

= 3rd Ranger Infantry Company (United States) =

The 3rd Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) was a Ranger light infantry company of the United States Army active during the Korean War . As a small special forces unit , it specialized in irregular warfare .

Four Airborne Ranger Companies were formed in the fall of 1950 . They were trained and graduated on November 15 . By the end of 1950 , the 1st , 2nd , and 4th Companies had deployed early for combat in Korea . The 3rd Ranger Company had been drawn upon heavily to replace training losses of the deploying companies . It received 80 trainees and completed a second cycle of Ranger training at the Ranger Training Center at Fort Benning , Georgia . The company deployed to South Korea in March 1951 and was assigned to the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division for four months , where it was used as a reconnaissance and scouting unit , probing North Korean People 's Volunteer Army positions . The company is known for its " Battle of Bloody Ridge " on 11 April where , on its first mission , it was able to push back the opposing force . The company later supported the 3rd Infantry Division at the Battle of the Imjin River .

Later in the summer , the company was used as a stealth " target acquisition " force , infiltrating Chinese positions and spotting concentrations of troops and equipment for artillery attack . The company was deactivated on 1 August 1951 , and was merged with the U.S. 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team alongside all other Ranger units .

= = Origins = =

With the 25 June 1950 outbreak of the Korean War , the North Korean People 's Army had invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK) with 90 @,@ 000 well @-@ trained and equipped troops who had easily overrun the smaller and more poorly equipped Republic of Korea Army . The United States (U.S.) and United Nations (UN) began an intervention campaign to prevent South Korea from collapsing . The U.S. troops engaged the North Koreans first at the Battle of Osan , being badly defeated on 5 July by the better @-@ trained North Koreans . From then on , the U.S. and UN saw a steady stream of defeats until they had been pushed back to the tip of the peninsula , into a 140 @-@ mile (230 km) -long fortification dubbed Pusan Perimeter by August . At the same time , North Korean agents began to infiltrate behind UN lines and attack military targets and cities .

UN units , spread out along the Pusan Perimeter , were having a difficult time repelling these units as they were untrained in combating guerrilla warfare . North Korean special forces units such as the NK 766th Independent Infantry Regiment had defeated ROK troops and used irregular warfare tactics effectively , prompting Army Chief of Staff General J. Lawton Collins to order the creation of an elite force which could " infiltrate through enemy lines and attack command posts , artillery , tank parks , and key communications centers or facilities . " All U.S. Army Ranger units had been disbanded after World War II because they required time @-@ consuming training , specialization , and expensive equipment .

With the defeat of the NK 766th Regiment at the Battle of P 'ohang @-@ dong , and the strength of U.S. infantry units in question , U.S. commanders felt recreating Ranger units was essential . In early August , as the Battle of Pusan Perimeter was beginning , the Eighth United States Army , in command of all US forces in Korea , ordered Lieutenant Colonel John H. McGee , the head of its G @-@ 3 Operations miscellaneous division , to create a new experimental Army Ranger unit , the Eighth Army Ranger Company . In the meantime , the Ranger Training Center was established at Fort Benning , Georgia .

= = Organization = = =

With the successful development of the Eighth Army Ranger Company as a " test " unit for the United States Army to bring back Army Ranger units , additional Ranger companies were ordered . The companies were small light infantry special forces units which specialized in infiltration and irregular warfare .

The new 3rd Army Ranger Infantry Company was formulated based on the Table of Organization and Equipment documents of Ranger units in World War II , all of which had been deactivated . The 3rd Ranger Infantry Company was organized into three platoons . A headquarters element of five men oversaw the platoons . However , due to lack of battalion support for clerical , transportation , supply and mess kitchen support , 3rd company had to acquire the personnel , vehicles , and other equipment needed to support their operations . This resulted in the involvement of considerably more highly trained personnel than the five called for by the TOE . Each platoon had three squads of ten men each , with a platoon sergeant and assistant platoon sergeant (a.k.a platoon guide) . Each squad had two fireteams of five men each and one man in each fireteam carried a M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle . The BAR was the largest weapon in the platoon . The 60mm M2 mortars , the 57mm recoilless rifles , and the M20 Super Bazookas were carried on the company M35 2 ½ ton cargo truck but seldom used . The company was authorized two vehicles ; an M38 Jeep and an M35 2 ½ ton cargo truck . The company was more heavily armed than the Eighth Army Ranger Company but less in strength and fire power than standard infantry companies . Like the other numbered Ranger companies , its organization called for five officers and 107 enlisted men in three platoons .

