

forward from the Solomons and from Hawaiian areas, notably to Roi, Engebi and Majuro in the Marshalls, and later to Peleliu, Tinian and Guam.

In late July 1944, General Vandegrift made an extensive inspection trip to the Pacific. On his return through Pearl Harbor, conferences were held with Admirals Nimitz, Tower and Sherman; General Rowell, Commander, Marine Air Wings, Pacific; Brigadier General Thomas, Director Plans and Policies; and Brigadier General Harris, Director of Marine Aviation. The decisions reached brought significant changes in the employment of Marine Aviation for the balance of the war. There was a revalidation of the primary role of Marine Aviation as the support of Marine ground forces, with a recommendation that a division of six *Commencement Bay* -class escort carriers be manned with Marine Aviation squadrons for the purpose. The

six carrier groups would be trained at MCAS Santa Barbara, Calif. Each group would be composed of one VMF squadron with 18 planes and one Marine torpedo-bomber (VMTB) squadron with 12 planes, under a Marine Air Support Group known as Marine Carrier Groups, Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific.

By the time the units were assembled, trained and qualified aboard their ships, the war was drawing to its end. The first of the Marine escort carriers (CVEs) to deploy was *Block Island*, which arrived off Okinawa on May 10, 1945. In addition to attacks on Japanese installations in the Okinawa area, she also supported the Marine divisions on the island. She was joined by the *Gilbert Islands* on June 1, and both participated in strikes in the Okinawa area and in the Balikpapan invasion. Two more Marine CVEs came out before the end, *Cape Gloucester* and *Vella Gulf*. All four Marine CVEs

participated in various aspects of the wind-down of the war, *Block Island* and *Gilbert Islands* taking part in the surrender of Formosa and the evacuation of approximately 1,000 allied POWs who had been imprisoned there.

## The Philippines

During the Leyte operations in the fall of 1944, the kamikaze threat became a serious problem for our carrier task forces. To deal with it, faster climbing fighters were needed with greater top speed in order to reach and shoot down the suicide planes before they could reach their targets. The *Corsair*, which was not then operating in the fleet, had these capabilities and became the solution. Ten VMF squadrons were immediately assigned to carrier duty with Task Forces 38 and 58, two squadrons aboard each of five fast carriers of the *Essex* class. Between January and June 1945, the program operated and helped solve the problem. Since many pilots had no previous carrier experience, the operational accident toll was a little heavy at first. However, all units soon settled down and the only difference was in the uniforms being worn in the ward room. It was an admirable example of the close relationship which exists between Naval and Marine Aviation in training, equipment and operational understanding.

As events began to crowd into each week of the fall of 1944, the two gigantic pushes westward toward the Japanese home islands began to come together. With Peleliu and Ulithi as major air and fleet bases in the southwest Pacific, decisions previously made to also take the Philippines route were being carried out. MAG-12 arrived in early December at Tacloban, and MAG-14 in early January at Guiuan on neighboring Samar. Later, as the landings moved to Mindoro and then to Luzon at Lingayen Gulf, one of the most interesting involvements of Marine Aviation in the Pacific war began to unfold. On Bougainville, now one of the backwaters of the war, Major General Mitchell, ComAirNorSols, and commanding the 1st Marine Air Wing, had his Chief of Staff, Colonel Jerry Jerome, set up a close air support school with two MAGs, a total of seven SBD squadrons. The school was under the charge of the operations officer, Lieutenant Colonel Keith McCutcheon. A formal curriculum was drawn up, including a multilecture course for all pilots, communications technicians, and officers of the 37th Army Division, also stationed at Bougainville and scheduled for deployment to the Philippines. The program was an unqualified success. Once established at Dagupan near the



foot of Lingayen Gulf, Jerome's command was designated MAGS-DAGUPAN and there they operated for the next three months. Their mission was to keep a nine-plane air alert cover over the 1st Cavalry Division on its dash to Manila, ordered by MacArthur, to free allied prisoners at Santo Tomas prison. In 66 hours, the 1st Cavalry was in Manila with its flank protected all the way by Jerome's MAGSDAGUPAN.

### Okinawa

In April 1945, the long struggle on Okinawa, which would bring the war to an end, began with the largest amphibious operation of the war. The operation reunited Marine Aviation with the Marine ground forces on a scale heretofore unknown.

For Marine Corps Aviation, as for all participating units, the Okinawa operation was the culmination of all that had been learned in the Pacific war. Here, knocking on the door of the enemy homeland, after four long years, was the final test.

