

# Barbula and Old Baldy, March 1953: Colombia's Heaviest Combat in Korea

by Charles H. Briscoe

**COLOMBIA** provided an infantry battalion and a frigate to serve with the United Nations Command in Korea from 1951–1955. It was the only Latin American country to provide forces.<sup>1</sup> The *Batallón Colombia* bravely fought the Communist Chinese in numerous engagements in 1951 and 1952, earning a U.S. Presidential Unit Citation during the Kumsong Offensive. However, it was the heavy fighting in March 1953, while the peace talks were in progress, that truly tested the mettle of the South Americans. This article will focus on the two most significant actions of the *Batallón Colombia* in Korea, Operation BARBULA and the fight for Old Baldy. In a period of ten days, the Colombians suffered 114 killed, 141 wounded, and 38 missing in action, the equivalent of two rifle companies.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of this article is to place those two battles in proper context in order to show how earlier success in Operation BARBULA created conditions that contributed later to a controversial loss.

This study is relevant because the Korean War was key to the development of a professional Colombian armed force and was a benchmark in the social and political transformation of the country. Because Colombia was the only Latin American country to support the principles of international, collective security in Korea, the *Batallón Colombia* and its naval frigates became “showcase” elements for their military services, the nation, and the Americas.<sup>3</sup> When the *Batallón Colombia* reached the front lines on 1 August 1951, the war was a stalemate.

The UN objective in Korea had shifted from military victory to a political settle-

ment. The Eighth Army commander, U.S. General James A. Van Fleet, concluded that “continued pursuit of the enemy was neither practical nor expedient. The most profitable employment of UN troops . . . was to establish a defense line (Line Kansas) on the nearest commanding terrain north of Parallel 38, and from there push forward in limited advances to accomplish the maximum destruction to the enemy consistent with minimum danger to the integrity of the UN forces.”<sup>4</sup>

That meant Line Kansas was to be fortified in depth. Hasty field fortifications would be constructed along the



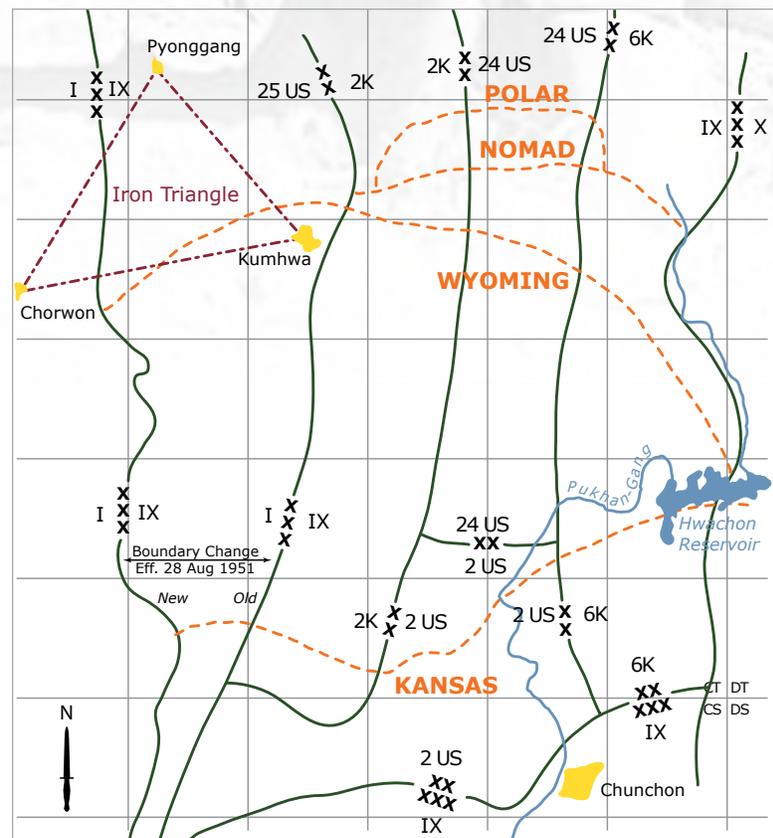
UN Service Medal



U.S. Presidential Unit Citation



Colombia's "Rampant Lion of the Infantry" insignia



Friendly Situation—August 1951 highlighting Lines Kansas, Wyoming, Nomad, and Polar.