The troops for the Ranger company were to be Airborne qualified , so the Ranger Training Center heavily recruited troops from the 82nd Airborne Division and 11th Airborne Division who had already completed United States Army Airborne School . In spite of this , only one Ranger operation in the conflict ever required an airborne landing . At the first Airborne Ranger graduation in November 1950 , each Ranger was given a black and gold Ranger Tab as a shoulder sleeve insignia . A few days later , each Ranger was issued a blue and white tab and instructed to sew it above the Ranger Tab . The Airborne Ranger Companies then in Korea were deactivated on August 1 , 1951 . They were merged into the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team to bring them back up to strength with airborne @-@ qualified combat @-@ experienced replacements . The 187th had been moved to Kyushu , Japan ? s southern island to take on a (then Top Secret) mission to save the UN negotiators at Kaesong , North Korea . All of the Ranger officers and top NCO ? s met in a mess hall at Camp Chickamauga , Beppu , Kyushu , Japan . Some of the senior NCOs had been WWII Rangers . At this meeting , they designed a scroll @-@ type patch similar to the WWII Ranger patches . In the center , was Ranger on top and Airborne underneath . On the left was the company number . On the right was ? Co . ? . At a later date , back in the states , more patches were made with Airborne on top and Ranger underneath .

= = History = =

= = = Formation and training = = =

Of a pool of 5 @, @ 000 applicants , the Ranger Training School selected 22 officers and 314 enlisted men for the first three Ranger companies on 2 October , which were entirely white . A fourth , all African @-@ American company was organized several days later . The 3rd Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne) was organized on 9 October 1950 , assuming the lineage of A Company of the 3rd Ranger Battalion . It had an initial strength of 135 enlisted men and five officers . The unit was formally activated on 25 October 1950 at Fort Benning . It was placed under command of Captain Jesse Tidwell and Bob Channon , who would be later promoted to Captain and in December , 1950 , to executive officer .

The Rangers trained extensively in reconnaissance , long @-@ range patrols , setting up roadblocks , land navigation , camouflage , concealment , and adjusting indirect fire . They undertook frequent live fire exercises , many at night , simulating raids , ambushes and infiltrations . The Rangers trained 60 hours per week and ran 5 miles (8 @. @ 0 km) each day and frequently held 20 miles (32 km) speed marches , which were considered traditions for Ranger training from World War II . The training for the numbered companies included much of the program used by second lieutenant Ralph Puckett to train the Eighth Army Ranger Company . In spite of a 30 percent dropout rate , most of the men completed the course and graduated 15 November 1950 .

While the 1st , 2nd and 4th Ranger Company each embarked for Korea shortly after their training was complete , the 3rd Ranger Company was retained at Fort Benning , to train the next cycle of Rangers along with the 5th , 6th , 7th and 8th Ranger Company . After providing fillers to 1st and 4th companies to cover their training losses , the 3rd had 40 men left . In mid @-@ December , they took an additional 80 men from 7th Company and completed a second cycle of Ranger training . This proved beneficial to the 3rd Company , as it was given cold @-@ weather training alongside the 5th and 8th companies at Fort Carson , Colorado . After the first training cycle was complete ; the Ranger units already in Korea had not received this training and were thus unprepared for the Korean winter . The 3rd Company also received additional training which better prepared it for combat , including tactics of the People 's Volunteer Army , which the other companies had learned in battle and tracer designation of targets during night attacks . They also received 57mm M18 Recoilless Rifles , however , these were kept on the cargo truck due to the necessity to break up a rifle team to man a crew @-@ served weapon , which didn 't happen . The entire company was trained to be their own forward observers for artillery . In March 1951 , the 3rd , 5th , and 8th Companies sailed for Korea , a trip which was fraught with frequent discipline problems as the Rangers continuously got into fights with U.S. Marines on board the troopship while en route . After spending one night in Kobe , Japan , the next morning they sailed for Pusan , South Korea .

