

Historic Review on the 65th Infantry Regiment Court-martial

Report by the Department of Army's Center of Military History*

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A full copy of the report, including the End Notes is available on request. Please contact The Puerto Rican-American Research Institute, P.O. Box 2274, Montgomery Village, MD 20886 or e-mail ernest377@yahoo.com, charges for postage and copying will be applied.

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Executive Summary

- A review of the performance of the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry in the Korean War provides important insights not only into the regiment's unique problems, but also into the status of the United States Army at one of the most critical junctures in its history. They underscore the impact personnel rotation policies, racial and organizational prejudices, and small unit leaders can have on combat readiness and battlefield successes. What has been called "The Forgotten War" is thus rich in lessons the Army of today can never afford to forget if it is to succeed on the battlefields of tomorrow.
- Between September 1950 and December 1951, the 65th, a Regular Army regiment since 1908, established a reputation as one of the 3rd Infantry Division's best and most dependable formations. It was well led, well trained, and highly motivated. The quality of the regiment in combat however, deteriorated rapidly in the Fall of 1952, when major failures occurred at OUTPOST KELLY and JACKSON HEIGHTS in the Chorwon Valley of North Korea.
- As a result, 95 men of the regiment were court-martialed and convicted of desertion, misbehavior before the enemy, and disobeying the orders of a superior office. Although Secretary of the Army Robert Stevens moved quickly to remit the sentences and granted clemency and pardons to all those involved, the court-martials have left a lasting mark on the veterans of the 65th and the people of Puerto Rico.
- A number of interrelated factors influenced the failure of the 65th, many of them related to conditions prevalent within Eighth Army and the 3rd Infantry Division. At the army level, these included a shortage of officers and NCOs, a rotation policy that removed combat-experienced leaders and soldiers and made sustained training impossible, tactical doctrine that resulted in high casualties, an artillery ammunition shortage, and declining morale. At the division level, they included poor leadership, a weak artillery brigade, and a command environment guilty of ethnic and organizational prejudice. Factors within the 65th contributed to the failure as well. They included a catastrophic shortage of NCOs, language problems, and inept leadership. That the Chinese were by then at their best only made matters worse.
- The heavy cumulative effect of all these influences was simply too great for the men of the 65th to bear. In the end, the regiment, which suffered as much, if not more, from these problems than any other U.S. Infantry regiment in Korea, simply could not overcome the combination of all the factors.
- The Army reconstituted the 65th as a fully integrated regiment in the Spring of 1953. By June, the regiment had redeemed itself, winning 14 Silver Stars, 23 Bronze Stars for valor, and 67 Purple Hearts in the battle for OUTPOST HARRY. The unit's colors remained in Korea until November 1954, when the regiment returned to Puerto Rico. Today, only the 1st Battalion of the 65th Infantry regiment remains as a testimony to a unique regiment that serviced the United States Army well for over a hundred years.
- In all, some 61,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, the bulk of them with the 65th Infantry Regiment. Some 743 were killed and 2,318 wounded.

Introduction

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Between September 1950 and December 1951, the 65th, a Regular Army regiment since 1908, established a reputation as one of the 3rd Infantry Division's best and most dependable formations. It was well led, well trained, and highly motivated. The quality of the regiment in combat however, deteriorated rapidly in the fall of 1952, when major failures occurred at OUTPOST KELLY and JACKSON HEIGHTS in the Chorwon Valley of North Korea. As a result, 95 men of the regiment were court-martialed and convicted of desertion, misbehavior before the enemy, and disobeying the orders of a superior officer. Although Secretary of the Army Robert Stevens moved quickly to remit the sentences and granted clemency and pardons to all those involved, the court-martials have left a lasting mark on the veterans of the 65th and the people of Puerto Rico.

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Formation of the Regiment

The first body of Puerto Rican troops formed for U.S. military service was the Puerto Rico Battalion of Volunteer Infantry authorized by Congress on 2 March 1899. The battalion was organized into four companies of 100 men each. A second battalion of four companies was added in February 1900, and the two battalions were combined to form the Puerto Rico Regiment of U.S. Volunteers. All officers and First Sergeants were continental (white) Americans, a standard practice in an Army with little confidence in people of color. In March 1900, the regiment was redesignated the Puerto Rico Regiment, U.S. Volunteer Infantry. Shortly thereafter, the Army recognized the force once again, renaming it the Puerto Rico Provisional Regiment of Infantry. The new unit consisted of two battalions, one mounted, one dismounted. On 4 March 1901, the unit's band and 1st Battalion participated in the inauguration of President William McKinley. In 1905, one battalion participated in the inauguration of President Theodore Roosevelt. That year, seven Puerto Ricans were appointed as Second Lieutenants.¹

On 1 July 1908, the Army renamed the unit the Puerto Rico Regiment of Infantry, United States Army. It became part of the Regular Army on May 27, 1908. On 1 July 1916, in anticipation of American entry into World War I, the War Department authorized infantry companies of 100 men each in times of peace and 150 men during war. At that time, the Army activated a 3rd Battalion for the regiment as well as a machine gun and supply company.²

World War I

At the outbreak of hostilities in April 1917, the U.S. Army established two Puerto Rican National Guard regiments, the predecessors of the 295th and 296th. The following month, the U.S. government extended the draft law to Puerto Rico. On 3 May the 65th assumed its wartime strength. Later that month its 4,000 men set sail from San Juan Harbor for the Republic of Panama, where they remained for the duration of the war. It returned to Puerto Rico in March 1919.³

In June 1918, the 373rd, 374th, and the 375th, were created. The Puerto Rico Regiment of Infantry provided the cadre for the three. The units were trained in Puerto Rico and were ready for overseas deployment when the war ended. All were inactivated in January 1919.⁴

Although more than 236,000 Puerto Ricans registered for service, only 18,000 were called to the colors in World War I.⁵ In addition, Puerto Rico provided the U.S. Army with 706 infantry officers.⁶ Battle casualties include 1 Killed in Action (KIA) and 4 Wounded in Action (WIA), reflecting the non-combat status of the Puerto Ricans serving in the Army.⁷ The average Puerto Rican soldier was 21 to 30 years old and served about 9 1/2 months.⁷ Although the bulk of the Puerto Ricans served in the Puerto Rico Regiment of Infantry and the 373rd, 374th, and 375th Infantry Regiments, a number also served in the 42nd Infantry Regiment in Panama guarding America's vital sea-to-sea link through the Panama Canal.⁸

On 14 September 1920, the Puerto Rico Regiment of Infantry became the 65th Infantry Regiment. Between World War I and World War II, many Puerto Ricans served in the 65th, 296th Infantry Regiments in Puerto Rico as well as the 33rd and 42nd Infantry Regiments in Panama.

World War II

In June 1940, after the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, the 65th Infantry's 3rd Battalion was reactivated and an anti-tank company created. The regiment underwent intensive training at Salinas Training Area, Puerto Rico until December 1942. It also performed security missions along the Puerto Rican coast and stood guard over the island's vital areas.⁹

By December 1941, nearly 58,000 troops were stationed in Puerto Rico, Panama, and along the vast arc stretching from Surinam, north along the Antilles screen, to the Yucatan Channel.¹⁰ The induction of additional Puerto Rican troops allowed the deployment overseas of growing numbers of continental troops. By the beginning of 1942 some 17,000 Puerto Ricans were under arms in the U.S. Army.¹¹

On 7 January 1943, the 65th Infantry Regiment deployed to the Panama Canal Zone where it joined the Panama Canal Department's Mobile Force. Units of the regiment received security missions for the protection of vital installations along the Canal and manned observation posts on both the Atlantic and Pacific sides of Panama. The battalions of the 65th were continuously rotated through jungle training for visiting student officers of the Latin American countries. As a result, the regiment attained a high degree of efficiency and was praised for its performance. The 65th conducted security missions until December.

In January 1944, the regiment embarked for New Orleans and then Fort Eustis, Virginia, in preparation for overseas deployment to North Africa. In March 1944, an advance party departed for Casablanca, French Morocco. The remainder of the regiment followed in April. The 65th remained in Oran, Algeria, in a staging area undergoing training for about two weeks, after which it was moved to Camp Port Aux Poules.

The 3rd Battalion was detached from the regiment and sent to Italy and then to Corsica to provide airfield security for Army Air Forces units. The remainder of the regiment was assigned to the Seventh Army along with the Puerto Rican 162nd Field Artillery Battalion. Still in Africa, the regiment underwent intensive training, especially in amphibious operations. Subsequently, the 65th Infantry, less the 3rd Battalion, went through a battle indoctrination course at Chanzy, Algeria. Near the end of 1944, the 3rd Battalion rejoined the regiment and training was resumed with emphasis on village fighting. In August, Company C was detached from the regiment and flown to France to take over security of the Seventh Army Command Post.¹²

In September 1944, the remainder of the regiment received orders to move to France and landed in Marseilles and Toulon early in October. The 65th then moved to a staging area near Aix-en-Provence. Company A took over a stockade of captured Germans under the direction of the Sixth Army Group Headquarters.

The 3rd Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Juan Cesar Cordero-Davila, went into combat on 12 December 1944 at Peira Cava in the Maritime Alps of southern France, where it relieved a battalion of the 442nd "Nisei" Infantry Regiment. On 4 January 1945, Colonel George B. Ford, the regimental commander, was killed by rifle fire while leading a combat patrol against a German strongpoint.¹³ On 15 January Sergeant Angel Martinez and Private Sergion Sanchez-Sanchez of Company L were killed, the first Puerto Rican soldiers of the 65th to die in combat in the European Theater.¹⁴ The 3rd Battalion was relieved from the Maritime Alps on 26th February 1945, and the entire regiment concentrated in Lorraine for further action in southwest Germany. In March 1945, the 65th crossed the Rhine and remained in Germany as part of the Army of Occupation until October 1945, when it was ordered to Calais, France, for the return home. The regiment arrived in Puerto Rico on 9 November 1945.¹⁵ Its soldiers had won a Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars and 90 Purple Hearts in combat.¹⁶ The 65th was awarded battle participation credits for the Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, Central Europe, and Rhineland campaigns.