Colombian positions on the main line of resistance while attached to the 24th Infantry Division near Chup'a-ri overlooking the Kumsong Valley, 1951.

forward slopes of Line Wyoming [Combat Outpost Line (COPL)] to blunt enemy assaults and delay them before they reached Kansas, the main line of resistance (MLR). Having trained to fight offensively, the *Batallón Colombia* would primarily defend. Only limited attacks would be conducted against the Chinese forces.<sup>5</sup> Attached to two different U.S. divisions (21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division until late January 1952; then to 31st



24th Infantry Division shoulder patch



21st Infantry Regiment (Gimlets) Distinctive Unit Insignia



IX Corps shoulder patch

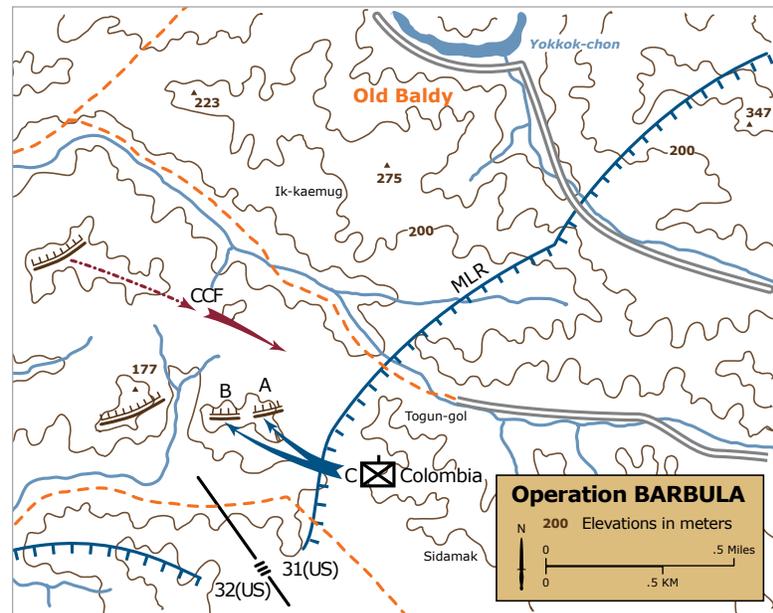
Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division until October 1954), the Colombians would defend the MLR and conduct patrols and raids between the lines until the armistice on 27 July 1953. However, while peace talks were ongoing at Panmunjom, the Chinese launched a major offensive in the spring of 1953, to capture several UN outposts on dominant terrain that overlooked the MLR.<sup>6</sup>

When the 7th Infantry Division returned to the MLR the end of February 1953, it had been reassigned from the IX Corps to the I Corps sector. The *Batallón Colombia* was operationally ready. The battalion's intense integrated training of 201 replacements from the 8th contingent was key to Colonel William B. Kern awarding it a top performance during regimental maneuvers in late November 1952, and again in February 1953.<sup>7</sup> Operation BARBULA placed the Colombians back into the ground war.

On 10 March 1953, Lieutenant Colonel Alberto Ruíz Novoa, third commander of the *Batallón Colombia*, sent C Company (-), commanded by Captain Gustavo Acevedo, to attack two enemy strong points on Hill 180. They were about five hundred meters in front of the 31st Infantry sector. These two strong points screened the Chinese MLR five hundred meters to the rear. After the two



Captain Jorgé Robledo Pulido briefed Operation BARBULA (right to left) to General Mark W. Clark (UN Command), General Maxwell D. Taylor (Eighth U.S. Army), Colonel William B. Kern (31st Infantry), Lieutenant General Paul W. Kendall (I Corps), and Major General Wayne C. Smith (7th Infantry Division) with a sand table terrain model.



Operation BARBULA (10 March 1953)



7th Infantry Division shoulder patch



31st Infantry Regiment (Polar Bears) Distinctive Unit Insignia



1st Corps shoulder patch



Batallón Colombia defensive positions on the reverse slope of the Main Line of Resistance.

Colombian platoons crossed a narrow valley, the element commanded by Second Lieutenant Andrade was to attack Strong Point A. Simultaneously, Second Lieutenant Miguel Piñeros Grimaldi and his platoon were to assault Strong Point B. Intelligence estimates were that both strong points were defended by infantry platoons. In the early morning darkness, the two Colombian platoons managed to get within fifty meters of their objectives undetected.<sup>8</sup>

Then, at 0700 hours, the platoons simultaneously charged the strong points with fixed bayonets. The courageous Colombian infantrymen jumped into the trenches throwing hand grenades. Bloody hand-to-hand fighting ensued as more Chinese rushed out of bunkers and fighting positions. Numbers of Colombian wounded quickly exceeded the capacity of litter bearers. The Korean Service Corps personnel brought along to carry the wounded fled when the attacks began. After an hour of intense fighting, it became deathly quiet as the dawn arrived.<sup>9</sup>

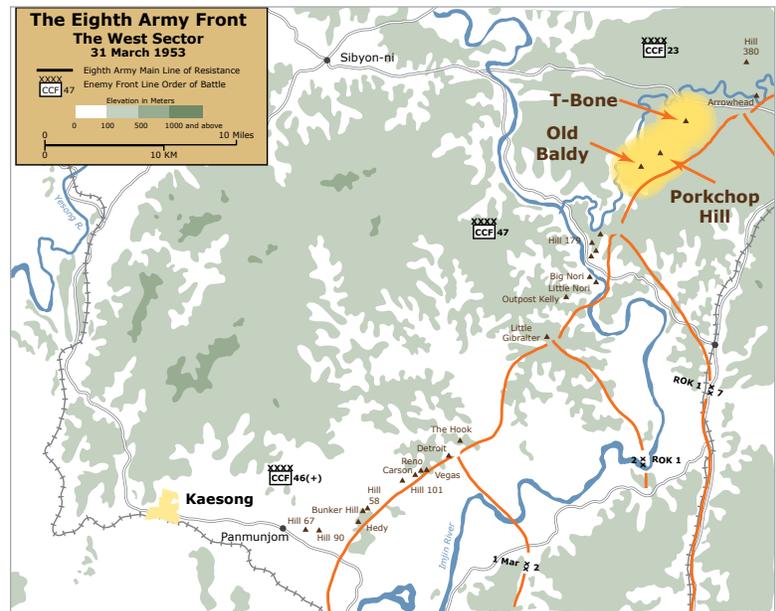
Observing the fights with binoculars, CPT Acevedo spotted two Chinese platoons rushing toward Hill 180. He quickly called in artillery support. The counterat-