Planning for the operation separated strategic and tactical aviation. Strategic air fell to the Army Air Forces (AAF) with the 20th Air Force. The 10th Army's Tactical Air Force (TAF) was commanded by Major General Mulcahy with Brigadier General Bill Wallace as his Air Defense Commander. Bearing in mind that the TAF could not function until the command had moved ashore and the amphibious phase of the operation was ended, tactical air during the afloat phase came from a task unit of the Amphibious Force Commander who headed 18 escort carriers of what was known as carrier-based tactical aviation. The kamikaze problem delayed the shift of command ashore until May 17, after the landings were initiated on April 1. In the TAF organization, the Air Defense Command alone, by the end of June, had a total of 15 Marine fighter squadrons and 10 AAF fighter squadrons. In its Bomber Command, there were 16 bomber squadrons by mid-July. When the radar warning units', reporting and communications network units are added in, the size and scope of the TAF is evident.

There were three Landing Force Air Support Control Units (LFASCU) under Colonel Vernon Megee which were outside the command chain of the TF, and reported to Air Support Control Units, PhibPac. This was complicated by the inability to shift control ashore earlier than May 17, but generally worked well in processing, evaluating and assigning air support aircraft through the LFASCU's ashore. In conjunction with the latter, there were two VMTB squadrons assigned to the TAF, originally

for antisubmarine patrol. However, this function was taken over by the patrol squadrons of the Navy and the two TBF squadrons were used for close air support, supply drops to troop units, and other special troop support missions for which they were well-suited. As could be expected, there were some problems throughout the operation but, generally, air support was handled, evaluated, processed and delivered by shore-based, CVE-based and fast CV-based aircraft more quickly and smoothly than in any other operation of the war.

Four Marine observation (VMO) squadrons operated at Okinawa, twice as many as in any other operation of the war. They not only spotted for the artillery, but also flew message pickups and drops, laid wire, transported personnel and performed general utility functions. They also performed superbly in the evacuation of wounded with planes modified to carry stretchers.

Marine Aviation had about one-tenth of its total personnel strength participating in the Okinawa operation, or about 1,575 officers and 10,800 enlisted personnel. The Marine total plane commitment to the operation was around 700. Altogether, the 17 Marine squadrons (two VMTBs) shot down 506 Japanese aircraft during the campaign.

There was no way the end of the war could be announced to the entire island simultaneously but, as the word quickly spread ashore and to ships anchored close in, there was no need. Every weapon that could be fired was cut loose and, against the night sky, rivaled any display put on by AA at the height of the operation. It signaled to all that at last Japan had capitulated. It took a little time to restore order and control, and realize that the long struggle had come to an end, but then things settled down rapidly.

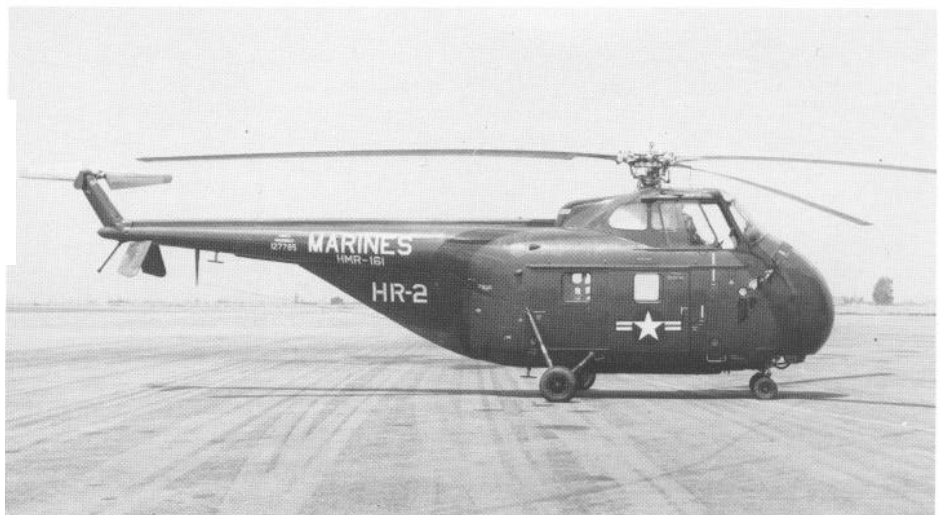
### The Occupation of Japan and Demobilization

For the occupation, two MAGs went to Japan and several units were assigned to China, with the rest eventually sent home. The drop in strength of the Marine Corps and Marine Aviation began as abruptly as it had increased at Pearl Harbor — almost immediately. However, a few overall statistics are in order before closing the book on WW II. There were 38 Marine squadrons of all types in combat against the Japanese. They shot down a total of 2,354 Japanese aircraft. Members of Marine Aviation were awarded a total of 11 Medals of Honor, and units of Marine Aviation were awarded 78 Presidential Unit Citations, 52 Navy Unit Citations and one Distinguished Unit Citation (Army).