= = = Bloody Nose Ridge = = =

The Rangers arrived in Korea on 24 March . They disembarked from the Army Transport Ship at Pusan . After spending a night or two there , all three companies continued on to Inchon on an LST Landing Ship , Tank , arriving at Inchon on 31 March . There , 3rd Airborne Ranger Company separated from its sister companies and was attached to the US 3rd Infantry Division near the Imjin River , where the division was engaged in an intense battle with Chinese forces , attempting to push them further north .

The 3rd Ranger Company entered action on 11 April , part of a tank @-@ infantry task force conducting aggressive reconnaissance in a wide valley near the river . Encountering a village , the 3rd Platoon cleared the village and killed two Chinese stragglers . After the lead elements of the tank company and the 3rd Platoon had taken the Kantongyon village , the tank company commander wanted to move his company west into the center of the valley before continuing north . Captain and now Executive Officer , Bob Channon was near the rear of the company column . CO , Jess Tidwell , riding with the tank Co , called Channon on the radio and instructed him to come up and take control of the 1st and 2nd Platoons . By the time Channon reached the two platoons , they were crossing over two small hills just north of Kantongyon . As they crossed over one of the hills , Channon and his radio operator were wounded by Chinese mortar rounds . Channon took the radio from Walker , who was now incapacitated , and joined the two platoons at the bottom of the hill . Channon then called Jess Tidwell for instructions , who responded , ? move out when the tanks move out . ? Two tanks had passed through a gap in the hills and were in front of them . Soon , the two tanks moved out at high speed to join their company in the center of the valley . As the Rangers started to move forward , toward the nose of a ridge from which the fire was coming about 700 @-@ 800 yards ahead , they began taking casualties from machine gun and rifle fire . About 100 yards out from the ridge , they received a heavy mortar barrage , resulting in a number of them being wounded . Channon also received a couple of burp gun rounds to his lower left leg . Shortly after , a couple of light tanks arrived . Pete Hamilton (1st Plt Ldr) and Channon crawled up on the tanks , bore @-@ sighted the guns on the machine guns and blew them away . About 30 yards out from a Chinese trench at the base of the ridge nose , they received a heavy volley of grenades . Abandoning protocol (once you start a charge , you are not supposed to hit the ground) , Channon , knowing that he ? d have no trouble getting his Rangers up again , had them hit the ground . When they got up , the Rangers took the ridge nose in a bayonet and grenade fight . When their position was secure , Platoon Sergeant Barber reported that they only had eight Rangers capable of continuing on . Pete Hamilton had been too seriously wounded to continue . Channon called Tidwell for instructions and was instructed to join the tanks and the 3rd Platoon in the center of the valley .

The 2nd Platoon had been supporting the 1st Platoon with enfilade fire on the hill from their left flank . Channon put the 2nd Platoon in the lead , followed by the remnant of the 1st Platoon . The tanks and the 3rd Platoon had moved up the center of the wide valley and were more than a thousand yards to the northwest . Fortunately , after about 300 yards of sniper fire from higher on the ridge to their right , they were able to gain cover from a 3 @-@ 4 foot field dyke , and then joined the 3rd Platoon in the center of the valley . Channon moved the company up around the tanks on a small hill ahead . The tank company commander then moved the tanks up to the final objective for the day about 300 @-@ 400 yards ahead . Jess Tildwell was with him , so Channon brought the company up to that small hill and got it organized . Bob Scully , Channon 's third radio operator for the day , was wounded when a mortar round hit . Jess Tildwell had Channon get on a tank with other wounded for the trip back to clearing station . On the way back Channon noticed that there was more than a two thousand yard gap before they saw any fighting elements . So before continuing on , he had a jeep take him to the tank battalion CP . He strongly suggested the gap be closed before dark , which was done and 3rd Company was replaced on line . In addition to those wounded who were able to continue on , four Rangers were killed along with 25 wounded and evacuated in this first engagement .

The company then advanced up the valley under sniper and artillery fire until it located and destroyed a Chinese communications and supply center at the end , before returning to 3rd Infantry Division lines . In all , they had killed over 100 Chinese in this fight , and the division commanders considered the mission a success in spite of the high casualty count . In this action , the Rangers adopted a new motto , " Die Bastard , die ! " [1] They also picked up the nickname ? Cold Steel Third ? , when division commander Major General Seoul , who was observing the action with other senior officers , was heard to say , ? There go my Rangers . They like that cold steel . ?