tack was blocked, but the enemy stayed within small-arms range and directed heavy machinegun fire on the strong points. At 0950 hours, LTC Ruiz Novoa ordered the immediate withdrawal of both platoons. Lieutenant Piñeros Grimaldi pulled his platoon back, but 2LT Andrade had radio problems and kept his platoon in place. Observing that some Colombians were withdrawing, the Chinese concentrated their fire on Andrade's platoon. As their casualties mounted, 2LT Andrade was wounded. Litter bearers had been reduced to crawling among the wounded and dead. CPT Acevedo requested that his third platoon be sent to retrieve the wounded and dead.<sup>10</sup>

Under heavy enemy fire the third platoon led by Second Lieutenant Luis A. Bernal (Silver Star, 21 June 1952) rushed forward to begin a search and rescue. By 1100 hours, most of the casualties had been evacuated to an emergency aid station on the MLR. Operation BAR-



Unarmed Korean Service Corps personnel carrying hot food to the Combat Outpost Line.



The Eighth Army Front 31 March 1953 showing the Old Baldy, Porkchop Hill, and T-Bone outposts.

# Initial Fights for Old Baldy (June–September 1952)

WHEN the 6 June 1952 assault to seize Hill 266 was halted by enemy fire, the 45th Infantry Division artillery fired another 500 rounds on the Communist defenders. The second heavy bombardment enabled A Company, 180th Infantry Regiment to finally seize control of Old Baldy shortly after midnight on 7 June 1952. The adjacent outpost on Porkchop Hill (Hill 255) had also been captured after an intense fifty-five minute fight.

As the enemy resistance crumbled, the infantrymen of A Company, 180th Infantry, 45th Infantry Division pushed their way toward the crest of Old Baldy on the late afternoon of 6 June 1952. Then, enemy artillery and mortars began to rain down on them. "There were no bunkers or trenches to get into," said Master Sergeant Gerald Marlin, "so we started digging while the shells burst around us. I almost crawled into my helmet."<sup>1</sup> Despite the heavy indirect fire, A Company held on and cleared Old Baldy of enemy.

Once the Old Baldy and Porkchop Hill outposts had been seized, the men of the 180th Infantry, aided by Korean Service Corps personnel, worked through the night to man-carry construction and fortification materials up the hills. Bunkers were dug and covered with sandbags. This would allow defenders protected inside to call friendly artillery on top of themselves (air bursts with proxim-

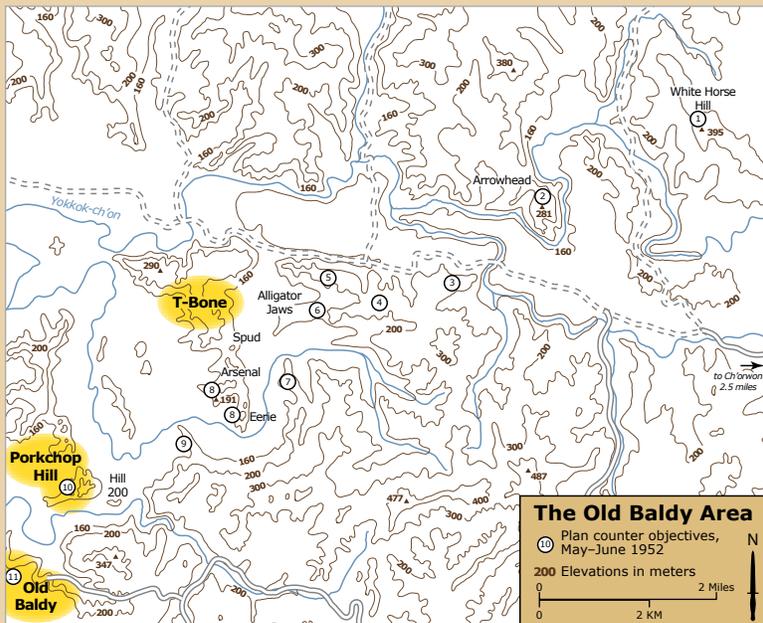
ity fuses) when enemy attackers drew close. The outposts were ringed with varieties of barbed-wire obstacles. Land mines were placed in enemy avenues of approach and covered by automatic weapons. Signalmen laid wire to adjacent posts and back to the MLR. Korean Service Corps personnel brought in stockpiles of ammunition. The blocking force unit behind the MLR had the mission to reinforce the outposts in the event of heavy enemy attacks. Elements of the 45th Infantry Division managed to fight off several determined enemy attacks during June and July 1952 until relieved by the 2nd Infantry Division. "Mostly they tried to get the hill by overwhelming us," remembered Private First Class Lee Keir, radio operator, Weapons Platoon, C Company, 179th Infantry Regiment. "Sometimes their infantry would come rushing in while their own artillery shells were still landing. When we raised our heads, there they were."<sup>2</sup> Taking advantage of the unit changeover, the Chinese launched a reinforced battalion against Old Baldy on the night of 17–18 July. Although the outpost was quickly reinforced with another rifle company, 23rd Infantry Regiment elements were eventually driven off Hill 266. Despite repeated counterattacks, the 2nd Infantry Division did not regain control of Old Baldy until 2 August. On 18 September