Marine Aviation assignments during the occupation period after the war were largely confined to Japan and mainland China. MAG-31 was established at the Yokosuka naval base airfield at Oppama, five days after the formal surrender aboard USS *Missouri*. The mission of MAG-31 was surveillance and reconnaissance of the Tokyo Bay area, and it was a key air unit of the Japanese occupation until July 1946, when it returned to the U.S.

MAG-22 flew into the Omura airfield on Kyushu from Okinawa, the entire logistic move being made by airlift. The group then moved to the U.S. in early December 1945. MAG-22 had been formed on Midway in the spring of 1942, and it saw home for the first time that December.

Headquarters of the 2nd Marine Air Wing, with MAGs 14 and 33, remained at Okinawa until February 1946, when they returned to the continental U.S. Marine air units in the occupation of China



The use of helicopters in combat was pioneered by Marine Corps HRS-1s in Korea.

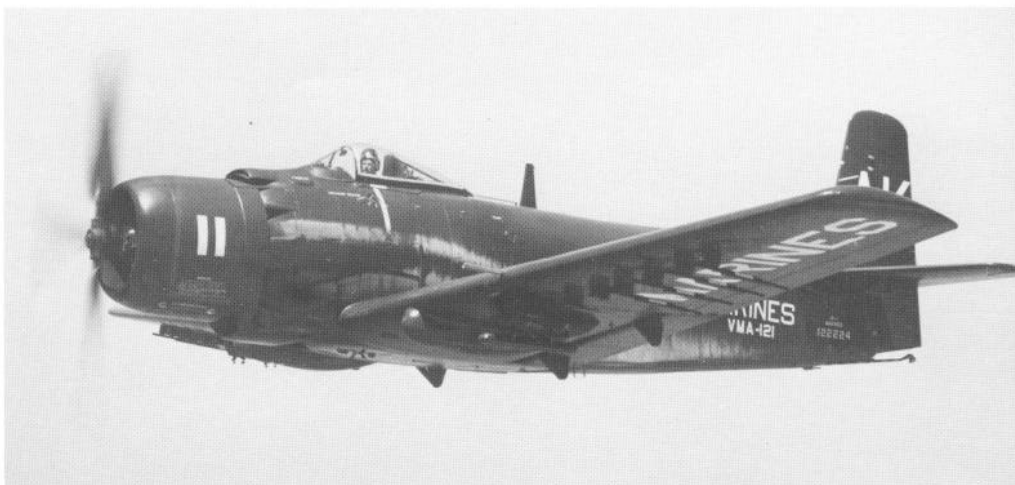
consisted of the 1st Marine Air Wing and its attached groups, MAGs 12, 24, 25 and 32. Their mission was primarily to fly show-of-strength patrols, and provide reliable air transport and logistic services to all Marine units in the occupation, MAGs 12 and 32 were transferred back to Marine Air West in California in the spring of 1946. Remaining units were gradually reduced, the last element, Air Fleet Marine Force WestPac, in January 1949.

In the 10 months from V-J Day to July 1, 1946, Marine Aviation went from 103 fighter and bomber squadrons to only 27, and in the next year the total dropped to 21. This level was held until June 30, 1950, when squadron strength dropped to 16, only three more squadrons than the total number in Marine Aviation on December 7, 1941. The Marine Corps was not alone in this seeming rush backward to a state of unpreparedness.

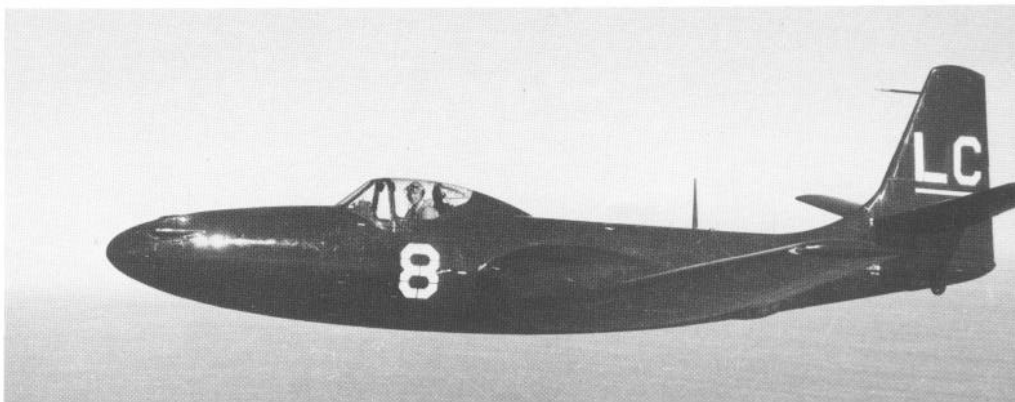
### III. Post-WW II Operations

The period following the end of WW II brought a cascade of technological advances, unprecedented in both volume and application to almost all fields of endeavor. For aviation in general, the advent of the jet age opened new horizons in transportation and worldwide communication, but for military aviation it was a new ball game. An era of range extension, compression of speed/time factors, routine all-weather operations, and greatly improved weapons delivery accuracy.

