

***Lt. Colonel Hodge Samuel Escue (Sam Escue)***  
***February 6, 1923 - Fort Worth, Texas — May 12, 2016 - Fayetteville, Arkansas***

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Hodges Samuel "Sam" Escue, (Lt. Colonel) 0-5, a resident of Prairie Grove, Arkansas, was born on February 6, 1923, in Fort Worth, Texas, the son of Wilburn and Velma Sparks Escue. He passed away on May 12, 2016, at Washington Regional Medical Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Fayetteville.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Charlene Escue the daughter of Sidney Claud and Mary Emily Bristow Dean. She was born April 29, 1926 in Lamesa, Texas, and died December 13, 1994 at her home in Prairie Grove, Arkansas. She was preceded in death by one sister, Marjorie Dean Lewis and two brothers, Edmond Dean and Jeff Dean. At the time of her death she was survived by one brother, Douglas Dean and four sisters, Nora Dean May, Cecil Dean Kingston, Janet Dean Baker, and Della Dean Doty.

Survivors at the time of his death include his wife, Janet (Bowden) Escue; two step-children, John Kirkpatrick, and Kimberly Thornton.

Funeral service were held at 10:00 a.m., Monday, May 16, 2016 at Luginbuel Funeral Home. Burial was in the Prairie Grove Cemetery.

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**Hodges Samuel "Sam" Escue** served in the United States Army for an impressive 23 years, ultimately achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. His dedication and commitment to service were unwavering, leaving a lasting impact on his community and country.

His legacy extends beyond his military service. Notably, he was a dedicated member of the community, contributing to the well-being of Prairie Grove. His impact is remembered with gratitude.

Hodges Samuel "Sam" Escue received several awards and honors during his distinguished military career. Some of these accolades include:

These decorations reflect his dedication, sacrifice, and commitment to serving our nation.

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He received the following Decoration, Medals, Badges, Commendations, Citations and Campaign Ribbons Awarded.

- 1) The (BSM) Bronze Star Medal is A United States Armed Forces decoration awarded to members of the United States Armed Forces for heroic achievement.
- 2) The (ROK PUC) Presidential Unit Citation if a military unit award of the government of Republic of Korea.
- 3) The (Am Def Svc Mdl) awarded to persons who served on active duty between September 8, 1939 and December 7, 1941.
- 4) The (As-Pac Camp Mdl) serving in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater between December 7, 1941 and March 2, 1946.
- 5) The (WW II Vic Mdl) World War II Victory Medal was for service medal of the United States military established by an Act of Congress on July 6, 1945.

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- 6) The (O/S Bars (2)), During WW II it was often informally referred to as a “Hershey bar”.
  - 7) The (RVCM W/DEV-60), awarded the Vietnam War (Second Indochina War) by the South Vietnamese government of the Vietnam Campaign Medal.
  - 8) The (Silver Star) awarded for singular acts of valor or heroism over a brief period such as one or two days of a battle.
  - 9) The (NDSM W/OAK Leaf Cluster) prior to the late-1970, members of the Army had received two NDSM (Korean era).
  - 10) The (Korean Svc Mdl), Korea Defense Service Medal.
  - 11) The ( GCM), Officially is awarded for exemplary behavior, efficiency, and fidelity in active Federal Military service.
  - 12) The (UN Svc Mdl), United Nations medallions issued to denote service with UN peacekeeping mission.
  - 13) The (Phil Lib Rib), Philippine Liberation Medal.
  - 14) The ( Am Camp Mdl), Army’s Parachutist Badge awarded to personnel completed the US Army Basic Airborne Course.
  - 15) The (Parach Bdge), completion of the United States Army Airborne School Basic Airborne Course or free fall parachute training.
  - 16) The (Glider Bdge), glider airborne unit.
  - 17) The (AFEM), participated in a United States military operation and encountered foreign armed opposition.
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## **THE CHOSIN CHRONOLOGY**

Battle of the Changjin Reservoir, 1950

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

### **HODGES SAMUEL ESCUE**

Lt. Col. Hodges S. “Sam” Escue, USA-Rct, know as “Hodges” back in 1950, was a liaison officer in the S-3 section of Headquarters, RCT-31, survived the trek with Task Force Drysdale to Hagaruri, SAVED DOZENS OF SOLDIERS EAST OF Chosin and never received recognition for his heroic feat. Hodges Escue played an important role as a platoon leader in Item Company during our attack to the top of the Funchilin Pass. For him I am truly thankful for friendship and advice throughout the years.

## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to the memory of more than one-thousand soldiers of the 31st Regimental Combat Team (RCT-31), 7th Infantry Division, who were lost during the battle east of the Chosin Reservoir, 27 November - 2 December 1950, many whose remains to this day rest in the soil adjacent to the Changjin Reservoir. Those soldiers fought for four days and five nights, preventing two Chinese Communist Divisions from driving south and taking the key junction at Hagaru-ri, thereby saving the 1st Marine Division and enabling them to break out to the sea.

## **PREFACE**

The Chosin Chronology has had as its driving force a combat experience in a foreign land, a type of experience remembered by a few, most of whom saw that action from the rear sight of a rifle, thereby limiting their knowledge and understanding of the big picture. Because of the variety of experiences, there emerged various versions of what actually happened when and where. The Chosin campaign was actually a series of separate battles that took place between 27 November - 12 December 1950. Although the battle took place at the Changjin Reservoir in North Korea, many prefer the Japanese name Chosin because of the maps then available. That word then became the foundation for the frozen Chosin and also The Chosin Few, a Chosin veterans association.

When survivors of that campaign boarded ships and sailed out of the Hungnam harbor, those with enough energy took the time to stand at the rail to watch the mountains of North Korea recede into the distance, knowing that within those mountains lay the remains of more than a thousand soldiers. That was their farewell in December 1950. During those moments I had mixed feelings. On the one hand, I wanted to know more about the so-called Chosin Reservoir campaign, yet, and equally compelling, I felt the need to shake it loose and get on with life.

Years later former soldiers and marines were alerted by calls from other survivors, drawing them into a brotherhood, an association named The Chosin Few which had its first biannual reunion in 1985. It was during those early years when I once again sensed the need to know more about Chosin: what happened and why. They said it was a time for healing those deep inner-wounds that always remain after such a traumatic experience. As years went by the sound of semper fi rang loudly in reunion hallways while experiences voiced from lecterns continued to emphasize Yudam-ni, Hagaru-ri and the breakout from there, with little attention given to the east side of the reservoir which today, these many decades later, continues to be the resting place of more than a thousand soldiers. The story had to be told. That's when stories gave birth to more questions, with the answers to be divulged in the enclosed History of the Chosin Story. Yes, even the Chosin story has its own history.

During twenty years of research we concentrated on what happened. Eventually it led to the sequence of significant combat actions which we call The Chosin Chronology. This e-book consists of a compilation of documents that separate the wheat from the chaff, the basis of which is a sequential sketch in the form of words, maps and

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photographs. By following the chronology, one will emerge with a clear general understanding of what happened, and why.

Connected to the chronology are volumes of detailed information that are revealed as links to The Changjin Journal, documents published on the web page of the New York Military Affairs Symposium ([www.nymas.org](http://www.nymas.org)). Also included are archives of maps and photographs. The 47 maps that make up the chronology are of topographic quality created by Mel Coolbaugh who designed them for maximum understanding (and minimum clutter as found on military topo maps). These maps are supported by a Map Archive which contains sections of actual 1:50,000 or 1:250,000 topographic maps; helpful are elevations (contours) and 1,000 meter grid lines for quick reference to distances.

As you continue through the story of the Chosin, keep in mind that the words Chosin (printed on 1950 maps) and Changjin, the Korean name of the reservoir, are interchangeable herein.