Although the most prominent, the 65th was not the only Puerto Rican infantry regiment to serve in World War II. The 295th saw service in Curacao, Aruba, Surinam, Trinidad, Cuba, and Jamaica, and the Army used a platoon of volunteers from the regiment for live mustard gas tests while in Panama.¹⁷ The 296th Regimental Combat Team served in Hawaii from 8 May 1945 to 7 March 1946 and was preparing for deployment against the Japanese when the war ended. Puerto Rican support units, such as the 245th Quartermaster Company also served in the European and Burma Theaters.¹⁸

More than 65,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. armed forces in world War II (including 171 women), the great majority in Puerto Rico, the Canal Zone, and throughout the Caribbean guarding vital installations. Some 368 Puerto Ricans died in service during the war.¹⁹ Almost 350,000 Puerto Ricans registered for service during World War II.²⁰

Post-War Period

Immediately upon returning to Puerto Rico, the 65th Infantry Regiment was reorganized. The 1st Battalion was stationed at Losey Field, while the 2nd went to Camp O'Reilly and later to Henry Barracks, Cayey. In 1946, the 1st Battalion moved to Fort Buchanan. The 3rd Battalion served on the Island of Trinidad, British West Indies, where it provided security for Fort Read and Waller Field. While on Trinidad, a reinforced platoon from Company I departed for French Guiana to protect the Army Air Force Base at Rochambeau during a local rebellion. In September 1947 the 3rd Battalion was airlifted to Puerto Rico and moved to Fort Buchanan, where it was inactivated and its personnel integrated into the 1st Battalion.

During the following months, the 65th Regimental Combat Team, which included the 65th Infantry Regiment, the 504th Field Artillery Battalion, the 531st Engineer Company, and a tank company of the 18th Mechanized Cavalry Squadron, conducted intensive training at Salinas Training Area.²¹ The regiment participated in the Atlantic Fleet Exercises of 1948 and 1949 near Vieques Island. Both culminated in an amphibious assault, which saw the 65th attached to the 2nd Marine Division. Senior Army and Marine officers praised the regiment for its outstanding performance.²²

In 1950 the regiment participated in PORTREX (Puerto Rican Exercise), an expanded version of the Atlantic Fleet Exercises, as the aggressor force defending Vieques. During the exercise, the men of the 65th stopped the landings of the 3rd Infantry Division on the beaches and inflicted heavy casualties on a battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division jumping onto Vieques Island. The regiment launched a series of counterattacks, which almost reached the beaches. Again, its *esprit de corps* and outstanding performance gained it the praise and recognition of senior military commanders.²³

The Atlantic Fleet Exercises of 1948 and 1949 and the PORTREX maneuvers of 1950 provided the 65th Infantry and its Puerto Rican soldiers with a great deal of positive exposure. This would play a major role in the Army's decision to deploy the regiment to Korea and later to integrate the growing number of Puerto Rican soldiers throughout the Army. Between the end of World War II and the beginning of the Korean War, some 14,000 Puerto Ricans enlisted in the US Army.²⁴

The Korean War: 1950

The invasion of South Korea by the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) found elements of the 65th scattered among three different posts on Puerto Rico, conducting small unit tactical training. Although authorized almost 4,000 personnel, the regiment had only 92 officers and 1,895 enlisted men.²⁵ It was composed entirely of Puerto Rican enlisted personnel, the majority World War II veterans with many years of service in the regiment. About 60 percent of the officers were continental and 40 percent were Puerto Rican. In June 1950 the unit consisted of two infantry battalions, a Headquarters Company, a Service Company, a recently activated Heavy Mortar Company, and a Medical Company.²⁶ All units were understrength in officers and men, a state of affairs common throughout the Army.²⁷ Furthermore, the Heavy Mortar Company lacked 4.2-inch mortars, ammunition and firing tables.²⁸

Colonel William W. Harris commanded the regiment. He was a West Point graduate and World War II veteran, as were the regiment's Executive Officer, Lieutenant Colonel George W. Childs, and 1st Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Howard B. St. Clair. Harris would later advance to General Officer rank, while two of his three original battalion commanders would go on to command infantry regiments, a testimony to the fine leadership present within the 65th at the onset of the war.

On 11 August, the 65th was alerted for overseas movement and directed to come to war strength with a readiness date of 22 August 1950. At that time, Harris received word his unit would be joining the 3rd Infantry Division in Korea, a fact that caused him some concern. "Can't you see the reception that we will get after our little pas de deux with them at Vieques," he told Brigadier General Edwin L. Silbert, Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Antilles. "We'll be about as welcome as the country cousin who dropped in unexpectedly on the city relatives for Sunday dinner." At the same time the 3rd Battalion, 33rd Infantry Regiment was redesignated the 3rd Battalion, 65th Infantry Regiment. A better match could not have been imagined. The Battalion had trained with the 65th during PORTREX earlier in the year. Concerned about the flow of Puerto Rican replacements to

Korea, Harris requested and received permission to deploy to Korea with 10 percent overage in company grade officers and enlisted personnel.

From 11 to 22 August, 600 Puerto Ricans were recruited for service with the regiment. Another 1,200 members of the Enlisted Reserve Corps were also recalled. World War II veterans made up the vast majority of those who joined up. The bulk spoke both Spanish and English. "I could have recruited 50,000," remembered Harris. Although the comment was an exaggeration, enthusiasm for the military service ran high in Puerto Rico, whose Governor, Luis Muñoz-Marin, had offered to form an all-Puerto Rican division of 18,000 men for the Army. Prior to the deploying, Harris and Sibert arranged for the creation of a personnel replacement center for the regiment in Puerto Rico. This initiative would pay substantial dividends for the regiment once it reached Korea. Between September 1950 and March 1953 the Replacement Training Center at Camp Tortuguero, Puerto Rico, trained some 30,500 Puerto Rican replacements, the bulk of whom served in the 65th.

Early on the morning of 27 August 1950, the 65th Infantry sailed out of San Juan for the Panama Canal Zone. It arrived in Panama on 30 August. There it picked up the 3rd Battalion, 33rd Infantry, as well as its heavy mortars and firing tables. The next day, the expanded unit sailed for Japan aboard two ships. Its men trained intensively in route, firing all their weapons from the ship. On 22 September the regiment arrived at Sasebo, Japan, where it was ordered to proceed directly to Pusan, South Korea. At that time, Colonel Harris learned the ship carrying the 3rd Battalion and the regiment's heavy equipment was having engine problems and would not arrive in Korea for another two weeks.

The 65th arrived in Pusan on Sunday, 23 September 1950. Spirits were high. Major General Edward Almond's X Corps had landed at Inchon, while Lieutenant General Walton Walker's Eighth Army had broken out of the Pusan Perimeter the previous week. While awaiting the remainder of its attachments, the regiment moved to a staging area near Samnangjin, 50 miles north of Pusan, where it participated in two weeks of intensive training and was restricted to operations east of the Naktong River. The 65th's first tactical mission took place on 28 September when it relieved a battalion of the 9th Infantry in an attack on the hill defended by a strong enemy force. It achieved its objective at the cost of 6 casualties.

Between 23 September and 31 October, the 65th Regiment Combat Team (RCT) (which included the 58th Field Artillery Battalion, a company from the 10th Engineer Battalion, and a battery from the 3rd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion) was engaged in blocking the escape routes north of isolated NKPA units and in antiguerrilla operations. The RCT's most significant engagement occurred on the morning of 17 October when 500 North Korean soldiers attacked Company F at Kumpchon. The company killed 79 enemy and captured 85 prisoners, while suffering 11 killed and 13 wounded.

At various times the 65th was attached to IX Corps, the 2nd Infantry Division, and the 25th Infantry Division or acted as the Eighth Army reserve. From 23 September to 31 October, the regiment inflicted more than 1,500 casualties on the enemy while suffering 221. During that period the men from the regiment won five Silver Stars for gallantry in combat. Responding to a query from Puerto Rico on the state and performance of the regiment in Korea, General Douglas MacArthur, the Far East Command Commander,

observed that the unit's men were "showing magnificent ability and courage in field operations. They are a credit to Puerto Rico and I am proud to have them in my command.

At the end of October, the 65th was attached to General Almond's X Corps. On 4 November it moved to Pusan and then to Wonsan, North Korea, by ship, arriving there the next day as the lead element of Major General Robert H. Soule's 3rd Infantry Division which had recently arrived in theater.

At the end of November the Chinese attacked U.S. Forces in the vicinity of the Chosin Reservoir. One of the regiment's most important missions in North Korea was assisting TASK FORCE DOG during the withdrawal of the 1st Marine Division from the Chosin Reservoir. Another important mission was defending a sector of the Hungnam beachhead, the exit point which UN Forces were evacuated from northeastern Korea. Elements of the 65th Infantry's 2nd Battalion were among the last troops to come off the beach when the evacuation was completed on 24 December.

The X Corps and 3rd Infantry Division commanders commended the 65th for its outstanding performance and General Almond presented the Silver Star to Colonel Harris for gallantry in action. By then the regiment had suffered 130 battle casualties during operations in northeastern Korea and had won 11 of 42 Silver Stars awarded by X Corps for the operation in North Korea.

The Korean War: 1951

During January 1951, the 65th Infantry participated in Operation Thunderbolt, a reconnaissance in force, and Operation Exploitation, an exploitation to the Han River. The combat it encountered was described as light to moderate. By the end of the month, the regiment had advanced to a region just south of Seoul, and was under orders to seize three hills held by the Chinese 149th Division. The assault began on 31 January and took three days. On the morning of 2 February 1951, with the objective within reach, two battalions of the regiment fixed bayonets and charged the enemy position, forcing the Communist soldiers to flee. The regiment's performance encouraged General MacArthur to write: "The Puerto Ricans forming the ranks of the gallant 65th Infantry give daily proof on the battlefields of Korea of their courage, determination and resolute will to victory, their invincible loyalty to the United States and their fervent devotion to those immutable principles of human relations which the Americans of the Continent and Puerto Rico have in common. They are writing a brilliant record of heroism in battle and I am indeed proud to have them under my command. I wish that we could count on many more like them."

In February and March, the 65th participated in Operation Killer and Operation Ripper aimed at the destruction of enemy forces. Task Force Myers, consisting of the Regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, the Regimental Tank Company, Company G and attached artillery and tactical air command group, attacked north against heavy enemy resistance. It was the first element of the 3rd Infantry Division to reach the southern banks of the Han River below Seoul. Patrols of 65th were also among the first troops to reenter the South Korean capital. In March, the 65th destroyed a North Korean regiment that had slipped through the front lines and attacked the 3rd Infantry Division's rear. On 23 March 1st Lieutenant Richard W. Durkee of Company L won the Distinguished

Service Cross, the first member of the regiment to do so. During the attack on the hill near Uijongbu, he single-handedly assaulted one enemy position after another, killing the Chinese soldiers occupying them. Though seriously wounded, Durkee continued to lead the assault, inspiring his men who overwhelmed the remaining Communist soldiers and sized the objective.