The major problems that dominated the period following V-J Day, from the Navy's and Marine Corps' viewpoints, was the effect of the atom bomb on future amphibious operations. For the planners and architects of tactics, the problem boiled down to devising some means of rapid concentration of troops from greatly increased dispersal distances that went with fleet cruising dispositions in the atomic age. It had to be a swift concentration in order to gain the relative safety of close contact with defending forces in minimum time, to lessen the likelihood of enemy atomic attack. The most promising design for a vehicle which might accomplish this turned out to be that of rotary-wing aircraft. The operational concepts were explored by special boards and study groups at Quantico, while the Division of Marine Aviation was investigating every rotary-wing aircraft idea that industry was trying to put into flying form. A developmental helicopter squadron, HMX-1, was formed at Quantico, and much in the same way that the development of amphibious landing craft was pursued in the thirties, each idea was given consideration and tested.



VMA-121 introduced Marine Corps ADs to Korean combat. The aircraft were able to carry heavier loads than the B-17s of WW II.



Jet fighter squadrons became a part of Marine Corps Aviation with the introduction of the McDonnell FH-1 Phantom.

Progress was slow because the state of the art was in its infancy but, by the early fifties, some realistic capabilities were in hand.

The first major surprise of the post-WW II years came when, in late June 1950, the United States responded in crisis fashion to the North Korean invasion of the new Republic of South Korea (RoK), just four years and nine months after V-J Day.

### IV. Korean War

On June 25, the North Koreans attacked with nine well-equipped infantry divisions, spearheaded by one armored division equipped with Soviet-built T-34 tanks. The RoK forces were no match for the invaders. Seoul fell on June 28, and its near collapse was faced by the U.S. and the United Nations (UN) in the first week of the war.

The United States responded to the invasion of South Korea both independently and through strong support and leadership in a UN resolution condemning the breaking of world peace by the North Koreans. President Truman

gave General MacArthur the go-ahead to send Army units into Korea from Japan and to take other actions in support of the shattered RoK forces. In addition to the Army forces, a naval blockade of the entire Korean coast was ordered, and Air Force units based in Japan were authorized to bomb specific targets in North Korea.

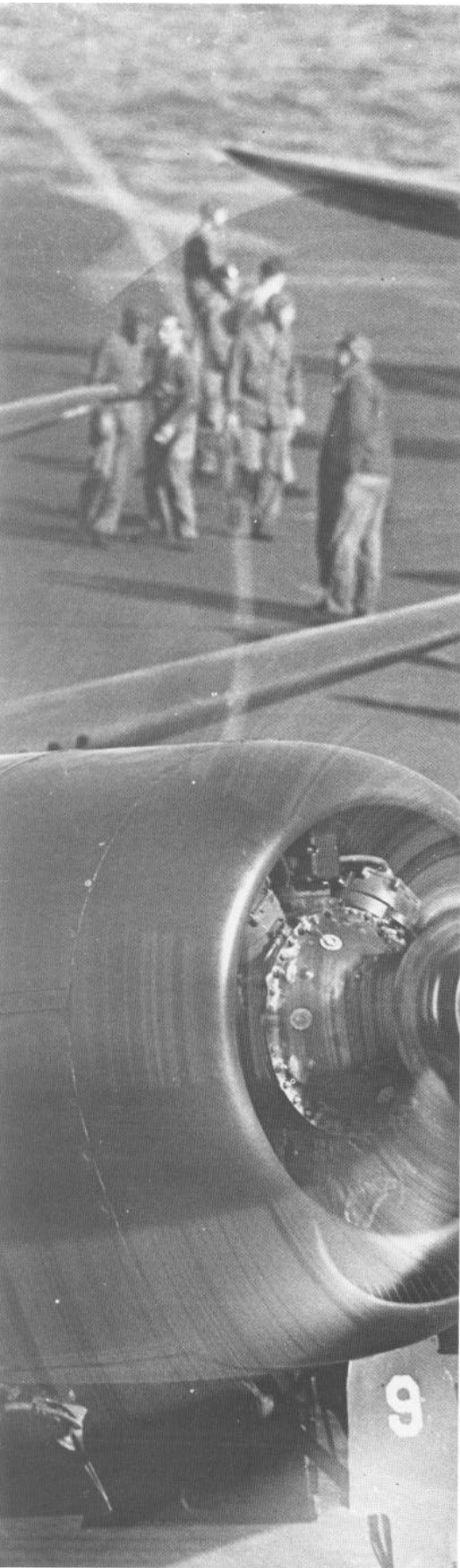
In response to urgent requests for U.S. reinforcements, the First Provisional Marine Brigade was activated on July 7. It was an air-ground team composed mainly of the Fifth Marine Regiment and MAG-33, both based on the West Coast. The time and space factors in the activation and deployment of the brigade were extraordinary. Normally, after the cutbacks and reductions following WW II, the division-wing teams on both coasts would have been hard pressed to deploy one reinforced brigade of regiment-group size in 30 days, let alone the seven days required in this case.