George Arthur Rasula

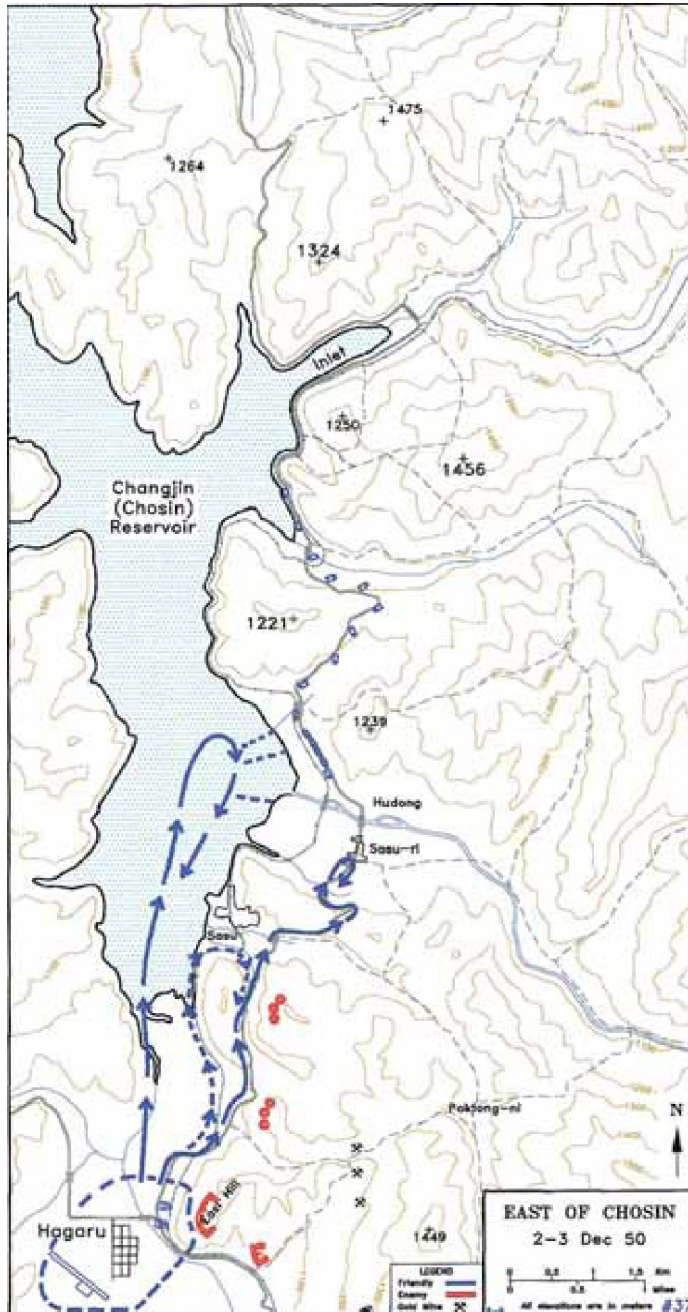
## **HISTORY OF THE CHOSIN STORY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Once the Chosin operation ended and X Corps departed North Korea, the only documents in existence were the command and after-action reports of the units that had the capability of producing them, that is, had enough survivors. In due time the units began to reconstruct what they could of the battle, as was the case in units of RCT-31. There were a few news articles written by reporters who had been present at Hagaru-ri, Koto-ri and further south to the coast.

**RESCUE EFFORTS EAST OF CHOSIN 2 - 3 DECEMBER**

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**Capt. Rasula and Lt. Escue at H/11 Marines CP/FDC  
Hagaru-ri. Photo by Unknown**

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While RCT 5 and 7 were breaking out from Yudam-ni, rescue efforts were helping wounded and cold casualties east of Chosin.

The lead man on the ice rescue effort was Lt. Col. Olin Beall who commanded the Marine Transportation Battalion. His team which operated on the reservoir ice reportedly rescued 325 soldiers. Also written is a claim that under cover of Corsairs he had walked the column of trucks on 2 December and counted 300 bodies. This feat was suspect ever since it was published, resulting in the questioning of survivors of that disaster.

Conclusion: Since the trucks with casualties were spread out from the bridge at Hudongni, a distance of four road-miles north to the bridge north of Hill 1221 as shown on this map, such a feat was not possible. American prisoners who were in the area at the time with their captors agree with this conclusion. We can only assume that he made an educated guess based on the vehicles he could see.

Unknown to past historians were efforts by ***Lt. Hodges "Sam" Escue*** of Headquarters, RCT-31, who, with jeep and driver, went up the east road and returned with 16 wounded soldiers. Then, realizing more were in the area, he borrowed two trucks and went back again, rescuing many more. Not satisfied, he later took a jeep and followed the narrow gauge railroad where he found a dead Korean youngster laying by the track, nothing more. During these trips he saw many Chinese soldiers on the ridges above the road, just watching.

And finally, historians have written that an infantry company with armor went up the east road in a rescue effort. This did not happen. It was a plan that was never executed. This fact was confirmed once again by the tank company commander, Col. Robert E. Drake and ***Lt. Col. Hodges S. Escue***. The author of this e-book, then captain assistant RCT S-3 under Lt. Col. Berry K. Anderson, senior Army officer at Hagaru-ri, concurs.