In April the regiment participated in Operation Dauntless, leading the 3rd Infantry Division's attack and defeating elements of the Chinese 26th Army. On 19 April, two members of the regiment, Sergeant Modesto Cartagena and Corporal Nieves-Laquer, both of Company C, won the Distinguished Service Cross during an assault on enemy defensive positions near Yonchon. Sergeant Cartagena knocked out four CCF defensive positions with hand grenades until seriously wounded. Corporal Nieves-Laquer, an automatic rifleman, repeatedly charged Chinese dugouts, killing the defenders and allowing the remainder of his squad to advance. Nieves-Laquer also made three separate trips across fireswept terrain, evacuating three badly wounded comrades to safety

During the Chinese Spring Offensive in April, the 65th defended its position against the vanguard of two CCF divisions, withdrawing in an organized fashion when ordered to do so. As the Eighth Army retreated southward, the regiment counterattacked aggressively whenever the opportunity presented itself. Between May and July, the 65th participated in operations to seize and hold the Chorwon Valley and was instrumental in stopping Communist counterattacks in the Iron Triangle (Chorwon - Pyonggang - Kumhwa) area.

In September, the regiment experienced its first major tactical failure when it was unable to seize a series of hill against two enemy battalions in the Chorwon Valley during Operation Cleanup, despite substantial support from all elements of the 3rd Infantry Division. It was the worst day in combat for the regiment and the division since their arrival in Korea. "We had units that had greater casualties but today we failed to take an objective and had to withdrawal without being "kicked out," observed General Soule, the division commander. "Bad weather, incorrect reports of troop location, and lack of aggressiveness on the part of the tanks contributed to this."

On 1 October Private Badel Hernandez-Guzman of Company I won the Distinguished Service Cross during an attack near Chorwon. Hernandez-Guzman, who had been in Korea only two months, single-handedly cleared a series of CCF defensive positions with a flame-thrower, allowing his company, which had been pinned down, to continue the attack.

By the end of its first year in Korea the 65th had suffered a total of 1,510 battle casualties and was credited with 15,787 enemy KIA and 2,169 enemy Prisoners of War (POWs). The officers and men of the regiment had won 4 Distinguished Service Crosses and 125 Silver Stars.

When asked by officers of the regiment in February 1951 why the unit had spent so much time on the front lines, Brigadier General Armistead D. Mead, the Assistant Division Commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, replied that the unit was the strongest regiment in the division. It had arrived in Korea overstrength at a time when the other regiments were understrength. In addition, the 65th had arrived two months before the remainder of the division and thus had more combat experience than the other infantry regiments. Finally,

Mead said that the regiment had tended to occupy the best and most defensible terrain, a compliment to the tactical competence of the 65th leaders. By the end of 1951, the regiment had thus established a reputation as a well led, well-trained, and highly motivated unit. "Its performance was superb," recalled a Puerto Rican officer in the 1st Battalion, Captain Fernandez-Duran. "We were very proud of our regiment's action. There was never any fear or cowardice displayed by anyone in our unit. Leadership was superb and most of the soldiers were veterans and regular army. As to discipline, nothing was left to be desired."

The Korean War: 1952

At the beginning of 1952 both UN and Chinese forces were occupying static positions. January found the 65th defending along LINE JAMESTOWN in the CHORWON VALLEY and conducting patrols and raids against the entrenched Chinese. Colonel Julian B. Lindsey replaced Colonel Erwin O. Gibson as commander of the regiment in November 1951. Gibson had only commanded the regiment since June. Unlike the majority of Eighth Army regimental commanders, he was not a West Point graduate. His replacement, after only five months, suggests that Soule had lost confidence in Gibson, probably as a result of his lack of aggressiveness during OPERATION CLEANUP. Lindsey, on the other hand, was a West Point graduate and World War II veteran who had commanded the 515th Parachute Infantry Regiment during the war and the 101st Infantry Regiment afterward.⁵¹

Lindsey, however, would command for less than three months.⁵² On 1 February 1952, Colonel Juan Cesar Cordero-Davila assumed command of the 65th. Cordero-Davila was a Puerto Rican National Guard officer who had served with the regiment in World War II for over three and a half years, advancing from the Regimental S-4 to Battalion Executive Officer, Battalion Commander, and Regimental Executive Officer. He also served for short periods during World War II as the Regimental Commander. Following the war, he had commanded the 296th Regimental Combat Team in Puerto Rico. As a result, he was responsible for training most of the men serving in the 65th in the Fall of 1952.⁵³

General J. Lawton Collins, the Army Chief of Staff, was responsible for Lindsey's removal and the appointment of Cordero-Davila to command the 65th. Cordero-Davila had solicited an assignment to Korea when Collins visited Puerto Rico in January 1952.⁵⁴ Collins believed that, in the long term, it would be of great value to the future of the Puerto Rican National Guard if Cordero-Davila were assigned to the regiment. General Matthew B. Ridgway, Far East Command Commander, concurred with Collins' recommendation, leaving General James A. Van Fleet, the Eighth Army commander, little choice but to replace Lindsey. The choice for Van Fleet may not have been a difficult one, as both Lieutenant General John W. O'Daniel, the I Corps Commander, and Major General Thomas J. Cross, 3rd Infantry Division Commander, favored replacing Lindsey, who was perceived to be too soft in handling his men. Yet despite this criticism, Lindsey went on to become the Chief of Staff of the 3rd Infantry Division, a plumb assignment.

Cordero-Davila was clearly one of the highest-ranking ethnic officers in the Army. His assignment to command the 65th reflected a fundamental change in the Army's attitude toward non-white officers and took place against a backdrop of the full integration of African Americans into Eighth Army. No African American officer had ever advanced so far.

The 65th spent February defending a sector on LINE JAMESTOWN. JAMESTOWN began on the west bank of the IMJIN River a little over 9 miles northeast of MUNSAN-NI then arched gently northeast to the town of SAMICHON on the SAMICHON RIVER. For the next 10 miles, JAMESTOWN ran northeast, rejoining the IMJIN RIVER near the town of KYEHO-DONG, then hugged the high ground south of the YOKKOCKON for about 12 miles until it reached the area of CHUTOSO, six miles northwest of CHORWON. From CHUTOSO, JAMESTOWN ran east by north for about 10 miles, ending approximately 5 miles northeast of CHORWON at the village of CHUNGASAN. In March, the 65th became the division reserve and remained there through May. In June it became the Eighth Army reserve. While in reserve the regiment conducted training and security missions and had to be prepared to react to any Chinese penetration of the Eighth Army line. In July the 65th returned to the LINE JAMESTOWN where it remained through August, defending its sector and conducting patrols and raids.

The Battle for Outpost Kelly (September 1952)

By the beginning of the Fall of 1952, the Chinese had completed a major quantitative and qualitative buildup and were becoming increasingly aggressive in the contest for control of the high ground forward of Eighth Army's defensive line. Intent upon gaining a better position prior to the onset of winter and concerned with gaining leverage in the peace talks through victories on the battlefield, the Communists made the western and central sectors of the UN Command's main line of resistance the focus of fierce and bitter fighting. A number of key Allied outposts were of particular interest to the CCF, including OUTPOST KELLY, defended by the 65th Infantry.

The 65th's area of responsibility encompassed a six-kilometer stretch of the UN line in the vicinity of Yonchon, North Korea. Opposing the regiment were elements of the 39th CCF Army, an experienced and well-led formation. The main object of contention was an outpost line consisting of seven isolated strongpoints located about a mile forward of the 65th's main defensive position on Line JAMESTOWN.

Enemy patrols and artillery barrages increased throughout the month as the Chinese probed for soft spots. The 65th responded with its own artillery and called in air strikes. On 17 September the Chinese launched their first concerted attack on Outpost Kelly, which was located three miles south of Kyeho-Dong and about one mile west of a double bend of the Imjin River in North Korea. Company C repulsed the attack with defensive artillery fire assisted by a constant stream of illumination flares. The following night two reinforced companies of Chinese infantry attacking from three directions slammed into the outpost, then occupied by Company B. Catching the company commander, most of his platoon leaders, the artillery liaison officer, and the forward observer in the command bunker where they congregated for a meeting, the enemy took the position quickly. Although it was known almost immediately that the outpost had fallen, Colonel Cordero-Davila was reluctant to call in artillery fires or to commit the regimental reserve battalion lest they kill those of his own soldiers still remaining on the hill. He was also concerned that the relief force might come under friendly fire in the confusion. That the Chinese would use American POWs to shield themselves while they repaired the outpost's defenses was also clearly on his mind. Indeed, the regiment had already suffered 82 casualties during the fighting.

Company E executed the first counterattack against the outpost on the morning of 19 September. Some of its elements managed to retake the outpost position, but the Chinese responded with such concentrated artillery, mortar, and automatic weapons fire, that the company abandoned it. The 65th called in some 2,000 artillery rounds in support of the attack. Company suffered 33 casualties.

The regiment launched its 1st Battalion against the outpost on the night of 20 September following heavy U.S. artillery and air strikes throughout the preceding day. The two lead companies in the assault, however, became the target of heavy Chinese artillery and mortar fire from the moment they crossed the line departure. Although the enemy used Variable Time-fused artillery shells to demoralize the attackers, elements of Company C managed to reach the crest of the outpost. Even so, the gain was short lived. A Chinese counterattack backed by relentless artillery fire soon forced Company C to retreat, ending the attempt to retake the position. The attack cost the regiment another 71 battle casualties.

Artillery and air strikes pounded Kelly between 21 and 23 September. On the morning of the 24th, the 3rd Battalion's three companies launched what all hoped would be a final counterattack. Lieutenant General Paul W. Kendall, the I Corps Commander, and Major General Robert L. Dulaney, the 3rd Infantry Division Commander, observed the assault. A 30-minute artillery concentration by the 58th Field Artillery Battalion along with direct fire from the 65th Tank Company and the 64th Tank Battalion preceded the attack. Again, however, intense Chinese artillery and mortar fire caused widespread confusion and panic in the attacking companies and prevented the battalion from retaking its objective. Company I and K disintegrated during the withdrawal. More than 10,000 artillery rounds and 11 air sorties were flown in support of the 65th throughout the day.