1952, the enemy launched another determined attack on Old Baldy. It took two days of heavy fighting with tanks to force an enemy withdrawal. The 2nd Infantry Division losses numbered 39 killed, 234 wounded, and 84 missing versus 1,093 Chinese dead. The constant fighting for control of Old Baldy was typical of the battles waged in the summer and



*Setting up barbed-wire obstacles at the base of Old Baldy.*

- 1 45th Infantry Division *News* (13 June 1952), 1, 4, cited in Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1992), 287.
- 2 Gary Turbak, "Assaulting Suicide Hill," *VFW Magazine* (June 2002) at [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0LIY/is\\_10\\_89/ai\\_87509634](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0LIY/is_10_89/ai_87509634).
- 3 Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, 285, 286, 287, 290, 291, 293, 295, 296; Gary Turbak, "Assaulting Suicide Hill," *VFW Magazine* (June 2002) at [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0LIY/is\\_10\\_89/ai\\_87509634](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0LIY/is_10_89/ai_87509634).



*The Old Baldy Area with Old Baldy as Objective #11, Porkchop Hill as #10, and T-Bone above Objective #8.*  
18 Veritas



*45th Infantry Division shoulder patch*



*2nd Infantry Division shoulder patch*



*180th Infantry Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia*



*23rd Infantry Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia*

BULA against the Chinese outposts on Hill 180 inflicted more than 175 casualties on the enemy, but the *Batallón Colombia* suffered nineteen killed, forty-four wounded, and eight missing in action.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, the fights on 10 March 1953 were a portent of heavier combat to come and the casualties would be significant.

Three days after Operation BARBULA, the *Batallón Colombia* relieved the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment on the MLR in the early morning darkness. They were defending the Togun-kol sector with a company-size outpost on Old Baldy (Hill 266), the high point of an east-west ridge that dominated the terrain to the north, west, and south. Hill 266 had been labeled Old Baldy by the 45th Infantry Division in early June 1952 after intense artillery and mortar fire had destroyed the trees on its crest. The Colombians, having guarded the T-Bone outpost to the east of nearby Porkchop Hill in January 1953, were familiar with the surrounding area when they occupied the center of the 31st Infantry defensive line on 13 March 1953. The 2nd Battalion was on the left while the 3rd Battalion on the right had another crucial outpost, the infamous Porkchop Hill (Hill 255). The 1st Battalion was in regimental reserve.<sup>12</sup>

On 20 March 1953, heavy artillery and mortar fire was directed on the outposts, marking an imminent Chinese offensive. The division G-2 confirmed that assessment after interrogating two Chinese deserters.<sup>13</sup> This major Chinese offensive was to improve the Communist position during the peace negotiations at Panmunjom. In the western sector of the MLR, the 31st Infantry Regiment would take the brunt of a series of regimental (-) assaults from elements of the 141st and 67th Chinese Divisions because they coveted those outposts on the most dominant terrain, Old Baldy and Porkchop Hill. Just behind the MLR, COL Kern put a rifle company of the 1st Battalion in a blocking position. LTC Ruíz Novoa posted B Company on Old Baldy and his A and C Companies on the MLR.<sup>14</sup>

In the early morning hours of 22 March 1953, the 141st and 67th Chinese Divisions began systematically pummeling Old Baldy with more than 300 rounds of 122mm artillery as well as 82mm and 120mm mortars and heavy machinegun fire.<sup>15</sup> Prior to this, the Colombians on Old Baldy had received about a dozen rounds of 122mm harassment fire daily. Under this heavy onslaught of fire, casualties started to mount as the bunkers and trenches on the outpost were seriously damaged. The *Batallón Colombia* counter-fired 1,500 rounds of 81mm mortar into likely enemy infantry assembly areas. When the heavy volume of enemy fire did not lessen by the late afternoon, ever-mounting casualties prompted the decision of COL Kern to relieve the battered company and reinforce the outpost that night.<sup>16</sup>