## **THE ATTACK BEGINS**

On 8 December the 1/1 Marines, supported by the Army 92nd AFA Battalion (155mm SP), a AAA Battery and some 73rd Engineers, moved out and took Hill 891 in a snowstorm. For the Koto-ri units the snowstorm helped or hindered, depending on one's point of view. Although it offered concealment, observed fire support was out of question.

On the right West side of the road heavy fire was received from Chinese positions on Objective A, and progress by 2/7 and 3/7 was slow. Marine 1/7 moving along the road had its problem with Chinese occupying a knoll on the immediate left, far below the advancing lead company of the Provisional Battalion. The reorganization at Koto-ri the previous night was able to provide one mini-battalion under Maj. Jones, with but two rifle companies, Capt. Rasula's Item Company followed by Capt. Kitz's King company.

On the left East sector the lead company, once again provisional Item Company which was no more than a platoon when they crossed the LD, followed the ridge line to Objective B without opposition. After having enough time for more men from Koto-ri to be brought forward by ***Lt. Escue***, they received orders and continued up the ridge in a snowstorm to Objective C where they suddenly encountered the Chinese. This was apparently a surprise for both sides as Item Company immediately launched an assault which killed defenders and drove others off the mountain, probably to the Gatehouse directly below which offered the only shelter for miles around. Once the objectives on both sides of the MSR were secured, the units remained on the highest ground of the Funchilin Pass for the coldest night of the Chosin campaign, a night during which Item Company lost more men to cold that they did for all causes since they left Hagaru-ri. Capt. Kitz positioned his King Company on a knob just below Item, scratching improvised shelter in the snow as they waited for relief after daylight. After this encounter there was no question that the Chinese in this sector had finally lost any ability to do serious battle. The next objective was the Gatehouse and Hill 1081.

One Four was about 15 yards to the left of Maj. Storms directing the aircraft. It was the best close air support you could ask for. Boyhood One Four, Capt. Stamford, was the tactical air controller for Faith's battalion. I walked with Maj. Storms and Capt. O'Neal for several minutes as we watched the air attacks coming almost directly at us. The Chinese were coming down the hill to the left toward the convoy. I crossed the swamp with several men and started up the road on the right side of the trucks. The fire was quite heavy and we took to the ditch and began crawling. It didn't take long before I realized there were too many dead men in the ditch. We got up and started toward the top of Hill 1221.

## **BEGINNING OF THE END - FIFTH NIGHT**

It was getting dark fast and the air cover departed about that time. When we reached the top of the hill we went toward the head of the convoy. We could see swarms of Chinese across the valley to the east. We went a few hundred yards along the top of the hill where there were many foxholes and some machine gun emplacements. We dropped off the hill to the right and there was an American tank disabled in the road. We stopped and learned against the steep bank above the road and took a smoke. It was still night as visibility was very poor which made it difficult to see enemy from friendly. There were wounded sitting beside the road.

We headed south and picked up more men, including a sergeant who took the lead. We encountered many roadblocks. We would leave the road and go to the railroad, and on to the lake, and back to the road. Sometimes we stayed in one place for thirty minutes, but it seemed like hours. When the shooting stopped, we would move out. I talked several times with the sergeant who was the point man. I knew who he was, but his name will not come back after all these years. He was a real quality NCO, one who would still listen and also make suggestions. We did not engage any of the roadblocks. We waited them out and went around them when the firing died down. When we came

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to the sawmill town it was light enough so I knew where we were. We could see the flashes from the artillery at Hagaru. We arrived at the Hagaru perimeter about 0200 hours, December 1, with about 15 men.

**EVACUATION**

I was debriefed on December 2 by ***Lt. Escue*** of Headquarters/31 who gave me at least a gallon of water, being dehydrated from consuming nothing more than snow. He also found me a place to sleep where I sacked out until the morning of December 3. When I awakened I discovered I could barely walk; my left knee was swollen from a fall down a railroad embankment, one of many falls that previous night. Capt. McClay and I checked into the aid station and were put on an evacuation flight to the Hamhung area [Yonpo airfield]. It was quite a takeoff for that fully loaded aircraft. Later that day we were evacuated to the Osaka Gen. Hospital in Japan. Capt. Sterling Morgan who was our 3/31 battalion surgeon was on our plane; he did a remarkable job at the reservoir. It had been a trying time for all.

