construction task in a combat theater, of the hardships and challenges confronting engineers across the depth of the battlefield. Engineers of the 84th ECB completed their mission, drawing from the experiences they gained while fighting along the Imjin during the past year.

It is important to realize that no similar permanent fixed-bridging effort had ever been attempted in the history of the Corps by an engineer construction battalion in a combat theater—nor has it been done since. Today, nearly 50 years after its completion, the Libby Bridge still serves as a crossing site on the Imjin River. It stands as a symbol of the contributions that engineers have made—and continue to make—in support of maneuver units on the battlefield.

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Chipyong-ni Staff Ride

By Major Keith A. Landry

On 11 February 2000, officers of the 44th Engineer Battalion at Camp Howze, Korea, participated in a staff ride to the battlefield at Chipyong-ni as part of the Broken Heart Battalion's Leader Development Program. The intent was to conduct a detailed case study of the direct and indirect leadership actions demonstrated by officers of the 23d Regimental Combat Team (RCT) during the battle of Chipyong-ni from 13 to15 February 1951. The 44th's commander wanted every officer to come away with a better understanding of what it takes to train, prepare, and motivate units and soldiers to fight—while surrounded and outnumbered—in Korea's severe winter environment and win.

In many annals, the siege of Chipyong-ni is described as one of the most bitterly contested engagements of the Korean War. Amid the snow-covered hills encircling the small town of Chipyong-ni in the X Corps sector, Colonel Paul Freeman's 23d RCT, 2d Infantry Division, made a decisive stand. During two long nights of brutal close combat, the 23d RCT—consisting of the regiment's three organic infantry battalions, the French battalion task organized with a Republic of Korea company, the 1st Ranger Company, an engineer company, a battalion of 105-millimeter howitzers, a battery of 155-millimeter howitzers, a company of 14 tanks, and 10 antiaircraft Quad 50s—inflicted tremendous casualties on elements of five attacking Chinese divisions. Chipyong-ni proved to be the culminating point of the Fourth Chinese Offensive and the Chinese Communist Forces' first operational defeat.

After a two-hour bus ride from Camp Howze, the officers began the staff ride at the Chipyong-ni battlefield monument (see photo) that was erected by the Korean 5th Infantry Division north of the village. Overlooking the village of Chipyong-ni,



the A/44th officers set the stage for the tactical discussions to follow by providing an overview of the Korean War from 25 June 1950 up to Lieutenant General Ridgway's assumption of command of the Eighth U.S. Army in December 1950. Officers of B/44th provided an overview of the organization, capabilities, tactics, and limitations of the Chinese People's Liberation Army forces and the 23d RCT. Once the stage was set for understanding the political and military factors impacting on the battle, the 44th's commander led a discussion (on 14 February 2000) aimed at assessing the combat readiness of the Chinese Communist Force and the 23d RCT on in terms of morale, logistics, and training.

The officers then moved to the site of some of the fiercest fighting near the G/23d Infantry positions to continue the tactical discussion. The C/44th officers reviewed the actual battle of 13 to15 February 1951 to determine what leadership actions contributed significantly to the 23d RCT's success at Chipyong-ni. Finally, officers of HHC/44th analyzed the supply and maintenance challenges faced by the 23d RCT, to include the resupply options available to the unit. The staff ride ended with a discussion to assess the contribution of logistics to the victory at Chipyong-ni.

During the siege, the 23d RCT inflicted tremendous casualties on attacking Chinese Communist Forces and suffered 52 killed, 259 wounded, and 42 missing. For this action, the 23d RCT received the Presidential Unit Citation. Together, the officers of the 44th Engineer Battalion discovered that in the seven months between Task Force Smith's defeat near Suwon and the victory at Chipyong-ni, the U.S. Army had learned how to fight a numerically superior force on difficult terrain, at night, in a severe and logistically constrained environment and win.

As they walked off the battlefield, each officer from the 44th seemed to reflect on the contributions engineers make in support of maneuver units on the battlefield in Korea. It was a day well spent.

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