CPT Gustavo Acevedo, the C Company commander, after having an American rifle platoon from the 1st Battalion (his company suffered seventy-one casualties on 13 March) attached, was ordered forward to relieve Captain Irmer Perea's B Company. At 2030 hours, while

C Company was moving toward the COPL, the Chinese attacked A Company manning the MLR. It was quite fortunate that Captain Augusto Bahamon and his company managed to beat off the assault because they were covering the entire battalion sector of the MLR. Large piles of determined Chinese lay dead or wounded in front of their positions.<sup>17</sup>

At 2105 hours, before the relief-in-place of B Company was completed on Old Baldy, the Chinese simultaneously launched double-barreled battalion-sized attacks against that outpost and Porkchop Hill. Both were preceded by intense artillery and mortar bombardments. The combined Colombian and U.S. elements on Old Baldy inflicted heavy losses on waves of Chinese advancing up the slope. Despite suffering massive casualties, the Communists kept throwing reinforcements into the fight for Old Baldy



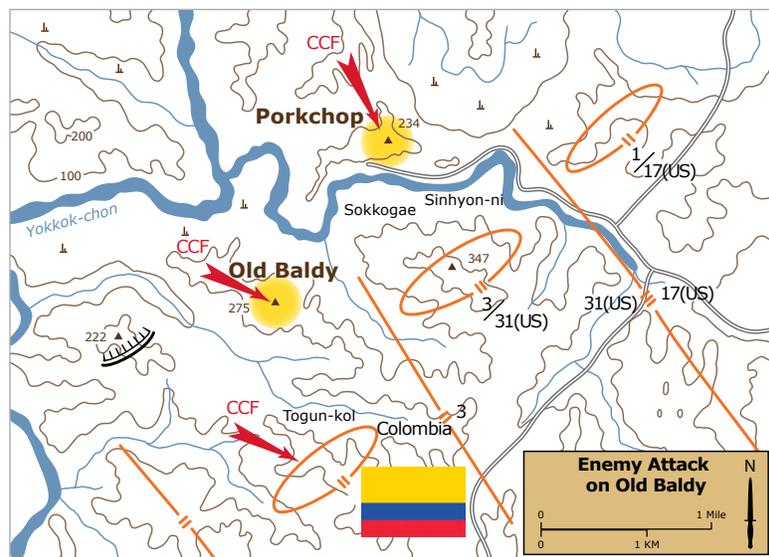
Old Baldy



Porkchop Hill



T-Bone. All three of these outposts could only accommodate a rifle company each.



Enemy Attack on Old Baldy-Porkchop Hill Area (23 Mar 1953) with Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) arrows for the MLR attack and the simultaneous attacks on Old Baldy and Porkchop Hill.

while pressing the assault on Porkchop Hill to the east. Finally, after two hours of heavy fighting on Old Baldy, the rolling onslaught of Chinese infantrymen could not be stopped. The Communists managed to break through the outer defenses at several points, fighting their way inside the perimeter of bunkers. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting broke out. A direct artillery hit on the command bunker had cut communications to the battalion. A Company, manning the MLR alone, relayed messages from her sister companies embroiled on Old Baldy.<sup>18</sup>

Several battalion attempts to resupply ammunition to the beleaguered units on Old Baldy had failed. The Chinese had registered artillery and mortars on the only access—a narrow, bare ridge leading from the MLR. Colombian casualties on the outpost mounted rapidly. The interiors of the collapsed bunkers were catching on fire from sparking fuses of hand grenades.

Low on ammunition and down to 40 percent effectives (including wounded still capable of fighting), the two commanders began a withdrawal down the southeastern slope of the outpost. LTC Ruíz Novoa was busy assembling bloodied infantrymen at the base of the hill when an American rifle company from the 1st Battalion came to help “mend the situation” on Old Baldy.<sup>19</sup>

First Lieutenant Jack M. Patterson started B Company (-) toward the abandoned outpost at 2130 hours. As the Americans approached, the Chinese defenders engaged them in succession with artillery and mortars, then machineguns and automatic weapons, and finally with rifles and hand grenades. Despite the persistent heavy enemy fire, Patterson’s determined soldiers managed to fight their way into the outer bunkers by 0200 hours on 24 March and began clearing them one by one.<sup>20</sup>

Progress finally ground to a halt when LT Patterson’s company encountered the main body of Chinese consolidating their hold on Old Baldy. Shortly after dawn on 24 March 1953, Major General Arthur G. Trudeau, commander of the 7th Infantry Division effective 20 March 1953, intervened to pull the Colombians off Old Baldy and the MLR and put them in regimental reserve. The 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry and B Company, 73rd Tank Battalion were made OPCON (under the operational

control) to the 31st Infantry to counterattack the lost outpost from the southwest. When the lead rifle company quickly became bogged down by Chinese fire, COL Kern committed another two companies of the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry to push past them, link up with the remnants of LT Patterson’s company, and establish a precarious foothold at the base of Old Baldy by evening.<sup>21</sup>