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area at the time. He was accompanied by an officer from the G-3 section and one NCO. In this area was Tank Company, a platoon of Company A, 13th Engineer Bn, mess and supply personnel, and eventually a small aid station established by personnel who escaped the Medical Company ambush at Hill 1221. About a mile to the rear was Service Battery, 57th FA Bn, positioned between ammo dump at Hagaru-ri and the artillery batteries at the Inlet.

Further to the rear was the headquarters company commander on the way behind Lt. Col. Reidy's 2/31. With him were administrative and supply personnel. Farther back on the move was the Rear CP of RCT- 31 under the regimental executive officer, Lt. Col. Deshon, with administrative and logistics elements. Another attached unit that never made it to Chosin was a 155mm howitzer battery of the 31st FA Battalion (A/31FA), designated to replace C/57FA that remained with 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry (1/31) near Pukchong. These rapid changes taking place on a very tight time schedule caused many problems years later for historians when they tried to follow a paper trail to determine unit locations. In most cases, such a trail could never be found.

The S-3 (operations) section was near full strength in the schoolhouse CP at Hudong-ni. Newly promoted Lt. Col. Berry Anderson, the RCT S-3, was the senior officer. Maj. Carl Witte (S-2) was present with his assistant, Capt. William Dowell, although his intelligence sergeant was at the forward "jump" CP with Col. MacLean, as were most men of the S-1 section. Sgt. Joe Wells, S-3 operations sergeant, and his clerk Cpl. Lucian Choate were also present as witnessed by Wells' initials on the RCT Operations Order 25 that was delivered to the forward battalions late afternoon 27 Nov. by liaison officer Lt. Rolin Skilton. Later the status of the other two liaison officers was learned: ***Lt. Hodges Escue*** was caught in the Drysdale ambush and made it to Hagaru, while Lt. William Racek was at the rear CP with Lt. Col. Deshon. Supervising the nuts and bolts of the S-3 staff at Hudong-ni was Capt. George Rasula, who administered the S-3 section and coordinated the missions of the liaison officers. Capt. Ronald Alley, artillery liaison officer from the 57th FA Bn who was normally present in the operations center, had moved to the reservoir with his battalion (later captured). A small supply dump existed at Hudong-ni.

A regimental headquarters of the day did not have enough fat to be spread out in so many locations at such a critical time. The enemy chose a good time to attack because a larger American force, the 5th Marines, had moved to Yudam-ni and in doing so left the axis of the enemy's main effort east of Chosin defended by a much smaller force. From a friendly point of view the move was an advantage to the Marines by creating a more powerful force - the principle of mass - at Yudam-ni by consolidating two Marine regiments. On the other hand, had the enemy followed their original plan of attacking the night of 26 November, they would have been engaging one regiment on each side of the reservoir at a time when the convoys of RCT-31 were yet a half-day from the Chosin. These scenarios make interesting war games for our military schools.

Most units formed perimeters for the night with the RCT disposed for an attack to the north. Command and control was sacrificed when MacLean chose to go to his forward CP for the night, once again dividing the RCT's command function. Personnel of the Forward CP eventually became riflemen, joining 1/32 and 3/31 for the disastrous breakout



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attempt. Approaching units of the RCT were cut off when the Chinese severed the MSR between Koto-ri and Hagaru-ri, leaving a small detachment at Koto-ri, while farther south Lt. Col. Deshon would soon be in the process of organizing a new regimental headquarters which eventually came under command of Col. John Gavin. Those few survivors who made it to Hamhung would meet strangers, replacements who had arrived to fill the ranks of the company.

MEDICS FACE TRAUMA The first officer of Medical Company to arrive at the schoolhouse CP was Capt. Clifford Hancock, a medical service officer (MSC) who, acting as the motor officer, was at the tail

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Capt. Rasula and ***Lt. Escue*** outside H/11 Marine artillery Command Post which was used as a gathering point for survivors from the east side of the reservoir (background).  
—Photo by unknown

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***Lt. Escue*** and Capt. Rasula with officers of H/11 Marine artillery at north sector of Hagaru perimeter.  
—Photo by unknown

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THE CHOSIN CHRONOLOGY

<https://mcoecbamcoepwprd01.blob.core.usgovcloudapi.net/library/DonovanPapers/korea/TheChosinChronology.pdf>