At the end of the month, Kelly remained in enemy hands, as did OUTPOST BIG NORI, another position manned by the 65th Infantry that had fallen to the Chinese on 25 September. The regiment suffered 408 battle casualties during the month of September, the bulk at OUTPOST KELLY. This was the highest number of battle casualties it had suffered in an engagement since its arrival in Korea two years earlier. Another 134 non-battle casualties were also incurred, making a total of 542 casualties for the month.

The 65th was hardly the only regiment to suffer setbacks during September. The Eighth Army lost five other positions elsewhere during the month. Even so, the units that lost BUNKER HILL, OLD BALDY, PORK CHOP HILL, CAPITAL HILL, and FINGER RIDGE recaptured them in counterattacks. KELLY was thus the only outpost that remained in Chinese hands at the end of the month.

As a direct result of that loss, General Kendall relieved both the divisional and the regimental commanders. Even prior to the loss of KELLY, Kendall considered the 3rd to be the weakest of his divisions and its artillery the weakest in his corps. General Van Fleet agreed with his assessment and wrote General Mark W. Clark, Far East Command Commander, to request the relief of Dulaney.

Kendall also recommended the relief of the 65th's commander. Describing Cordero-Davila's behavior during the battle of OP Kelly, he wrote that: "Colonel Cordero

became...[so] nervous that...[by] the end of the action he was utterly incapable of commanding his regiment. His speech was incoherent and his judgment was utterly futile." Kendall concluded by noting the Cordero was "incapable of properly commanding a regiment of infantry in combat. Van Fleet acted quickly, supporting the relief in a letter to Clark. "My review of the recent fighting involving the 65th Infantry and my visit to the unit," he said, "convince me beyond doubt that the 65th Infantry Regiment has retrogressed in combat fitness under Colonel Cordero's leadership and that he does not have the leadership or professional capacity to reestablish acceptable standards. Clark agreed with Van Fleet's assessment of Dulaney and Cordero-Davila. On 8 October, Major General George W. Smythe replaced Dulaney as the 3rd Infantry Division Commander. Three days later, Colonel Chester B. DeGavre replaced Cordero-Davila as Commander of the 65th Infantry Regiment.

The Battle of Jackson Heights (October 1952)

During October, Chinese forces launched yet another series of strong local offensive operations aimed at seizing key terrain in Eighth Army's western and central sectors. These included an attack against JACKSON HEIGHTS in the 3rd Infantry Division sector, which pushed the 65th Infantry Regiment to the breaking point.

Colonel DeGarve assumed command of the regiment on 11 October, while the 65th was in IX Corps reserve near CHANGMOL, North Korea. A 1933 West Point graduate, DeGarve had served as a Lieutenant and Headquarters Company Commander with the 65th between 1937 and 1939.⁷¹ As the new regimental commander, he moved quickly by embarking on an intensive 21 day training cycle aimed at welding his force into a confident, hard-hitting team "capable of successfully accomplishing any assigned missions."⁷² Tactical training was to have been progressive in nature, beginning at the squad and section level and culminating in battalion and regimental field exercises. A shortage of ammunition, however, firing restrictions, division inspections, and over-supervision by both division and regiment greatly degraded the value of the training, leaving the 65th less than prepared for the trials ahead.⁷³ Complicating matters, DeGarve issued an ill-advised order for all personnel of the regiment to shave their mustaches "until such a time as they gave proof of their manhood."⁷⁴ Interpreted as a demeaning gesture by the troops, the measure generated open insubordination in two of the regiment's three battalions, further undermining morale and unit cohesion.⁷⁵

On 22 October the regiment moved from CHANGMOL to TOPI-DONG, two miles north of CHORWON, to relieve elements of the 51st ROK Regiment, 9th Division, on LINE MISSOURI. MISSOURI constituted the central portion of the main defensive line of the UN forces. It crossed near the heart of the IRON TRIANGLE.⁷⁶ By the 24th the regiment had charge of a four-mile-wide defensive sector located approximately seven miles north of CHORWON. Although the assignment involved more than twice the usual frontage for an infantry regiment defending in mountainous terrain, it was well within standard Eighth Army practice at the time.⁷⁷ The regiment adapted to the task by deploying with two battalions forward and one battalion to the rear.

The outpost at JACKSON HEIGHTS was located on the eastern edge of the CHORWON VALLEY, approximately eight miles northeast of CHORWON and six miles

southwest of PYONGGANG, North Korea.⁷⁸ It comprised the southern portion of a large hill known as IRON HORSE MOUNTAIN (HILL388). the peak of IRON HORSE MOUNTAIN, located 750 meters to the north of JACKSON HEIGHTS, and a second hill known as CAMEL BACK MOUNTAIN (HILL 488), located 2,800 meters to the northeast, dominated the position. Located more than a mile in front of the main defensive line, the position at JACKSON HEIGHTS consisted of solid rock. All of its bunkers, as a result, were in unsatisfactory condition. Complicating matters, the position lacked barbed wire and mines because of supply shortages and heavy enemy pressure dogged every attempt to make even marginal improvements in its defenses.⁷⁹ Company G had charge of the outpost. Facing it were elements of the 3rd Battalion, 87th Regiment, 29th Division, 15th CCF Army, well supported by artillery.

Enemy action against the outpost followed closely on the heels of the 65th's arrival. Shelling began at 1100 on 25 October and continued throughout the day and into the evening. Enemy patrols probed the position twice the next morning but were repulsed each time. Shelling continued that day, and by the evening of the 26th the 65th had suffered a total of 24 casualties. Chinese shelling resumed at 1000 on the morning of the 27th with much heavier concentrations than on the previous two days. In short order a CCF mortar round hit Company G's ammunition supply. Much of the unit's 60-mm mortar ammunition went up in the conflagration that followed. By 1245 the company had suffered another twelve wounded, and its commander, Captain George D. Jackson, was radioing higher headquarters for assistance in evacuating the company's wounded from the position. By 1700 all but seven members of the company's Mortar Platoon were casualties and only two mortars were still in action. At 1800 JACKSON HEIGHTS received another heavy shelling, this time followed by a reinforced company-size attack consisting of an estimated 250 men and supported by fire from nearby enemy positions. Company G repelled the attack but at the cost of 14 more friendly casualties. That night, the company's listening posts detected large numbers of enemy troops positioning themselves to the east and west of the position. Jackson attempted to call in artillery fire only to be informed that he had an allocation of only 100 illumination and high explosive rounds for the night. The Chinese thus moved unmolested to their assault positions.

Tensions increased as night fell. Between 2035 and 2100 the Chinese unleashed an immense artillery and mortar barrage on JACKSON HEIGHTS. Charging from two directions but mainly from the southeast, two companies of Chinese infantry attacked at 2100. Company G responded with small arms fire and its remaining mortar rounds, but its ammunition dump was hit a second time, causing confusion among its men. Casualties mounted. Jackson called for final defensive artillery fires at 2120. They inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, allowing Company G to begin withdrawing at 2130. By 2240 the unit's first elements were safely behind the 65th's main defensive line. The company had suffered 87 battle casualties.

On October 28, Colonel DeGavre ordered his 2nd Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Betances-Ramirez to retake JACKSON HEIGHTS. Since the battalion already had responsibility for a major sector of the 65th's main defensive line, however, Betances-Ramirez planned to use only one of his companies for the attack, Company F. He received permission to borrow a second, Company A, from the 1st Battalion. Once JACKSON HEIGHTS had returned to American hands, he intended to use Company F to remain on position to defend the outpost while Company A returned to its parent unit. As is often the

case in war, however, when forces from more than one unit are involved, the colonel's intentions were garbled in transmission. Confusion immediately arose within the two units over which would stay to defend the heights and which would depart.

The attack began at 0645 on 28 October. By 0955 Company F was on the objective and was reporting it secured. By 1115 both companies were on the hill, having taken 17 casualties while inflicting 22 casualties on the enemy. Although the operation had gone extremely well, it soon began to deteriorate, with each company commander thinking his stay on the position was temporary. In the confusion that followed, the men of the two companies became intermingled, destroying the cohesion of the outpost's defense and presenting the Chinese with a lucrative target. As enemy artillery and mortar rounds slammed into it, inflicting numerous casualties, the defending troops began to move off the position. With the situation deterioration the Company A Commander, 1st Lieutenant John D. Porterfield, called a meeting of his officers to decide what to do next. The group convened, however, before a Chinese 76-mm round fired from CAMEL BACK scored a direct hit on it, killing Porterfield, his artillery forward observer, and one of his platoon leaders, along with an officer from Company F. The death of these leaders had an immediate impact on the men, who began to abandon the position in even larger numbers.

Since communication with the two companies had gone down during the attack, Colonel Betances-Ramirez only learned of the situation at 1500. He ordered Company F to remain on JACKSON HEIGHTS and Company A to return to the main defensive line. These matters stood until 1705, when the 2nd Battalion command post received a message from Captain Cronkhite on JACKSON HEIGHTS stating that the fighting strength remaining on the position was down to ten men and requesting permission to withdraw.

At 1715, a lieutenant from Company H reported that some 80 men from Companies A and F had congregated in the vicinity of HILL 270 and were refusing to go back to JACKSON HEIGHTS. Betances-Ramirez ordered these men, including 1st Lieutenant Juan Guzman, a Puerto Rican National Guard officer and the Company A Executive Officer, to go back up the hill to join Captain Cronkhite. Regarding the order as suicide, most of the men again refused. At approximately 1730, Cronkhite ordered the remaining men on JACKSON HEIGHTS to withdraw. That evening Colonel DeGavre recommended that the division reinforce its main defensive line and that it discontinue attempts to retake JACKSON HEIGHTS for the night. Both recommendations were approved, but the respite for the regiment was brief.