= = = Imjin River missions = = =

Despite suffering over 50 percent casualties by this time and with few reinforcements , 3rd Ranger Company remained on the line , and was used as a reconnaissance element for the division . As the 3rd Infantry Division advanced , pressing gains from the Chinese , the company was used to guard a vital bridge over the Hantan River . It then massed with several combat engineers and other division elements to form Task Force Rogers . The task force then probed north searching for Chinese concentrations , but did not encounter any Chinese troops .

On 19 April , the Chinese conducted a counteroffensive in the 3rd Infantry Division sector , first striking to the east , followed by a feint that struck near the Rangers ' position . The task force was assigned to rescue a group of five 3rd Division tanks that had been disabled 8 miles (13 km) inside Chinese territory . Advancing , they suppressed a Chinese ambush before the Chinese could attack , and advanced under mortar attack and took the hills surrounding the tanks . They then returned the stranded tanks to UN lines at a cost of two wounded .

On 22 April , the Rangers , tanks and engineers conducted another probe of the Chinese positions , to ensure they could not launch a surprise attack on nearby Republic of Korea Army formations . Encountering two Chinese companies dug in at a hill with one route of attack , Tidwell ordered a surprise attack on the hill , which was successful in pushing Chinese forces off the outlying fortifications .

It then moved to reinforce the British 29th Infantry Brigade , which was cut off on Hill 235 after ROK troops folded under attack . After two days of intense fighting and foot marching , the Rangers moved to relieve the British troops , despite itself being at only 67 percent strength . Encountering heavy resistance , they were initially unable to break through Chinese formations to relieve the British .

Chinese forces counterattacked , destroying a 3rd Infantry Division tank column sent to assist the Rangers and attacking the 3rd Ranger Company from three sides , as they dug into a hill . Though the Rangers eventually were forced to withdraw , the defense of the Rangers , the US 3rd Division and the British 29th Brigade had broken the momentum of the Chinese offensive .

= = = Target acquisition unit = = =

The 3rd Infantry Division then moved to the offensive , in early May 1951 they were used to scout for Chinese concentrations and then call in artillery to destroy them . These actions have been viewed by historians as one of few instances where Rangers in Korea were effectively employed , used as a stealthy infiltration force for terrain too difficult for conventional units .

On 11 May , with Chinese forces slackening their offensive , 3rd Ranger Company was recalled to Kimpo Airfield for parachute proficiency training , above the objections of the 3rd Infantry Division commanders who considered the company invaluable . The company spent several weeks in division reserve , and undertook various missions such as convoy security and guarding command posts , as well as surveillance and visiting patrols behind the front lines . In one of these rearguard actions , the Rangers evacuated a rundown village only to have one member of the unit , Corporal Dave Rauls , captured by three Chinese infiltrators .

By 17 June , the company was returned to the front and operated again as a target acquisition unit . Paired with 3rd Infantry Division 's reconnaissance company , an artillery battery and a forward air control party , they became known as " Task Force Ferret . " Positioned 6 miles (9 @. @ 7 km) ahead of the main division positions , the unit was also placed to warn the rest of the lines should the Chinese attack . By this time , however , the front lines in the battle had begun to largely stabilize , and as both armies fortified stationary positions , the Rangers infiltration abilities became unusable .

= = = Final mission and disbandment = = =

In July , the division was holding on the " Iron Triangle , " strategically important and defensible ground . In an attempt to strengthen its forces , the 3rd Infantry Division evacuated hills 682 and 717 at the southern base of the triangle , positioning the Rangers to appear as if they were still manned the hills . After eight days of patrols , Tidwell ordered an aggressive patrol to strike Chinese positions . Over three nights , they ambushed four Chinese patrols , causing several casualties and suffering few of their own .

On 10 July , the U.S. Army ordered the deactivation of all of its Ranger companies . The Army noted that the Ranger companies were only an exercise directed by The Pentagon which was complete . The 3rd Ranger Company was deactivated on 1 August 1951 in Korea . Like many of the other Ranger units , most of the Ranger veterans were folded into the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team , where their airborne skills could be used . Still , Operation Tomahawk was the last airborne jump of the war .

= = Awards and decorations = =

The 3rd Ranger Infantry Company was awarded three campaign streamers and two unit citations for its service in the Korean War . In 1953 , the unit was again designated A Company of the 3rd Battalion , 75th Ranger Regiment , that unit carries on the 3rd Ranger Company 's lineage .