At departure, the strength of the brigade was 6,534. MAG-33 totaled 192 officers and 1,358 enlisted men, and was composed mostly of VMFs 214 and 323, night-fighter squadron VMF(N)-513 and



Still going strong, the F4U was the primary fighter of the Marine Corps in Korea, both aboard ship and ashore.





VMO-6. An important component of VMO-6 was a detachment of four HO3S-1 Sikorsky helicopters, hurriedly assigned and moved to El Toro from HMX-1 at Quantico. Aircraft strength at deployment added up to 60 F4Us, eight OYs and the four HO3S-1s. The original plan to hold the brigade in Japan temporarily was abandoned. This was a result of the deteriorating position of the UN command in Korea which, by the fourth week of the war, had drawn into a perimeter-type defense of the port of Pusan at the southern tip of the peninsula. MAG-33 shipping had been directed to Kobe and debarkation began there on July 31. The fighter squadrons were flown off the CVE *Badoeng Strait* to Itami near Osaka, where they were checked for combat by the ground crews, and hastily transported overland from Kobe. With one refresher hop at Itami, VMF-214 landed aboard the CVE *Sicily* for operations on August 3 and, on August 5, VMF-323 returned to *Badoeng Strait* for the same purpose.

VMF(N)-513 was assigned to the 5th Air Force (5th AF) for control and began shore-based operations from Itazuke airfield on the southern island of Kyushu. Its mission was to fly night heckler operations over the brigade, while the two carrier-based units provided close air support. On arrival at Kobe, a tank landing ship (LST) was waiting to reembark Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron (MTACS) Two and the ground echelon of VMO-6 for transport to Pusan. The aircraft of VMO-6 were readied at Kobe and Itami, and ferried to Pusan by air. Thus the air-ground integrity of the brigade was intact as it entered its first combat less than 30 days after activation, a truly remarkable achievement.

At the time of the commitment to action of the brigade, the UN defense had contracted to a perimeter around the southernmost port of Pusan. It was vital that the perimeter be reduced no further, since the port was the logistic link to a viable base position in support of a UN recovery on the peninsula. To bring this to reality, the Marines were accorded the honor of restoring the confidence of UN troops by destroying the myth that the North Koreans were somehow invincible. Like the deployments aboard the fast carriers in WW II to help thwart the kamikaze threat, the basing of VMFs 214 and 323 aboard *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait* again showed the wisdom of the long-standing commonality policies between Naval and Marine Aviation.

From *Sicily* in the form of eight *Corsairs*, came the first Marine offensive action of the war. Eight VMF-214 F4Us took off at 1630 on August 3, 1950. They carried incendiary bombs and rockets and made numerous strafing runs. VMF-323 joined the fray from *Badoeng Strait*

on August 6. Because the carriers were so close to the front lines of the perimeter, the strikes could reach their targets in a matter of minutes at almost any point where support was requested. MAG-33 aircraft were constantly orbiting on station over the front line as the ground forces advanced, and communications within the air-ground team were steady, from the tactical air control parties (TACP) with the battalions all the way back to the brigade headquarters. The air support system, controlled by the active presence of Marine Tactical Air Control Squadron Two and VMO-6 at brigade headquarters from August 6 on, was a complete success.

The 5th AF exercised overall control of tactical air operations in Korea but Marine Aviation units, as components of an integrated Fleet Marine Force, operated in support of the brigade as their highest priority, and in support of other UN units as a lower priority. The brigade control organization consisted of three battalion tactical air control parties and one regimental TACP, each consisting of one aviation officer, an experienced and fully-qualified pilot, and six enlisted technicians. In addition, there were the facilities and personnel of MTACS-2 at brigade headquarters, as well as the Brigade Air Section of the staff. There was also the Brigade Observation Section, consisting of the tactical air observer, three gunnery observers, and the light observation and rotary-wing aircraft of VMO-6.

The foregoing gives an abbreviated description of the brigade air support system which operated very effectively through some of the most rugged fighting of the Korean War. In addition, brigade air in the case of VMO-6 established so many "firsts" with their helicopters during the period that it was obvious that a major tactical innovation was in the making. An adjacent Army infantry regiment summed up the air component performance in the perimeter: "The Marines on our left were a sight to behold. Not only was their equipment superior or equal to ours, but they had squadrons of air in direct support. They used it like artillery. It was 'Hey, Joe, this is Smitty. Knock the left off that ridge in front of Item Company.' They had it day and night. It came off nearby carriers and not from Japan with only 15 minutes of fuel to accomplish the mission."