Early in the morning of 29 October, Company C, commanded by 1st Lieutenant Robert E. Stevens, departed the 1st Battalion area for JACKSON HEIGHTS. The unit reported the objective secured at 0720, but shortly thereafter its men began abandoning the position. By 1050, 58 of them had assembled near the battalion command post. The number grew over the hours that followed, even though 80 agreed to return to the hill. In the end, the 1st Battalion Commander, Major Albert C. Davies, had little choice but to order Stevens and those of his men who remained to return to the main defense line. The equivalent of "a company less its officers and a few men," wrote Colonel DeGavre afterward, "withdrew from JACKSON HEIGHTS without an enemy round being fired or a live enemy being sighted...[since] there were...however, bodies of both friendly and enemy dead on the position...[the] unauthorized withdrawal is believed to have been solely from fear of what might happen to them. On 29 October, the 3rd Division relieved the 65th of its

sector along LINE MISSOURI. The next day the regiment, less its 3rd Battalion which remained on the line under the 15th Infantry regiment, reverted to IX Corps reserve at Sachong-ni, North Korea.

The 65th had suffered a total of 259 casualties for the month, including 14 officers. Of these, 121, including 97 battle casualties and 24 non-battle casualties, occurred while the regiment was stationed on LINE MISSOURI. The reputation of the regiment and the Puerto Rican soldier, which had suffered a heavy blow after the battle of OUTPOST KELLY was shattered irreparably. A total of 123 Puerto Rican personnel, including one officer and 122 enlisted men, were in the division stockade pending court-martial for refusing to attack the enemy as ordered and misbehavior before the enemy. The regiment's only Puerto Rican commander, Colonel Betances-Ramirez, had been relieved of his command. To make matter worse, on 3 November, 39 more enlisted men of the 3rd Battalion's Company L refused to continue with a patrol while attached to the 15th Infantry regiment in the vicinity of JACKSON HEIGHTS. They were also placed under arrest. The following day, the 3rd Division's commander pulled the 3rd Battalion out of the line at the request of the 15th Regiment's commander.

The Reasons for Failure

A number of interrelated factors influenced the failure of the 65th in the Fall of 1952, many of them related to conditions prevalent within Eighth Army and the 3rd Infantry Division. At the Army level, these included a shortage of officers and NCOs, a rotation policy that removed combat-experienced leaders and soldiers and made sustained training impossible, tactical doctrine that resulted in high casualties, an artillery ammunition shortage, and declining morale. At the division level, they included poor leadership, a weak artillery brigade, and a command environment guilty of ethnic and organizational prejudice. Factors within the 65th contributed as well. They included a catastrophic shortage of NCOs, language problems, and inept leadership. That Chinese forces were then at their best only made matters worse.

President Truman's decision in 1951 to send another four U.S. Army divisions to join the one already serving in Germany and then to reduce the Army's military personnel ceiling for Fiscal Year 1953 by 11,000 officers and 44,000 men exacerbated the Army's shrinking manpower pool. These two decisions resulted in troop reductions in Korea, beginning in 1952. By the fall of 1952, Eighth was experiencing a manpower shortage, which included officers (especially infantry and artillery company and battery commanders) and NCOs. All units in Korea were affected by this shortage. Eighth Army attempted to offset the shortage in personnel by increasing unit firepower, but this proved unfeasible. Prior to the fight at OUTPOST KELLY, the 65th Infantry Regiment had 136 officers on hand versus the 153 authorized. The bulk of the shortage were at the infantry company and platoon level, where the presence of good leaders mattered the most. Fifteen of the seventeen officers missing in the 65th were from the twelve rifle and weapons companies. Prior to the action at JACKSON HEIGHTS, the shortage had grown to 28 officers. That Colonel Cordero-Davila failed to highlight this shortage in the regiment's monthly command reports to division suggests that, like other regimental commanders, he accepted chronic shortages of the sort as normal. In the end, the lack of small unit leaders was a major factor in the setbacks the 65th experienced at OUTPOST KELLY and JACKSON HEIGHTS.

Rotation was another factor. In the Spring of 1952, the Eighth Army Commander, General James A. Van Fleet, attributed the "healthy mental state" of U.S. troops in Korea to the liberal rotation policy that had been adopted early 1951. In World War II GIs served until they were killed or seriously wounded or the war ended, whichever came first. The policy in Korea, however, allowed soldiers to rotate back to the United States after earning a specific number of rotation or constructive Months Service (CMS) points. To qualify for rotation during 1952, a soldier had to have nine months of service in the combat zone in Korea or a total of thirty-six CMS points. Each month at the front was worth four points and service elsewhere in Korea was valued at two points a month. In addition to the required CMS points a soldier also had to have available a qualified replacement. As a result of this system, the Eighth Army was rotating 16,000 to 28,000 men a month (or the equivalent to one-and-a-half infantry divisions) by the Spring of 1952. This was increase from 15,000 to 20,000 rotated the previous year. At that time the average infantry regiment in Korea was rotating 4,400 men a year or 120 percent of its total authorized strength.

Rotation on such a massive scale gutted units of combat-experienced leaders and soldiers, rendered effective training almost impossible, and undermined unit cohesion and readiness. "It has been, frankly, a mystery to me," wrote General Collins to General Clark in August 1952, "how the Eighth Army has been able to retain its combat efficiency in light of the fact that we simply cannot furnish non-commissioned officers and young officers from the states who have the experience comparable to the men whom they replace in the Eighth Army." Major General Hayden Boatner, who commanded the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea, seconded Collins. "The Army's rotation policy," he said, had resulted in increased casualties in Korea.

Colonel Cordero-Davila was of the same mind and, in fact, attributed the poor performance of the regiment at OUTPOST KELLY to the rotation policy. The 65th rotated 5,055 men between January and September 1952, one of the highest rates for any infantry regiment that year. As a result, it was received more replacements over the same period than almost any other infantry regiment in Korea. Between January and September 1952, it accepted 2,163 replacements. By the end of the year it had received 5,422. No regiment in the U.S. Army experiencing this degree of personnel turnover in addition to combat losses could hope to maintain combat readiness of any appreciable level. Ironically, the Governor of Puerto Rico, Muñoz-Marin, had opposed individual rotation for the 65th the previous year in favor of unit rotation and had offered to replace the regiment with another all-Puerto Rican regiment combat team.

Casualties also figured into the 65th's problems. Although Eighth Army tried to minimize them, pressure to hold terrain while retaining the initiative and a tendency by commanders to improperly execute Army tactical doctrine resulted in unnecessarily high casualties. An Army Field Forces report written in the winter of 1952 indicated that the static situation in Korea had created an Army in which few individuals had participated in a general offensive. As a result, skills in offensive operations were lacking, despite Van Fleet's emphasis on local offensives and frequent patrols in order to prevent UN troop from losing their fighting edge. Too often, however, those operations took on the form of high cost frontal attacks. Observing the trend, General Collis grew increasingly concerned. Emphasizing that the careful use of terrain in combat operations could shield troops from unnecessary loss of life, he called upon his commanders to avoid frontal assaults whenever

possible. They were costly, he said. Collins' assertion was a virtual condemnation of the way the Army was training its infantry officers in 1952 and the tendency of those officers to opt for frontal attacks in Korea.

Eighth Army policy regarding patrols and raids contributed to the problem. Eighth Army methods called for extremely aggressive action to dominate the space between the friendly and enemy main lines and to capture prisoners for interrogation. In most corps and divisions, each battalion on the main defensive line was required to send out at least one patrol or raid a day in an effort to capture one prisoner every three days. The results of these methods rarely justified the cost. "Personally," wrote Major General A. H. Cassels, commander of the British Commonwealth Division in the Spring of 1952, "I believe the reason behind the order [to capture prisoners] was to keep the U.S. Army divisions 'sharp' regardless of the casualties, and at least one of their divisions has taken very considerable casualties - between 2,000 and 3,000.

The British Commonwealth Division, for example, suffered a 30 percent casualty rate during seven company raids in July 1952 in pursuit of Chinese prisoners who produced little information of use. At least one U.S. Army regiment suffered more than 160 casualties (including 8 Missing in Action - MIA) in an unsuccessful attempt to capture a single Chinese prisoner. Between December 1952 and March 1953, UN forces dispatched some 30,646 patrols resulting in 3,288 friendly casualties (including 116 MIA) while inflicting 4,689 enemy casualties and taking 51 prisoners, a marginal return, at best, considering the effort expended.

The Eighth Army's prescribed methods for defending an outpost line were also problematic. According to U.S. Army doctrine, the outpost line was intended to delay and disorganize the advance of the enemy, deceive him as to the true location of the main battle position, and deny him ground-observed artillery fire on that position. In accomplishing this mission an outpost was expected to inflict the maximum casualties on the enemy without engaging in close combat. Doctrine called for commanders to withdraw from the outpost when the position was no longer tenable. The negotiations at Panmunjom, however, had bestowed increasing importance on even the smallest terrain features, causing both the Chinese and UN forces to fight tenaciously for every hill and outpost. As a result, "Hold at all cost" was the order of the day. The commander on the spot, however, had the authority to withdraw his men on an outpost in danger of being overrun or destroyed but was required to counterattack at the first opportunity to regain the lost position. The Chinese learned to use this policy to good effect, capturing a weak outpost quickly, inflicting casualties on counterattacking UN troops, then withdrawing to repeat the process at a later date. As a result, U.S. infantry regiments often suffered casualties defending an outpost until thrown off by the Chinese and then counterattacking again to retake the lost position. "Some of the bloodiest battles," observed one U.S. Army historian, "were fought over these seemingly inconsequential outpost." Altogether, the 65th suffered over 800 casualties (including 500 battle casualties and 306 non-battle casualties) defending and attempting to retake OUTPOST KELLY and JACKSON HEIGHTS.

Mounting casualties added to the problem. The 65th infantry took a total of 1,648 casualties between January and August 1952. By the end of the year, it had suffered a total of 2,923 casualties, including more than 800 battle casualties. This was more than 90

percent of the regiment's total strength and fairly representative of the casualties suffered by other infantry regiments in Korea.

Another factor contributing to the regiment's failure, especially at JACKSON HEIGHTS, was a shortage of artillery ammunition. As the war of movement came to an end in mid-1951, artillery assumed a new importance, and ammunition expenditure increased significantly. By October 1951, Eighth Army had only 25 percent of the required 155-mm artillery rounds. While medium and light artillery was rationed at about 50 percent of the normal rate of fire. These shortages curtailed even limited offensive capabilities and resulted in increased friendly casualties. The artillery ammunition shortage was one of the primary reasons for the Army's request for exorbitant amount of close air support in Korea.