At 0430 hours, 25 March, COL Kern sent another company to flank attack the Chinese from the northeast. This effort was quickly pinned down by deadly enemy fire from Old Baldy. A detachment of tanks enabled the infantrymen to break contact. The 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry counterattacked repeatedly without success. Finally, during the night of 25–26 March, the 32nd Infantry battalion was ordered to withdraw.<sup>22</sup> MG Trudeau pounded the outpost all day with Air Force, Navy, and Marine fighter bombers on 26 March. The Chinese on Old Baldy hunkered down in their bunkers allowing several Colombians who were trapped behind the lines to slip back to the MLR.<sup>23</sup>

Colombian casualties were high for their two and one-half days of intense fighting on Old Baldy. Ninety-five South Americans gave their lives, ninety-seven were wounded, and thirty more were missing. Combined, these losses amounted to more than an entire rifle company. Chinese casualties were estimated to be more than 500. The Communists had been determined to capture and retain possession of Old Baldy. Thus, in just ten days, the *Batallón Colombia* had suffered 313 casualties, the equivalent of two rifle companies. In regimental reserve, LTC Ruíz Novoa reorganized the remnants of his battalion into two understrength rifle companies, a heavy weapons platoon, and a command and control platoon. More amazing was that on 27 March, four days after the Old Baldy battle, the shrunken *Batallón Colombia* moved back to the MLR. That same afternoon, MG Trudeau awarded LTC Ruíz Novoa the Bronze Star for Valor for outstanding leadership during the Old Baldy battle.<sup>24</sup>



*This photo of U.S. soldiers carrying barbed wire up to Old Baldy shows the exposed, narrow ridge available to resupply the beleaguered Colombians with ammunition.*



*Batallón Colombia soldiers gathered after memorial service for their Old Baldy dead in April 1953.*



*Batallón Colombia award ceremony for Operations BARBULA and Old Baldy. Note the Colombian "Rampant Lion of Infantry" sign to the right.*

Lieutenant General Paul W. Kendall, the I Corps commander, ordered that Old Baldy be retaken on either 27 or 28 March. MG Trudeau planned and rehearsed the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry for this mission using similar terrain. Then, General Maxwell B. Taylor, the new Eighth Army commander, cancelled the I Corps counter-offensive on 30 March. Old Baldy was no longer deemed essential to the defense of the sector.<sup>25</sup>

The price for Old Baldy was heavy for Colombia—192 killed or wounded during the battle and thirty missing, presumed prisoners of war. U.S. casualties after multiple fruitless efforts were equally high. American officers estimated that the Chinese suffered 600–800 killed during the battles for Old Baldy.<sup>26</sup> Although the Chinese initially overran the 3rd Battalion company on Porkchop Hill on 23 March, a quick counterattack regained a portion of the outpost that night and the position was restored the next day.<sup>27</sup> Porkchop Hill was attacked frequently afterward. Artillery forward observers on Old Baldy (Hill 266) enabled the enemy to place devastating indirect fire on the lower Porkchop Hill (Hill 255). A three-day assault that started on 16 April 1953 was the most determined. It was finally stopped when several companies of the 17th Infantry Regiment counterattacked and drove the enemy away from the hill.<sup>28</sup> By that time, American casualties in the 7th Infantry Division for the fights on Old Baldy and Porkchop Hill exceeded 300 dead, wounded, and missing.<sup>29</sup> In the meantime, an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners had been agreed upon at Panmunjom.

During Operation LITTLE SWITCH (20–26 April 1953), six Colombian soldiers were repatriated.<sup>30</sup> On 19 June 1953, General Paik Sun Yup, Korean Army Chief of Staff, conferred the "Ulchi Order of Military Merit" on LTC Ruíz Novoa at the 7th Infantry Division headquarters.

Less than a week later, Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Ortíz Torres became the fourth commander of the *Batallón Colombia*.<sup>31</sup> Colonel Ruíz Novoa left Korea to be Minister of War for General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who had overthrown President Laureano Gómez Castro on 13 June 1953.<sup>32</sup> By then, the tempo of military operations in



*Lieutenant Colonel Alberto Ruíz Novoa being congratulated by General Paik Sun Yup, Chief of Staff, Korean Army, after being awarded the "Ulchi Order of Military Merit" at the 7th Infantry Division headquarters on 19 June 1953.*

Korea had slowed dramatically.

