



## 6,000 Americans were killed or missing during the fierce battle at the Chosin Reservoir

The Battle of Chosin, or "Changjin" as it's called in Korea, a two-week-long bloodbath pitting 30,000 US, ROK, and British troops against 120,000 Chinese soldiers, was a defining moment of the Korean War.

Fighting in the winter of 1950 in bitter cold and brutal terrain, men endured severe frostbite, sleepless nights, and total mental and physical exhaustion. Below-zero temperatures, snow-covered mountains, icy roads, and wind-swept cliffs made every skirmish, firefight, and attack a nightmare beyond the men's wildest dreams.

### If You Stopped Moving, You Froze

With tens of thousands of young Americans and Chinese locked in eye-to-eye, hand-to-hand combat in the desolate, freezing mountains surrounding the Chosin Reservoir, the death toll soared. Even men with minor wounds or injuries frequently died. If you stopped moving, you froze.

The terrain and weather were so bad that Oliver P. Smith, the commanding general of 1st Marine Division, the largest American unit engaged at Chosin, said the mountains of North Korea were "never intended for military operations." And every man who fought there would agree.

To most of the soldiers

and Marines who found themselves at the frozen reservoir from November-December 1950, the terrain looked more like the set of a Himalayan mountain-climbing movie than a place to fight. But fight they did. They Just Kept Coming. With tens of thousands of disciplined and determined white-clad Chinese soldiers attacking every night to the eerie cacophony of blaring bugles, shrieking whistles and clashing cymbals, the Americans, Brits and Koreans fought courageously. Beating back wave after wave of Chinese attackers, the UN forces barely held on.

The Chinese, despite outdated weapons and inadequate food, supplies, and ammunition, just kept coming. When a Chinese soldier went down, American veterans recalled, dozens more suddenly appeared.

By late November 1950, 1st Marine Division and 31st Regimental Combat Team, surrounded and vastly outnumbered, were on the verge of annihilation. As casualties mounted, the generals realized there was only one way to avoid a catastrophic defeat: break out to the sea.

### Attacking In Another Direction

Over the next 5-7 days, the Americans fought, or as O.P. Smith said, "attacked

in another direction," down a winding, treacherous, snow-packed road to Hungnam, a North Korean port 70 miles away. Through extraordinary willpower, exceptional war-fighting skills, and countless acts of valor, US Marines and soldiers escaped the Chosin trap.

By the time US forces, with thousands of North Korean refugees in tow, reached the evacuation beaches, nearly 6,000 Americans were dead or missing; thousands more were wounded. None of the men who survived the horrific battle would ever be the same. Today they are

called "The Chosin Few." Mao's attempt at destroying 1st Marine Division, however, had come at a high price. The communist dictator had lost an estimated 50,000 soldiers, including his eldest son, and had learned to never again underestimate the American fighting man. Honoring Chosin Veterans Recently I had the privilege of meeting two US Marines and four ROK soldiers who fought at Chosin. In their late eighties and early nineties, the former warriors were being honored at a ceremony held in downtown Seoul.

Along with thousands of

people from throughout Korea, they were part of an event that paid tribute to the courageous soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines who suffered, sacrificed, and died in the remote mountains of North Korea in 1950.

As the six elderly men slowly came to the stage, some with canes and others with the assistance of young ROK soldiers or Marines, I couldn't help but think of the thousands of Americans who had left their loved ones and friends 68 years ago, never to return. Men like Bob Reem,

Eddie Thorn, and Harvey Storms, who sacrificed their lives so that others might live.

As the veterans returned to their seats and looked out into the crowd and the bustling streets of Seoul, it was a bittersweet moment. They later explained that they had all lost friends at Chosin and would never forget their brothers in arms who died fighting for South Korea's freedom.

As the Korean War Memorial in Washington, DC, reminds us, "Freedom Is Not Free."

Story by Ned Forney

# Daughter recounts her father's ordeal in the Korean War battle of the Chosin Reservoir

Allen Purvis Nichols was born to Rozel and Cora Jackson Nichols on December 20, 1928. He grew up in Reynolds Station and the surrounding areas.