There were a number of reasons for the shortage. First, was the unusually high rate of fire deemed necessary by General Van Fleet to offset the enemy's quantitative superiority. Second, there were no ammunition production lines of any consequence in operation in the United States for the first year of the Korean War. The decision to open such lines came only in late 1951. A long lead time (about a year and a half) was required to establish production lines. Thus, new ammunition was not expected to reach Korea until mid- to late 1952. By the Spring of that year Van Fleet was forced to ration artillery ammunition to bridge the gap between the decreasing stockpile and new production. Until the transition was complete, however, shortages were the rule. Finally, a steel strike in the United States in June 1952 further exacerbated the ammunition situation. "Our request for fire support were many times reduced in quantity, time, and type of ammo," wrote Colonel Betances-Ramirez after the war. "The light 81-mm mortar ammo was short most of the time...The WP (White Phosphorus) and time-fuse were also in short supply too often." If adequate artillery ammunition had been available to Captain Jackson on the night of 27 October, JACKSON HEIGHTS would probably have held.

Declining morale was another factor undermining the combat effectiveness of Eighth Army in the Fall of 1952. With the initiation of negotiations in July 1951, the tempo of operations on the battlefield had slackened. With an early end to the fighting in prospect, UN commanders and troops were eager to prevent unnecessary casualties. When the war continued with no end in sight, however, the mission of occupying and defending a static line for an extended period sowed uncertainty in the ranks. Time magazine correspondent John Osborne wrote in the Winter of 1952, "soldiers see no purpose and no good in the kind of war they are fighting...It is the quality born of their knowledge that they are not expected to win. They are expected only to stand and hold, and perhaps to be killed or maimed in the process. They are expected to leave their line on occasion and walk through the night silence toward the enemy line, and on rare occasions even to attack and harass the enemy...but almost never to take the enemy line." The result was an environment in which many junior leaders and soldiers shunned risk taking and, in effect, ceded the initiative to the Chinese. Recognizing this, Van Fleet grew increasingly frustrated with the nature of the war. "In Korea we are still holding a defensive line dominating 'no man's land' but it is a damn hard job to keep an army fit, ready, and eager to fight - especially when they go home faster than we can train them," he wrote Lieutenant General Willis D. Crittenger. "It is a real challenge to every commander in Korea. Really, I wish we could put on an offensive and get the darn thing over with because what we need most of all is a military victory."

Factors unique to the 3rd Infantry Division also contributed to the failure of the 65th. Weak leadership under Generals Dulaney and Smythe was the most important of these. Prior to the fight at OUTPOST KELLY, General Dulaney had failed to assess accurately the readiness of the regiment for combat operations. Furthermore, his leadership of the division left much to be desired. In a letter to Lieutenant General John W. O'Daniel, the former I Corps Commander, General Van Fleet wrote: "The 3rd got steadily worse under Dulaney and a number of his subordinates who didn't seem to have the drive to keep it sharp. Their bayonets got awfully rusty and dull after your departure." O'Daniel responded: "Bob Dulaney, I thought when I left there, was fighting his problems rather than solving them and I told him so. With his background, he certainly should have done a better job than he did. I am afraid he developed a swelled head and was somewhat bull-headed. That may account for his missing some of the things that he should have seen and done." In the same way, neither acted to alleviate the regiment's chronic shortage of officers. Nor did the 3rd Infantry Division have an effective program for validating training as other divisions had. Furthermore, little was done to rectify the failings of the 65th evident after OUTPOST KELLY. There was no major shakeup in the leadership of the regiment, no major influx of critically needed junior officers or NCOs, no sustained and uninterrupted training period, and no rest period of any significant length for the men traumatized by the Chinese artillery and more than 400 battle casualties. Instead, Smythe rushed to put the 65th, a clearly flawed unit, back on the line. No one should have been surprised when the regiment failed. Indeed, the surprise was that the regiment held JACKSON HEIGHTS for as long as it did and that even managed to retake and man the position for a time. Smythe's insensitivity to his men only added to the problem. Rather than encourage them, he ordered the name "*The Borinqueneers*," the name the men had selected for the 65th, removed from all the regiment's vehicles and withheld as punishment the regiment's special ration of rice and beans.¹³³

Division artillery was another problem. In his 18 September letter to Van Fleet, the I Corps commander had called the 3rd Division artillery brigade the weakest in I Corps: "In recent tests of the Division Artillery of the 2nd, 3rd and 1st Marine Divisions, the artillery of the 3rd Division was a poor third or last."¹³⁴ The division artillery failed to provide effective counterbattery artillery support at either OP KELLY or JACKSON HEIGHTS. The heavy volume and accuracy of CCF artillery fire literally swept the men of the 65th off the position again and again. "Artillery units suffered also the effects of rotation of their original personnel. Their replacements lacked the experience necessary to render efficient supporting fires," remembered Betances-Ramirez. "Counterbattery was non-existent. The infantry in the field could not successfully accomplish its mission without artillery support.... The Chinese had achieved a superior heavy mortar pattern of fires (120-mm) that caused us too many unnecessary casualties because they were firing without receiving our counterfires. The morale of our soldiers was decimated in the same proportion."¹³⁵

Finally, General Dulaney's and General Smythe's handling of the 65th's white and Puerto Rican officers reveals an uneven standard of justice and indicates a great deal about the 3rd Infantry Division's attitude toward the regiment. The relief of the 65th's Puerto Rican regimental commander, Colonel Cordero-Davila, by Smythe was fully warranted. A commander is, after all, responsible for everything his unit does or fails to do. The relief of the regiment's only Puerto Rican battalion commander, Colonel Betances-Ramirez of the 2nd Battalion, by Dulaney, however was not. The 1st Battalion's Company B was the unit that lost OUTPOST KELLY, most likely because its men were asleep at their posts.¹³⁶ In

the same way, the 3rd Battalion's Companies K and L disintegrated while counterattacking at OUTPOST KELLY, their troops streaming back in disorder. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion's Company G, under George Jackson, had held JACKSON HEIGHTS for the better part of four days against all odds. Company A of the 1st Battalion and Company F of the 2nd later abandoned the same position but the enemy's fire was so intense that no one could have remained on JACKSON HEIGHTS that day. Company C of the 1st Battalion, however, took and then abandoned the position without any Chinese opposition. With three strikes against the 1st Battalion (one at OUTPOST KELLY, two at JACKSON HEIGHTS) and two against the 3rd (both at JACKSON HEIGHTS) it is ironic that Betances-Ramirez was made to shoulder the whole blame. Finally, both the 1st and 3rd Battalions had more men court-martialed than the 2nd Battalion.¹³⁷

Neither did Smythe have to court-martial the men of the 65th. Indeed, the recently adopted Uniform Code of Military Justice provided him with a great deal of leeway. When 100 soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division abandoned their positions in July 1952 during the battle to recapture OLD BALDY and refused to return to the fighting, they were not court-martialed, because the division commander, Major General J.C. Fry, attributed the episode to confusion rather than cowardice. "They were typical clear-eyed, good-looking American boys," he said. "They had probably been afraid....frightened to their very souls, but they were not cowards."¹³⁸ Fry lectured the men then monitored their progress. Some were promoted or rotated home while others were decorated for bravery. "None," he reported, "has proven cowardly."¹³⁹ Fry, a veteran World War II combat commander, had taken command of a fundamentally sound division. Smythe, also a World War II veteran with impressive credentials as a combat commander, had inherited, on the other hand, a weak division whose previous commander had been relieved. It seems fair to conclude that the court-martial of the 65th's men was more an attempt to send a warning to the division than an effort to reform the regiment. Indeed, that very point came out in the court-martials in testimony that was very rapidly suppressed.

The 3rd Infantry Division's actions with regard to the regiment's white officers stood in stark contrast to its actions against the Puerto Rican officers and men of the 65th. The division took pains in its official report on the episode to absolve its white officers of all responsibility: "It should be noted that the conduct of continental officers during this operation was excellent," wrote the division commander. "The Division Commander and the Assistant Commander during the period feel that the continental officers of the 65th Infantry Regiment are high-energy types leaders, with exceptional records."¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, the refusal of the 3rd Battalion's Company L to continue with its combat patrol in November resulted in neither the relief of the regimental or the battalion commander, both of whom were white. Nor was any action taken against either the company commander or platoon leaders. Smythe also opted not to take any action against the officers and men of the 15th Infantry when a patrol from that regiment refused to follow its commander to the still hotly contested position at JACKSON HEIGHTS in November. The same was true when the regiment was thrown off JACKSON HEIGHTS by the Chinese in November and failed to regain the heights.¹⁴¹ In light of these incidents, it seems clear that a double standard was operative where the 65th was concerned. The 3rd Infantry Division's willingness to sit in judgment over Puerto Rican officers and soldiers stands in stark contrast to its treatment of white officers and units afflicted by the same malaise as the Hispanic regiment.

If racial prejudice was clearly present, organizational factors also played a role in the way the 3rd Division handled the 65th. The regiment did not really belong to the division but was under long term attached status to it. General Soule, who brought the division to Korea, treated the regiment as one of his own, spending a great deal of time with its commanders and soldiers and ensuring that its men received their fair share of awards. The relationship between the division and the regiment, however, began to deteriorate after Soule departed in September 1951 and command fell to Generals Cross, Dulaney, and then Smythe. Correspondence between General Van Fleet and Cross, a veteran of three tours in the 3rd Division, indicates that the Eighth Army's commander wanted the 65th replaced with the 30th Infantry Regiment. "Dear Tom," wrote Van Fleet in December 1952, "Your old division is coming along exceptionally fine under George Smythe with the exception of the 65th. That will never be corrected until we can restore to the division its old regiment now at Fort Benning."¹⁴² Van Fleet also commented on the so-called failures of the 65th in correspondence with Lieutenant General John W. O'Daniel, the former I Corps Commander. O'Daniel had commanded the 3rd Infantry Division during World War II and remained close to developments in the unit.¹⁴³

The combination of racial and organizational prejudice manifested itself in not only the relief of Colonel Betances-Ramirez and the court-martial of 94 of the regiment's men, but also in the 3rd Division's distribution of awards. By August 1952, the officers and men of the 65th had won 4 Distinguished Service Crosses and 126 Silver Stars. In comparison, the 7th Infantry Regiment had won 18 Distinguished Service Crosses and 423 Silver Stars while the 15th Infantry Regiment had garnered 20 Distinguished Service Crosses and 239 Silver Stars.¹⁴⁴ The 65th thus ended the year with considerably less than the division average of 14 Distinguished Service Crosses and 263 Silver Stars per regiment. This occurred despite the fact that it had accrued almost two more months in combat than the other regiments and had acquitted itself well, and sometimes with distinction, in 1950 and 1951.

