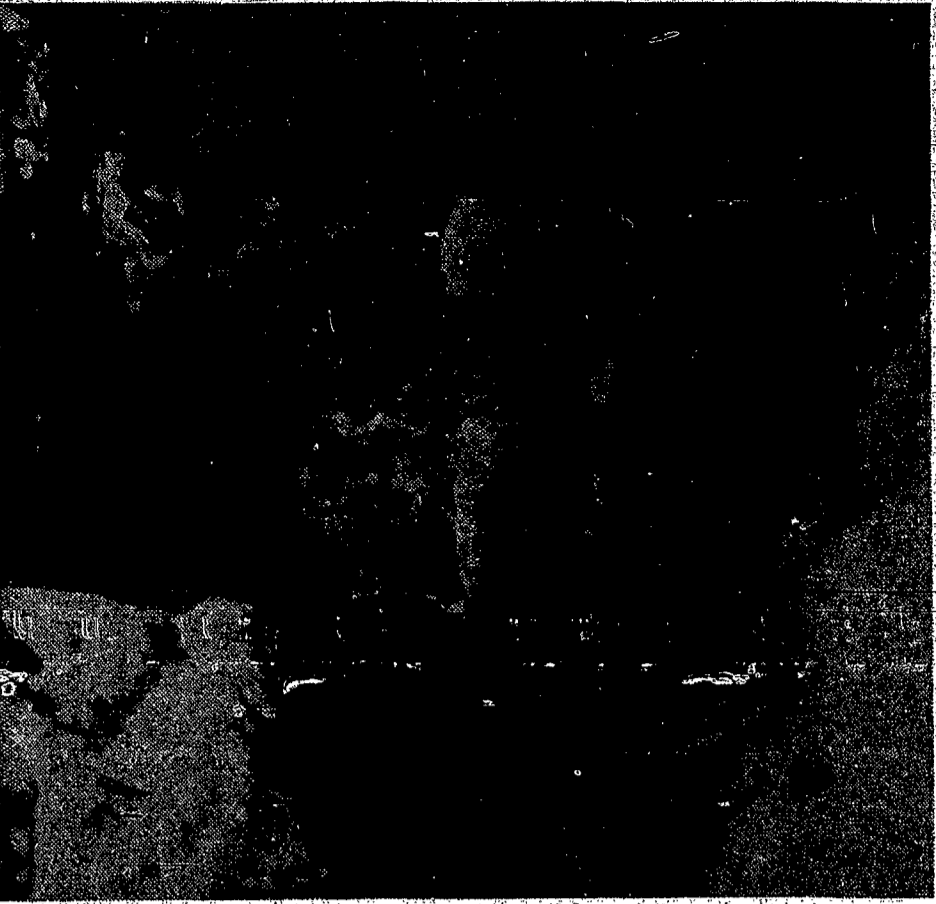
"Business as usual" was the creed of the day. Military budgets were cut, Congressmen were hypercritical of army spending. "It's down the drain; the war is over; let's start cutting the services; we've got to economize."

And then it happened. North Korea invaded South Korea. Within forty-eight hours President Truman took the only stand he could take. American troops stationed in Japan were ordered to hold the signing Korean forces. The Korean "police action" had begun.

In August of 1950 I received War Department orders assigning me to study at Notre Dame University for one year. As I was home on leave a wire from Washington arrived cancelling the Notre Dame assignment and instructing me to return to the 11th.

Nearly all military schools suspended operation at this time for the Korean action was turning out to be much more serious than had been anticipated. North Korea was throwing a real Suez day punch at the Americans and at the almost disorganized South Koreans.

Mike Michaels, formerly of the 101st, was making a real name for himself by plugging the holes in the lines with his small regimental combat team.



Observation post of the 187th at "Yoke Major" in Korea in 1952.

He was a fairly young man for a doctor and really hated Communists, who had killed his parents in Pongyang, the North Korean capital. He was a devout Catholic, but for a doctor he was much too eager to kill the enemy when he should have been thinking about caring for the wounded.

Our first real action was on the peninsula just northwest of Seoul. Colonel Harry Wilson's battalion plus a special-weapon company was to clear that area of the enemy.

Organized resistance was S-M-N-I, but the guerrillas harassed our troops at every turn on the road. They ambushed a group of headquarters men, killing four. The company commander and another man were killed by a defective grenade, and before we got back to Seoul, we lost three more men.

Nine men lost seems like a comparatively small price for any action, I suppose, but when you know men well, statistics are meaningless and each life lost is a terrible, heavy cost.

When marines had cleared the city of Seoul of all active resistance, the North Korean flag was quickly taken in by all the inhabitants and the South Korean flag hung outside each house. (The North Korean flag was carefully tucked away ready to replace the South Korean flag again should the battle for Seoul change once more.)

These poor people just wanted to be friends with everyone, or better still, just left alone.