Gen. MacArthur asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the 1st Marine Division, with appropriate air in the form of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. General Lemual C. Shepherd knew full well that the understrength division could hardly deploy the reinforced Fifth Marines to the brigade, let alone field the balance of the division, but he had an abiding faith in the

loyalty and performance potential of the Marine Corps Reserve. The reserve, ground and air, came through and in less than 60 days after receiving the initial orders, both the wing and division made the landing at Inchon on September 15.

With the strengths of the division and the wing being only at 7,779 and 3,733, respectively, there was no way war-strength manning levels could be reached and maintained without drawing heavily on both the ground and aviation organized reserve contingents. Division war strength ran about 25,000 and the wing about 9,500. On July 19, 1950, mobilization of the Marine Corps Reserve was authorized. The first reservists arrived at Camp Pendleton and El Toro on July 31, and by utilizing some units and personnel of the 2nd Division and 2nd Wing on the East Coast, the 1st MarDiv and the 1st MAW were able to realize their scheduled mount-out dates of

August 10-15. Because many reservists were combat veterans of WW II, only about 10 percent required any form of basic indoctrination and training. The fact that personnel were well-trained, experienced and seasoned was a key factor, particularly in aviation, since the total time required from commencement of pilot training to operational status is a matter of some two years. The Marine Corps Reserve made the Marine Corps force in readiness a reality of the Korean War.

The sky over the objective area was to be divided between the air units of Joint Task Force Seven of the Navy, and those of X Corps. The command was designated by the 1st MAW as Tactical Air Command, X Corps (TAC X Corps) with principal units VMFS 212 and 312, plus VMF(N)s 513 and 542. The command of X Corps was given to Gen. Cushman who had MAG-33 which was

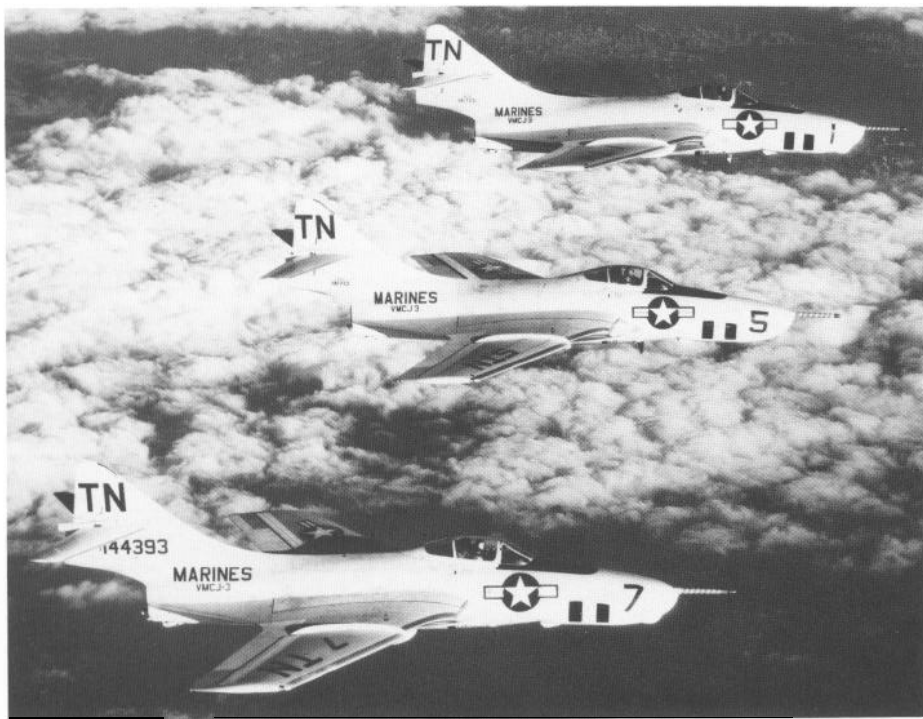
under Colonel Frank Dailey. Close support for the landing was assigned to the task group, including the two small carriers *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait*, still operating with VMFS 214 and 323.

The 1st MAW designated MTACS-2, which had controlled air support for the brigade, to function in that capacity for the landing and, upon establishment of X Corps ashore, to then continue to patrol for TAC X Corps.