On July 23, 1948, at the age of 19, he traveled to Louisville where he enlisted in United States Marine Corps as an Infantryman. He would be assigned to the MB, USNActvWash Naval Gun Factory in Washington, D. C.

On June 25, 1950, nearly two years after his enlistment, the Korean War broke out. By September of that year, he and his Division had deployed to Seoul, South Korea where they remained until October 9, 1950. Their Campaign objective was to capture and secure the city.

For their second Campaign, his Division was mobilized to the Wonsan-Hungnam-Chosin Province along the 38th Parallel. There, U.S. Forces fought alongside United Nations Command Troops from South Korea and the United Kingdom in what is now known as the Battle of Chosin Reservoir.

Over the course of 14 days, his Division, and their UN Allies took on heavy

fire as the Chinese joined the North Koreans, outnumbering them nearly 3 to 1. He soon found himself as one of only two men from his original platoon who had survived. There, they endured for three days among the bodies of their fallen comrades, low on ammunition, food, and medical supplies. Temperatures dipped to -36F and Private First Class Nichols suffered frostbite to his hands, feet and legs. At the 11th hour, rescue finally came bringing ammunition and much needed provisions. PFC Nichols and his fellow Marine were treated for wounds and evacuated to safety.

The Battle of Chosin Reservoir is known by many historians as one of the most brutal conflicts in modern military history due to the violence, harsh weather conditions and high number of casualties in this battle alone. Veterans of the battle are colloquially referred to as the "Chosin Few".

PFC Nichols was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps on July 22, 1952; 367 days past his initial contract end date. His selfless service and personal courage serve as a

testament to his own strength and the indomitable spirit of the American people.

Allen Purvis Nichols died in Louisville on February 22, 2002 at the age of 73. He is survived by his children, Deborah Atwell Beck of Hawesville, and Jeffrey Nichols of Lewisport. Please join his family in honoring him and his service to our country.



Allen Purvis Nichols  
"The Chosen Few"



## The following story was published in the 1953 Hancock Clarion

### Frankie (Goat) Morgan, Missing in Korean Action, is Prisoner of War

The ending of the Korean War Sunday night had a very special meaning to Mrs. Rubye Morgan of this city.

For on Saturday morning she had received word from the Department of the Army that her son, Frankie K. Morgan, was still being held on the prisoner of war list, and on May 1 of this year had been promoted from PFC to Corporal.

It was therefore speculated that Frankie would be among the 3500 Americans who would be exchanged and returned home since the truce has been signed.

Frankie enlisted in the army in March 1950, and received his basic training at Fort Knox and arrived in Korea in August, 1950. He was wounded in September of that year and received the Purple Heart. He was only 17 when he enlisted in the army.

At the time that he was reported missing in action, Mrs. Morgan had received word that he had been with six other men operating an artillery gun and were ambushed. It was Dec. 1, 1950 when he was reported missing in action.



Mrs. Morgan had received no word from him since that time but had received details of where he was and what he was doing when he and his six comrades were last seen. Thus, it was joyous news that she received saying that he was still on the prisoner list.

Before entering service, Frankie had worked for Billy Stephens, and had been given the nickname of "Goat". This was due to the fact that as a mere boy around Hawesville, he had a goat hitched to a wagon which he drove around town. He was born here and had attended local schools.

## Memorial Day service to honor Frankie Morgan

The annual Hawesville Memory Garden Cemetery Memorial Day service honoring deceased veterans will focus this year on Frankie Morgan, a Hawesville native who died as a prisoner of war in the Korean War.

The May 27 service will be led by the Military Honor Guard from the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in Cannelton, Ind. where Morgan's brother, Cal, is a member.

Morgan, who was 17 when he enlisted in the army, was reported as missing in action on December 1, 1950, and died while in foreign custody. His body was never recovered.

Prior to enlisting in the military, Morgan worked at the farm store in Hawesville.

A plaque honoring Morgan has been placed at Memory Gardens. The ceremony will begin at 11:45 a.m. and be held beside the plaque.

**THANKS FOR ALL YOU'VE GIVEN**

THIS WEEK WE HONOR THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE MADE GREAT SACRIFICES TO PROTECT OUR FAMILIES, OUR COUNTRY AND OUR FREEDOM.

**MAXWELL BROS. LUMBER**