I called on the Bishop of Seoul, who had come back to his cathedral as soon as the Communists were gone. Together we went out to his seminary. A few seminarians started drifting back to clean up the place, which had been used as a North Korean barracks.

The fifth they left was almost indescribable. The holy pictures had been slashed to ribbons. Stalin's picture hung above the altar, and the life-sized crucifix had been replaced by the floor smashed and piled with human excrement.

Obscene pictures were crudely drawn on the walls. The Bishop school pupils to Catholic schools didn't act shocked by what

we saw but simply directed the cleaning of the place.

When we returned to the airfield, General Bowen ordered Chaplain Hope, the very excellent Protestant chaplain of the 187th, and myself to hold memorial services. Every man in the regiment attended one service or the other.

It struck me that that is one of the greatest differences between the Christian and the pagan cultures—the importance of the individual, the great concern for nine dead men (in a country where death is as routinely accepted as a mosquito bite).

The tide of the war was changing rapidly now, and the North Koreans were falling back to prepare defenses positions in the area of the 38th parallel. The airforce had spotted about two thousand American prisoners being marched north of Pongyang.

We were quickly briefed for an airborne drop with the double mission of rescuing those Americans from their captors and cutting off the retreating North Koreans who were fleeing from the heavy blows of the 1st Armored Cavalry Division. As we were to take off at dawn, that night I was hearing confessions in my tent.

The men were lined up outside, and above the whisper of the penitents I could hear a couple of Mexican boys arguing. One was trying to persuade the other to go to confession.

"Come on, Manuel, come to confession. Maybe you die tomorrow, who knows?"

"No, Miguel. I don't go to confession."

"Come on, come on, Manuel. Confession is good for you."

Bus Rides OK'd For Pupils

Burnt Hills, N.Y. — (NC) — Voters in the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake school district have approved, by a nine-vote margin, the providing of public funds to transport parochial school pupils to Catholic schools outside the district.

What Topics Will Council Consider?

By FATHER JAMES I. TUCEK (N.C.W.C. News Service)

Vatican City—What will the forthcoming ecumenical council take under consideration?

It may be expected to take definite steps toward Christian unity; to increase the role of the layman in the work of the Church; to relax certain penal laws; to adapt the relative positions of diocesan and religious clergy to modern times; to broaden bishops' faculties.

Pope John XXIII indicated the general scope of the ecumenical council when, on January 25, he announced that it would take place.

He said, in an official communique issued by the Vatican Secretariat of State, that it would: (1) look to the edification of the Christian people, (2) be an invitation to the separated communities to seek unity, and (3) bring the Code of Canon Law up to date.

THE PRECISE questions that would arise within these three general categories were not immediately stated. The Pope had announced only that there would be an ecumenical council. Since an ecumenical council is an assembly of the bishops of the world, the council will certainly study the Vatican Council.

The increase in speed and convenience of transportation and communication which has occurred since 1870 will create a great difference between the two councils.

Today a bishop can come from the American continent in less time than it took a bishop to come to Rome from Bologna at the time of the Vatican Council. The time required for communication is even more marvelously increased. A message will go from Rome to New York today in less time than it took to go from one side of Rome to the other in 1870.

Thus, one might expect that whereas the cardinals resident in Rome drew up the preliminaries of the Vatican Council, Princes of the Church in more distant lands might be invited to work on the preliminaries of this time.

Some notion of what the future ecumenical council might treat could also be sought logically in the pattern set by the

Some notion of what the future ecumenical council might treat could also be sought logically in the pattern set by the

McCurdy's your summer wardrobe needs plenty of Donnkenny go-togethers for the shirtheast look you love

Blouses, 30-38
3.00

Skirts, 30-18
4.00

Mix and match your Donnkenny blouses and skirts for wonderful wardrobe variety.

A. Embroidered blouse and skirt both in charcoal, mint and light blue stripes on white.

B. Embroidered blouse and skirt both in turquoise, maize and pink checks on white.

Not shown here:

Scoop neck blouse in white, pink, blue or beige.

Slim skirt in white, pink, blue, beige, mint, yellow, lilac and black.

Full skirt in above colors, sizes 10-14.

Sleeveless convertible collar blouse with mint or blue appendzel embroidery on white.

Sleeveless convertible collar blouse with lilac, light blue, black or yellow embroidery on white.

McCurdy's Blouses, Street Floor
Northside and McCurdy's of Geneva

Mail and Phone Orders Filled
Call BAker 5-3000

Line Quality
MONUMENTS
No Apts. Plain Prices
TROT BROS.
CO., INC.
William J. Schaezky
Robert F. Schaezky

7120 Mt. Hope Ave.
CR 3-3271
FREE PARKING

Open Nites 'Til 9
Jantzen
TARTAN PLAID SWIM SUITS
Matching Suits for Mothers and Daughters

Same plaid for Dad and Dad

SCHOEMAN'S
458 Monroe Ave. cor. Meigs
FREE PARKING