A primary and crucial objective in the Inchon landing was Wolmi-do Island. Preparation of Wolmi-do began on September 10, with attacks by VMFs 214 and 323 with bombs, rockets and napalm. The *Corsairs* literally blackened the entire island with napalm to the extent that, during the second day of attacks, the whole island appeared to be ablaze. During the afternoon of September 15, VMFs 214 and 323, plus three squadrons of Navy *Skyraiders*, alternately blasted Inchon, integrating their strikes with naval gunfire from 1430 right up to H-hour. The successful outcome was indeed welcome.

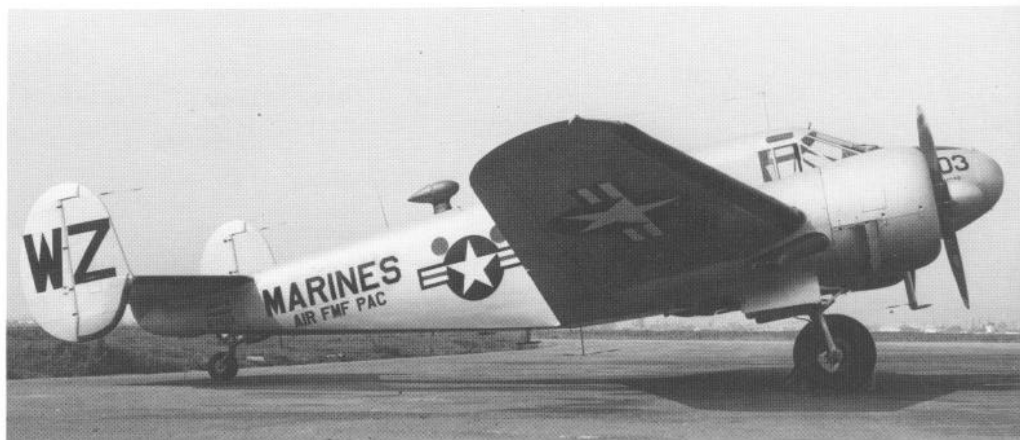
During the advance from the beachhead, which commenced the day following the landing, the air support control system functioned precisely as previously described. One of the key objectives of the assault phase and the advance toward Seoul was the capture of Kimpo airfield. As the objective areas widened and expanded with the advance, however, it was essential to bring in more shore-based aviation to meet the demand quickly on a constantly broadening front. The field was captured and declared secure in the mid-morning of September 18. The first plane to land at Kimpo was an HO3S of VMO-6 which brought Gen. Shepherd and Colonel Krulak.

Gen. Cushman established his headquarters at Kimpo on September 19, and was quickly joined by MTACS-2, Marine Ground Control Intercept Squadron (MGCIS) 1 and VMO-6. The first fighter squadron of MAG-33 to check in was VMF(N)-542 with five F7Fs,



VMCJ-3, with its Grumman F9F-8Ps, was one of three Marine Corps squadrons to provide photoreconnaissance support.

Beech SNBs provided small transport and multiengine training throughout WW II and into the 1970s.



landing late in the afternoon of the 19th. *Corsairs* of VMFs 212 and 312 landed shortly after 542 and also went into action on the 20th. During the transition of the squadrons assigned to MAG-33 from MAG-12 in Japan, the operational burden of Marine air support was handled entirely by the two CVE-based *Corsair* squadrons, VMFs 214 and 323, administratively assigned to MAG-12. Also supporting the move forward of the division-wing team into the Korean peninsula was VMF(N)-513, still operating from Itazuke AFB in Japan. Control of air support had passed from the Amphibious Force Commander to MTACS-2 ashore on D-plus-2, when the Landing Force Commander (1st MarDiv) declared he was ready to assume control.

With Kimpo in hand, the next major objective became the forced crossing of the Han and the taking of the essential key terrain from which to launch the assault on Seoul properly. MAGs 12 and 33 made their contributions to these endeavors by rapidly increasing their strengths and capabilities at Kimpo, and through strikes against redeployment and reinforcing moves by the communists attempting to improve the defenses of the city.

From September 19 on, both MAGs 12 and 33 flew "maximum effort" schedules in close support of both the 1st and the 5th Marines in their assaults toward the city. Typical during this period was a flight of five *Corsairs* led by Lieutenant Colonel Lischeid of VMF-214 which effectively broke up a threatened counterattack on Hill 105-S, held by the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines. On the 24th, on the east slopes of Hill 56, VMF-323 dropped 500-pound bombs only 100 yards in front of the attacking Marines, F Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, enabling them to seize the high ground of their objective.

The supply lines of the North Korean invading forces had been cut totally and the Inchon landing had halted the North Korean army.

During the period of the Inchon-Seoul operation, September 15-October 7, the 1st MarDiv suffered 2,450 battle casualties. The division took 6,492 North Korean prisoners and estimates of total enemy casualties added up to 13,666, most of whom were counted dead on the battlefield. These figures represent a ratio of better than eight to one, a commendable performance considering the speed with which the air-ground team was put together and deployed. It says much for the force-in-readiness concept of the Marine Corps and for the wisdom of maintaining a viable, strong and loyal Marine Corps Reserve, ground and air.