If racial prejudice played a role, however, personnel policies unique to the all-Puerto Rican regiment pushed it over the brink. The officer shortage placed a tremendous leadership burden on the NCOs of the infantry regiments. In the 65th, however, the sergeants were simply not there. Although only Puerto Rican sergeants could serve in the regiment, those that spoke English could serve in any unit in Eighth Army as a result of a change in personnel policy enacted in October 1951. Ironically, the reason given for this change was the 65th's solid performance in the Puerto Rican Exercises of 1950 and 1951.¹⁴⁵ As a result, English-speaking Puerto Rican sergeants were diverted to other infantry units in Korea. Complaints of NCO shortages in the 65th surfaced as early as September 1951.¹⁴⁶

By September 1952, the problem had reached crisis proportions in the regiment. Although some 2,000 Puerto Rican soldiers, including many NCOs, were serving in other regiments throughout Korea, the 65th had only 381 of 811 authorized NCOs in the upper three grades. Many of these had been developed from recent replacements. Company commanders were forced to assign inexperienced privates and privates first class to key leadership positions where they commanded squads and acted as platoon sergeants, positions normally reserved for experienced Sergeants and Sergeants First Class.¹⁴⁷ The chain of command in combat suffered as a result. A failure to sustain the momentum of attacks occurred along with a tendency on the part of the men to become confused and disorganized after leaders became casualties.¹⁴⁸ The problem, of course, was endemic to

the entire Eighth army, but it was particularly acute in the 65th, where it proved catastrophic.¹⁴⁹

Part of the reason for that effect was language.¹⁵⁰ The regiment was unique in that the officers and men used both English and Spanish. By the Fall of 1952, the majority of enlisted men in the 65th spoke only Spanish, while the majority of officers spoke only English. Language had not been a major issue in 1950 and 1951 for the regiment. Most of the unit's NCOs and men were World War II veterans who spoke English relatively well. In addition, many of the officers that brought the regiment to Korea spoke Spanish. By 1952, however, few of the 65th's officers spoke Spanish and few of the unit's sergeants and men spoke English. The loss of bilingual NCOs to other regiments deprived the regiment of a critical link between the officers and their men.

The NCO shortage and the problems it entailed were nothing in comparison with a broader breakdown in leadership that was also occurring in the 65th. Despite warnings from the division, commanders at all levels failed to ensure that OUTPOST KELLY and JACKSON HEIGHTS were prepared to defend against impending Chinese attacks. Indeed, Cordero-Davila believed the enemy would remain on the defensive, because of an informal arrangement with the CCF in which U.S. soldiers occupied the outpost during the day and the Chinese occupied it at night. "It was an unwritten gentleman's agreement," he observed in a newspaper interview following the fall of KELLY, "with the gentlemen only on this side of the line." This belief that the enemy would remain on the defensive apparently worked its way down to lower level commanders, where it prompted a failure on their part to execute counterattacks expeditiously. In the same way, the 65th's commanders failed to provide, with a few exceptions, critical leadership at the time and place it was most needed. In light of the officer and NCO shortage throughout the regiment, regimental and battalion commanders should have been well forward with their assaulting units, getting a firsthand look at the situation, providing inspiration and control, committing reserves, and ensuring that their orders had been properly understood and executed. Instead, many of those individuals attempted to micromanage the battle from their bunkers, where they had little immediate influence over the direction events took.

The quality of the 65th's commander also figured into the failure of the regiment. Despite his impressive credentials, popularity with the men, and personal courage, Cordero-Davila proved to be more interested in pandering to his men than in ensuring that they were disciplined, well trained, and combat ready. Indeed, rather than rely on officers more tactically and technically competent than himself, Cordero-Davila undermined his officers' and sergeants' authority by establishing a Privates' Council consisting of a private from every platoon in the regiment and meeting once a month. The council undercut the chain of command by allowing soldiers to submit complaints directly to the regimental commander. Cordero-Davila then intervened on behalf of the men, upsetting policies his company and battalion commanders had set in place without sufficient feel for the circumstances that had led them in the first place. As a result, discipline suffered.

In his report after the battle at OUTPOST KELLY, General Dulaney wrote: "There was much to indicate that Colonel Cordero was not a disciplinarian."¹⁵² A number of the 65th's officers agreed with his assessment. One lieutenant (who went on to become a Colonel) described Cordero-Davila as "a totally inadequate officer" and insisted that he was "incompetent, lacked basic knowledge of infantry weapons and tactics" and "displayed

inadequate leadership skills."¹⁵³ In a display of candor, he added that the regiment's commander was "overly pro-Hispanic to the detriment of his largely continental officers."¹⁵⁴ Clearly interracial tensions were present in the regiment, even if they were usually well disguised by displays of outward harmony. Another officer remembered: "There was no discipline when I was just assigned to the 65th P.R. Regiment in July-September 1952, directly attributable to the political CO (Commander). When my patrol bugged out the men that ran were verbally admonished by the CO and I was told that the men would not do that again!"¹⁵⁵ When Colonel DeGavre took command of the 65th in October, the men had stopped saluting, cutting their hair and shaving, were cutting the heels off their Army issued boots, carving the stocks of their weapons, and failing to wear helmets on the front lines. He attributed the breakdown in discipline directly to Colonel Cordero-Davila, whom he called a "Political" commander.¹⁵⁶

These circumstances notwithstanding, the breakdown in discipline DeGavre speaks of could hardly have been either as severe or as widespread as the Colonel suggests. The fact that Company G was able to hold JACKSON HEIGHTS and that Company F was able to recapture it for as long and as quickly as they did indicates that some soldiers of the regiment retained a good measure of training, discipline, and tenacity. This could be attributed directly to the caliber of small unit leaders. Captains Jackson and Cronkhite, for example, were West Point classmates. Both had commanded companies abroad (Jackson in the Philippines, Cronkhite in Panama) as well as training companies in the United States prior to arriving in Korea. Both trained their companies hard and imposed a high standard of discipline on their men. Their secret of success appears to have been finding a training area away from the prying eyes of Colonel Cordero-Davila and the regimental staff.¹⁵⁷

The Chinese, of course, deserve a good deal of credit for the 65th's troubles. Their performance was a solid indicator of their growing technical capabilities and tactical competence. The year 1952 saw a steady buildup of enemy artillery, with the most significant increase occurring between April and July.¹⁵⁸ This included the introduction of new and more effective weapons such as the Soviet 152-mm. gun and improvements in the supply of artillery ammunition.¹⁵⁹ Chinese and North Korean forces began the year with 71 artillery battalions and 852 artillery pieces on the front line. There were another 361 artillery battalions and almost 3,500 artillery pieces in their rear areas. In comparison, United Nations forces deployed 66 artillery battalions and 1,200 guns in Korea, the bulk along their front lines. By October, the enemy's strength in artillery had almost doubled to 131 artillery battalions and more than 1,300 artillery pieces at the front. In addition, there were another 383 battalions with 4,000 artillery pieces in rear areas. UN artillery had grown to 82 battalions of almost 1,500 artillery pieces.¹⁶⁰ The CCF and NKPA thus enjoyed a rough parity in artillery with the allies at the front while having the advantage of ample reserves.

Accompanying the growth in Chinese artillery was an increase in the number of CCF artillery rounds fired in 1952. That increase began in June and peaked in November. In January the CCF fired approximately 17,500 rounds a month in comparison with the 8,000 rounds fired in July 1951. By August they were firing 70,400 rounds a month. The figure rose to 105,000 rounds in September and peaked in November 1952.¹⁶¹ A growing sophistication in artillery tactics accompanied those increases. Beginning in September 1952 the Chinese began to use massed preparatory fires prior to attacks while also intensifying the bombardment of rear areas.¹⁶² And their fire came from positions located

well to the rear, making it more difficult for friendly artillery to conduct an adequate response.¹⁶³ One of the first manifestations of the CCF's ability to mass artillery effectively came at OUTPOST KELLY against the 65th.

In addition to their growing tactical and logistical capabilities, the Communists also displayed a growing tactical competence and a greater willingness to take the war to the enemy. Unlike the U.S. Army in Korea, few Chinese officers and soldiers were rotated home, ensuring a large cadre of battle-hardened veterans. The capture of OP KELLY, for example, can be considered a model operation by a reinforced CCF battalion and highlights the disparity in leadership, training, and morale of the two opposing forces.

The heavy cumulative effect of all these influences - the shortage of officers and NCOs, the rotation policy, a casualty intensive tactical doctrine, ammunition shortages, sagging morale, inept leadership, weak division artillery, racial and organizational prejudice, and language problems - was simply too great a burden for the 65th to bear. In the end, the regiment, which suffered from these problems at least as much, if not more, than any other U.S. Infantry regiment in Korea, simply could not overcome the combination of all these factors.

It is a tribute to the dedication and perseverance of the men of the 65th that, in light of all this, they attacked as many times as they did and were able to advance as far as they did, seizing both outposts, albeit for short periods of time. As happens too often in war, they were let down by their leaders at all levels.

Aftermath: Court-Martial and Reconstitution

The 3rd Infantry Division pursued two tracks in dealing with the 65th's failures. The first entailed the largest mass court-martials of the Korean War. The second was an attempt to have the regiment inactivated and replaced by the 30th Infantry.