While the Colombian Navy maintained a frigate in Korean waters until 11 October 1955, the fighting phase of the war ended with the armistice.<sup>33</sup> During Operation BIG SWITCH from 5 August–6 September 1953, an additional twenty-two Colombian soldiers were repatriated.<sup>34</sup> The *Batallón Colombia* left Korea on 29 October 1954, carrying home the remains of 141 soldiers.<sup>35</sup>

The veterans received a heroes' welcome when they arrived at Buenaventura, Colombia, on 25 November 1954. Five days later in Bogotá, the *Batallón Colombia* paraded proudly before thousands of people.<sup>36</sup> In addition to U.S. and Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citations, the UN Service Medal for Korea, and the Republic of Korea's War Service Medal, the Colombian Army veterans were awarded the Colombian *Valour Star* for Korea. By the end of the war, the United States had awarded eighteen Silver Stars, thirty-four Bronze Stars (twenty-five for valor and nine for meritorious service) to Colombians.<sup>37</sup>

The Colombians fought well in Korea and earned considerable respect among the United Nations and throughout Latin America. Like



*Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation*



*Colombian Infantry Combat Badge for Korea*



*Republic of Korea War Service Medal*



*Colombian Valour Star for Korea*

many wars, the bloodiest fighting took place while armistice negotiations were ongoing as combatants sought to gain advantages at the peace table. The Colombian defense of an outpost on dominant terrain in front of the main line of resistance took on epic proportions. While Old Baldy was finally lost on 23–24 March 1953, it should be remembered that several 2nd Infantry Division battalions struggled for two months to regain the outpost in August 1952. The fighting for Old Baldy's sister outpost on Porkchop Hill (Hill 255) would seesaw back and forth until July 1953, when the Chinese applied the same level of determination against an American rifle company as had been mustered against the Colombians on Old Baldy four months earlier. While the price for the outpost was heavy on both sides, the Chinese, who were willing to sacrifice more, prevailed.<sup>38</sup>

The Battle for Old Baldy was the *Batallón Colombia's* largest and most costly action in the Korean War. In some respects, it symbolizes Colombia's coming of age in the modern world. A large rocky terrain memorializing that epic combat rightfully dominates the central courtyard of the Colombian Armed Forces headquarters building in Bogotá.

President Rojas Pinilla honored the Korean War veterans with a special issue of stamps in 1955 commemorating Colombian Forces in Korea. A ten *centavos* postage and twenty *centavos* airmail stamp contained the UN emblem and flags of Korea and Colombia, all superimposed on a Korean landscape.<sup>39</sup> The Colombian government further memorialized the contribution of its veterans to the Korean War by erecting a large monument at Gaejong-dong, Seo-gu, Inchon, South Korea. The inscription on the monument reads: "Colombian warriors were born of the spirits in the Caribbean Sea! Holding the United Nations flag high in the sky, they fought in the interest of peace. During the campaign, 213 soldiers sacrificed their precious lives. This monument was created to commemorate those who fought for peace in Korea. It is a permanent reminder of the selfless sacrifice made by these soldiers."<sup>40</sup>



*Monument to the Colombian Forces in the Korean War at Gaejong-dong, Seo-gu, Inchon, South Korea.*

The Korean War was key to the development of a professional Colombian armed force. It also marked a phase in the social and political transformation of the country. Having forged their leadership in combat, the officers of the *Batallón Colombia* led the country through some of its most trying times in the postwar period. Today, the legacy lives on as the *Batallón Colombia* serves as part of the Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai. ♣

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## Endnotes

- 1 Carlos Horacio Urán, *Colombia y los Estados Unidos en la Guerra de Corea* (Notre Dame, IN: Kellogg Institute, University of Notre Dame, May 1986), 22–24. **While military forces were offered by Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, and Ecuador, only Colombia provided them. The contributions from the rest of Latin America amounted to money, foodstuffs, and use of military bases. Most countries applied economic sanctions.**
- 2 Republic of Korea, Ministry of National Defense, *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III (Seoul; War History Compilation Committee, 1974), 161–64, 166, hereafter *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III.
- 3 Daniel Davison, "The Colombian Army in Korea: A Study of the Integration of the Colombian Battalion into the 31st United States Infantry Regiment Based on the Experience of Major General Lloyd R. Moses," unpublished Masters Thesis, University of South Dakota, August 1972, 37.
- 4 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 136.
- 5 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 137; United States, U.S. Army in the Korean War, Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1992), 283–84; Davison, "The Colombian Army in Korea," 22.
- 6 Bradley L. Coleman, "The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954," *The Journal of Military History* 69 (January 2005), 1169, 1170–71.
- 7 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 157.
- 8 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 161–64. **Lieutenant Colonel Ruiz Novoa commanded the Juanambu No. 16 and Bolívar No. 1 Battalions before being selected as Director of the Colombian Infantry School. Before taking command in Korea, he attended a special refresher course in battalion tactics at the U.S. Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. Ruiz Novoa later became Minister of Defense and Chief of Staff of the Colombian Armed Forces.** Russell W. Ramsey, "The Colombia Battalion in Korea and Suez," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* IX (October 1967), 547–48; Davison, "The Colombian Army in Korea," 37.