When it became clear that the landing had achieved a total rout of the North

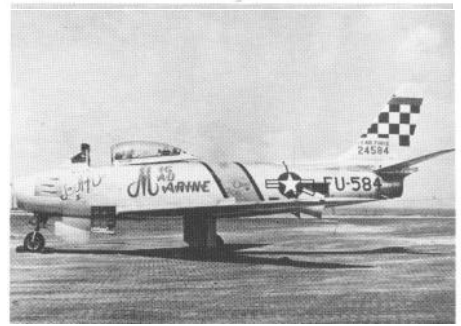
Koreans, Commander in Chief, Far East (CINCFE) made plans for the follow-up. It was decided that the UN command could conduct pursuit operations beyond the 38th parallel into North Korea but the authority for Gen. MacArthur to deploy his forces was burdened with several limitations. Briefly, no force other than those of the Republic of Korea could enter if there was a clear indication of Soviet or Chinese entry. Also, there could be no attack of any type against any portion of Chinese or Soviet territory. Further, only RoK forces would be deployed in those provinces of North Korea bordering on the Soviet Union or Manchuria.

Generally, the plan was for the 8th Army to advance along the axis; the RoK II Corps in the center and the RoK I Corps up the East Coast direct to Wonsan. The 1st Marine Division would make an assault landing at Wonsan and the 7th Army Division would follow ashore in an administrative landing. After establishment ashore at Wonsan, the X Corps would then advance west to join up with 8th Army. The entire force would then advance north to two phase lines; only RoK forces would advance beyond the second phase line, in keeping with the restrictions mentioned above. The 8th Army would cross the parallel on October 15 and the Wonsan landing was set for a D-day of October 20.

The discovery that the harbor and approaches to Wonsan were sown with rather sophisticated Russian mines of all kinds made it impossible for any landing to be made until the harbor was safely swept. The delays entailed in the sweeping, combined with the early taking of Wonsan by the RoK I Corps, reversed the normal order in amphibious operations. When the assault elements of the division finally landed at Wonsan, they were welcomed ashore by the already well-established Marine Aviation units.

On October 13, General Field Harris, commanding the 1st MAW and TAC X Corps, flew into Wonsan and decided to begin operations there immediately. VMF-312 flew in from Kimpo on the 14th, and wing transports brought in 210 personnel of the headquarters and VMF(N)-513 the same day. Two LSTs sailed from Kobe with MAG-12 equipment and personnel, while some bombs and rockets were flown in on the planes of VMF(N)-513. On the 16th, VMFs 214 and 323, still on board *Sicily* and *Badoeng Strait*, began operations at Wonsan, covering the minesweeping activities until October 27.

With the change from an assault to an administrative landing at Wonsan, the 1st MAW was placed under the control of Far East Air Force, with delegation of control to the 5th AF north of the 38th parallel. This required the daily



An Air Force F-86 flown by John Glenn while on exchange duty in Korea.

operations schedule to be submitted to 5th AF at Seoul by 1800 of the previous day. The distance involved and relatively poor communications made it extremely difficult to get clearance back in time. This was resolved between Gen. Harris and General Partridge, Commanding General 5th AF, with permission for the former to plan and execute missions for X Corps in northeast Korea without waiting for 5th AF clearance.

With the major changes in strategy that accompanied the collapse of the North Koreans, and the rapid advances of 8th Army and the two RoK Army Corps to the north, CINCFE issued some new directions which affected X Corps and the Marines directly. One aspect was an order for the 1st MarDiv to "advance rapidly in zone to the Korean northern border."

### Chosin Reservoir

The 1st MarDiv command post was moved to Hungnam on November 4, with the 7th and 5th Marines operating north, closing the "stretch" to less than 60 miles. Wonsan, from the viewpoint of Marine Aviation, was looking like a bypassed Japanese base from WW II. The concentration of the division north of Hungnam, in its march to the Yalu River, made the airfield at Yonpo increasingly attractive to the 1st MAW because it was in the center of the Hungnam-Hamhung area. This meant that response times for close air support would be considerably reduced. On November 6, MAG-33 was ordered to Yonpo from Japan, and was operating there by November 10, in time to receive VMF-212 from Wonsan. On the 15th, VMF-214 was ordered ashore from *Sicily* and set up at Wonsan with MAG-12 supporting the squadron as best it could.

By November 27, the 1st MarDiv was concentrated in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir, with the command post at Hagaru, the 7th and 5th Marines at Yudamni, and the 1st Marines along the main supply route with a battalion each at Chinhung-ni, Koto-ri and Hagaru.