Shortly after JACKSON HEIGHTS, Colonel DeGavre and his company commanders preferred charges against all the men involved. Between 23 November and 26 December 1952, 95 of those individuals were tried by General Court-Martial in fifteen separate trials. First Lieutenant Juan Guzman, the first tried, faced General Court-Martial on 23 November, less than three weeks after being charged. He was found guilty of willful disobedience of a lawful command to move his platoon to JACKSON HEIGHTS and received a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and five years confinement at hard labor. Guzman, who was fluent in English, had an excellent military record with the Puerto Rican National Guard prior to arriving in Korea.¹⁶⁴ He had been in Korea only eight days when the attack at JACKSON HEIGHTS took place and had been appointed to Company A Executive Officer only five days after arriving in theater and three days prior to attack. It is clear, however, that traumatized by the Chinese artillery and the sight of the many dead and wounded, he refused several direct orders to move his men back to JACKSON HEIGHTS.¹⁶⁵ "You asked if Lt. Guzman had been unfairly picked for Court Martial charges, my answer is 'no,' wrote Colonel (Retired) Betances-Ramirez. "His repeated refusals to obey a direct order from his supervisors called for the action taken and for the findings of guilty that followed."¹⁶⁸

On 7 December the first group of enlisted men were tried. The men, all from Company L., received dishonorable discharges, forfeiture of all pay and allowances and 1-2 years confinement at hard labor.¹⁶⁷ A group of 5 men from Company C, tried on 10 December received 13 years confinement at hard labor.¹⁶⁸ Four men from Company L tried on 15 December received 16 to 18 years confinement at hard labor.¹⁶⁹ The last court-martial of the year was on 26 December when 11 men from Company F were sentenced to hard labor.¹⁷⁰ In January 1953, the last four members of the regiment were tried and acquitted. In all, of the 95 men court-martialed, 91 were found guilty. In addition to confinement at hard labor, all the guilty were sentenced to dishonorable discharges and total forfeiture of pay and allowances.

The Army kept the court-martials relatively quiet and downplayed both the number of men tried and the severity of their sentences.¹⁷¹ By late-January 1953, however, newspapers in both the United States and Puerto Rico had picked up the story, mostly as the result of letters written by the men of the 65th to their friends and families. Soon after it broke, Congress, the government of Puerto Rico, and the press demanded explanations and investigations.¹⁷² On 3 February 1953, General Collins testified before the House Armed Services Committee. When asked about the regiment and the court-martials in Korea, the Army Chief of Staff answered that the 65th had been a "very well trained" and "very ably led unit" when it first arrived in Korea, where "it distinguished itself in action."¹⁷³ He blamed the failure of the regiment on rotation, the inability of the men to speak English, and the lack of battlefield experience of its officers. "The Puerto Ricans have proven in action in early fighting in Korea," he testified, "that they are gallant people and that they will fight just as well as anyone else if they are properly trained and properly led." Collins concluded his testimony on the 65th by pointing out that its failure was not due to either a lack of artillery or equipment.

The inability of the men of the 65th to speak English became the Army's official reason for the failure of the regiment in the Fall of 1952. Using this as justification, Secretary of the Army Robert Stevens moved quickly to overturn the sentences. By 14 July he had granted clemency to 56 of the 93 soldiers. By 1954 all those sentenced had received clemency or pardons. The majority returned to service in the Army. Court-martialed records make clear that, despite the appeals process, the soldiers of the regiment would not have had their sentences overturned without the intervention of Secretary Stevens.

While the court-martials were taking place the regiment was being reconstituted. In November 1952, the 3rd Infantry Division's commander, General Smythe, recommended that a combat-trained regiment be assigned to the division instead of the 65th. If that were not possible, he suggested that an experienced regimental combat team replace the 65th during the four months it would take to retrain the unit. If those two options proved unfeasible, he requested that the division be authorized to reconstitute the 65th with 60 percent Continental personnel from other units and that all Puerto Rican in excess of this figure be redistributed throughout Eighth Army.

Smythe's recommendations were based on an investigation conducted by Major John S. D. Eisenhower, the son of the then-President Elect. In his memoirs Strictly Personal, Eisenhower, who was serving with the 15th Infantry as a newly arrived Major in Korea, relates his appointment as investigating officer into the failure of the 65th at

OUTPOST KELLY and JACKSON HEIGHTS. According to Eisenhower, the 3rd Infantry Division commander was less than impartial. "John, that regiment can't fight the way it's set up." Smythe said. "I want it thrown out of the division or integrated with Puerto Rican and Continentals like they are in every other division. Now write a study and make it logical. Eisenhower writes: "I set to work with enthusiasm. For a few weeks I was to be the division G-3 projects officer."

Major Eisenhower produced a study biased in the extreme against the regiment. The study devoted less than half a page to the 65th's record in 1950 and 1951 and more than five pages to its record in 1952 and its failure at OP KELLY and JACKSON HEIGHTS. It failed to mention the impact of unit rotation on the regiment, the critical shortage of NCOs, or the failure of the 3rd Infantry to remedy the regiment's problems and to provide it with any significant degree of leadership. The study concluded: "It is obvious that in view of the repeated disintegration of companies under fire, the 65th Infantry can no longer be entrusted with a sector of the United Nations battlefield until radical improvements are made."

Two days after receiving Smythe's recommendations (along with Eisenhower's study), Lieutenant General Reuben Jenkins, the IX Corps Commander, wrote to the Eighth Army commander. He noted that the 65th was "not a battle-worthy unit" and could not be made into a battle-worthy unit with less than six months of training "and then only after it has been assigned a large compliment of experience Regular Army noncommissioned officers." He added that an all-Puerto Rican regiment could no longer be justified and seconded Smythe's recommendations. Jenkins requested that the 30th Infantry be brought to full strength and transferred to Korea for assignment to the 3rd Division. He also recommended that English language instructions at the training center in Puerto Rico should be extended from the sixteen then required to twenty-two.

On 14 November, General Van Fleet requested that Department of the Army deactivate the 65th. "In the early fighting in Korea," he wrote, "the 65th Infantry Regiment gave an excellent account of itself. It had a high percentage of career soldiers and its noncommissioned officer personnel were, for the most part, bilingual. This situation no longer exists. A recent study of 1300 Puerto Rican replacements showed that only 300 spoke English." Addressing the NCO problem, the General added that "An obvious solution to correct the lack of qualified Puerto Rican NCOs was to integrate continental US NCO's into the regiment. This was attempted and proved successful only when the NCO spoke Spanish. The availability of Spanish speaking US NCOs is limited."

Unit command reports do not support the contention that Eighth Army, IX Corps or the 3rd Infantry Division attempted to remedy the shortage in the 65th Infantry by assigning Continental NCOs in any significant numbers to the regiment. Nor is it likely. The shortage of NCOs was Eighth Army wide, suggesting that there were not many available to reassign to the 65th. It is interesting that Van Fleet did not mention the almost 2,000 Puerto Rican soldiers, many of them NCOs, serving in other units in Korea. It is clear (and understandable) that units were unwilling to part with their Sergeants. It is equally clear that Eighth Army was unwilling to reassign NCOs in any appreciable number to the regiment. Van Fleet concluded by requesting that the 65th be deactivated and replaced by another regiment: "It is desired," he wrote, "that consideration be given to the return of the

30th Regiment to the Division. This regiment has always been part of the division and has in that status participated in World War I and World War II."

Toward the end of February, the department of the Army directed that the 65th be reconstituted as a fully integrated formation with non-Puerto Rican personnel assigned in the same proportion as in other regiments in the Eighth Army. With reconstitution scheduled for early March, the unit relinquished its segment of LINE MISSOURI at the end of February and pulled into a reserve position near CHANG-MOL. In March, some 2,096 Puerto Rican enlisted personnel left the 65th to join other units. In exchange 1,140 Continentals arrived. By the late Spring of 1953, the regiment had lost its Puerto Rican identity.

The 65th was hardly the first American unit in Korea to suffer setbacks. The 34th Infantry was reduced to paper status in August 1950, while the African American 24th Infantry was inactivated on 1 October 1951. Both regiments had suffered repeated combat failures. In August 1951, a battalion of the 9th Infantry became disorganized and abandoned its positions during the fighting for BLOODY RIDGE after its command group was surprised by the Chinese and fled. In July 1952, 85 men of the 23rd Infantry and another 15 men of the 2nd Infantry Division abandoned their position at OLD BALDY and refused to return to the fighting. Nor was the 65th the last. In November of 1952, a 15th Infantry patrol refused to continue with its mission. A week later the 15th lost JACKSON HEIGHTS and failed to retake it.

On 30 March, the newly reconstituted 65th began eight weeks of intensive training. On 16 May, the regiment occupied a sector on LINE MISSOURI. That same day, Company G, attached to the 15th Infantry Regiment and defending OUTPOST HARRY, defeated a three-pronged attack by a Chinese battalion, winning 14 Bronze Stars for valor. On 10 June, Company B defeated another battalion-size attack, engaging in hand-to-hand combat with the CCF and counterattacking to throw the enemy off its position. During the remainder of the month, the 65th supported the 15th Infantry Regiment in its defense of OUTPOST HARRY and launched a number of raids against the Chinese inflicting some 150 casualties on the enemy while suffering 104. By the end of the month the men of the regiment had suffered 196 battle casualties (including 26 KIA, 165 WIA, and 5 MIA) while winning 14 Silver Stars, 23 Bronze Stars for valor, 22 Bronze Stars, and 67 Purple Hearts. The 65th had thus redeemed itself against the Chinese.

The 65th conducted raids against the CCF throughout July. The last "aggressive" tactical operation of the Korean War conducted by the regiment came on 27 July when a reconnaissance patrol from Company B called in artillery fire on a group of Chinese soldiers. The truce ending the war was signed later at 1000 that same morning and the cease-fire went into effect at 2200. From 1500 to 2145 the Chinese shelled the entire regimental sector, including the regimental command post, inflicting numerous casualties. Battle casualties for the month were 27 KIA and 144 WIA and MIA. The 65th remained in Korea through the Fall of 1954, conducting training, border security, and reserve missions. It returned to Puerto Rico in November. On 19 November, the regiment transferred its colors to the Puerto Rican National Guard, where it took the place of the 296th Infantry.

In all, some 61,000 Puerto Ricans served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, the bulk of them with the 65th Infantry Regiment. Of these, 48,000 joined in Puerto Rico.

Over the course of the war, 743 were killed and 2,318 wounded. One of every 42 casualties incurred by U.S. forces was Puerto Rican, and the island suffered one casualty for every 660 of its inhabitants as compared to one casualty for every 1,125 inhabitants of the Continental United States.

Why did Puerto Ricans fight in Korea? Perhaps there was some truth in Governor Muñoz-Marin's words on the day the colors of the regiment were transferred to the 296th: "The flag of the United States which they followed with devotion into battle represents their great democratic faith as citizens of the United States. The flag of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, under which they proudly fought, represents in their hearts those ideals important to Puerto Rico, for their homes in the hills and villages of Puerto Rico, their pride in their traditions, and their hope that their island would assume each day a greater role as an exporter of goodwill and understanding between the peoples of all countries. One senses the real answer, however, in the words of a group of Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Korean War veterans: "We fought because we were soldiers of the United States Army and of the regiment. It was our duty."