*The Old Baldy monument in the courtyard of the Colombian Armed Forces headquarters building in Bogotá.*

- 9 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 161–64.
- 10 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 161–64.
- 11 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 161–64.
- 12 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 161–64.
- 13 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 164.
- 14 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1169, 1170–71.
- 15 “Periodic Operation Report,” Colombian Battalion, 20–23 March 1953, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th U.S. Infantry Division cited in Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1170. The Americans on Porkchop Hill received a commensurate barrage.
- 16 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1170–71.
- 17 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1170–71.
- 18 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1170–71.
- 19 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1170–71, 1172.
- 20 Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, 393; Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1170–1171, 1172.
- 21 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1173–74.
- 22 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 164–65; Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, 394, 395.
- 23 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1172; Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, 395.
- 24 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 166; **Despite awarding Lieutenant Colonel Ruiz Novoa the Bronze Star for Valor, Major General Arthur Trudeau, the commander of the 7th Infantry Division for just three days when the battle occurred, blamed Ruiz Novoa for the loss of Old Baldy after the war, although his division also lost Porkchop Hill to the Chinese in July 1953. More importantly, Colonel William B. Kern stated that the caliber and preponderance of the Communist Chinese forces, not Colombian shortcomings, decided the outcome on Old Baldy. “The enemy troops proved to be the best trained and disciplined that my regiment encountered in all Korean operations. The Communist forces outnumbered and outgunned the Colombian Battalion and its supporting regimental artillery assets. Old Baldy, as the main Chinese attack, received the most support from their divisions. The same caliber of troops managed to drive the Americans from Porkchop Hill in July 1953.”** Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1173–1175.
- 25 Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, 395. **When negotiations at Panmunjom reached critical stages, the Chinese military was used to test UN will on the battlefield. As the action raged around MLR outposts, the battles took on political and propaganda significance far beyond their military value. James I. Marino, “Korean War: Battle on Porkchop Hill,” *Military History* (April 2003) at [http://www.historynet.com/wars\\_conflicts/Korean\\_war/3034286.html](http://www.historynet.com/wars_conflicts/Korean_war/3034286.html).**
- 26 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1173, 1174; Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front*, 395.
- 27 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1172.
- 28 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 167.
- 29 “Third Korean Winter, December 1, 1952–April 30, 1953,” [http://korea50army.mil/history/factsheets/3rd\\_Korean\\_winter.shtml](http://korea50army.mil/history/factsheets/3rd_Korean_winter.shtml).
- 30 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 167, 170. **During Operation BIG SWITCH (5 August–6 September 1953), an additional twenty-two Colombian soldiers were repatriated for a total of twenty-eight.**
- 31 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 168, 169.
- 32 Ramsey, “The Colombia Battalion in Korea and Suez,” 548.
- 33 Mark H. Danley, “Colombian Navy in the Korean War, 1950–1953,” *The American Neptune* 58 (Spring 1998), 255, 256. **On 22 April 1954, the *Almirante Brión* left the war theater for Colombia after being relieved by the *Capitán Tono* on its second tour. The *Capitán Tono* arrived at Yokosuka on 26 March 1954, and went into repair. The *Capitán Tono* operated chiefly along the west coast of Korea in the Yellow Sea until relieved by the *Almirante Padilla* on 11 March 1955. On 11 October 1955, *Almirante Padilla* left Korean waters for Colombia completing the country mission to the UN naval forces.** *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 178.
- 34 *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 170.
- 35 **The UN Command allowed remains to be either buried in South Korea or repatriated to the native country. When choosing internment in Korea, the contributing government retained the option to carry their fallen servicemen home after the war. It was decided that deceased Colombians would be cremated, their ashes placed in urns, and buried in cylinders in the UN Memorial Cemetery at Tanggok, near Pusan. The *Batallón Colombia* carried the remains home when they returned in 1954.** Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1175, 1176; *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 170; Ramsey, “The Colombia Battalion in Korea and Suez,” 549.
- 36 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1175, 1176; *History of the UN Forces in the Korean War*, III, 170; Ramsey, “The Colombia Battalion in Korea and Suez,” 549.
- 37 Coleman, “The Colombian Army in Korea, 1950–1954,” 1161.
- 38 **“When the Chinese seized Old Baldy there was good military logic to abandon Porkchop.”** S.L.A. Marshall wrote. **“That concession would have been in the interest of line-straightening without sacrifice of a dependable anchor. But national pride, bruised by the loss of Old Baldy, asserted itself, and Porkchop was held.”** James I. Marino, “Korean War: Battle on Porkchop Hill,” *Military History* (April 2003) at [http://www.historynet.com/wars\\_conflicts/Korean\\_war/3034286.html](http://www.historynet.com/wars_conflicts/Korean_war/3034286.html).
- 39 **The South Koreans issued a 500-*won* stamp in 1951 commemorating Colombia’s role in the war. The Statue of Liberty and the flags of Korea and Colombia were overlaid on a Korean rural background. For the 15th Anniversary of the outbreak of the war, the Republic of Korea issued a 4 *won* stamp with the UN emblem and flags of Australia, Belgium, Great Britain, Canada, and Colombia. In 1975, for the twentieth Anniversary, a 10 *won* stamp was issued with flags of Luxemburg, Australia, Great Britain, Colombia, and Turkey represented. “Korean War Stamps,” [flagsonstamps.info/Colombia.htm](http://www.flagsonstamps.info/Colombia.htm).**
- 40 “Colombia Monument,” <http://www.lifeinkorea.com/culture/Korean-War/Korean-war.cfm>.

