

# Lessons from the Past



## TOMAHAWKS AND RED LIONS



### *THE HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 1-23 INFANTRY AND 1-37 FIELD ARTILLERY*



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Since the invention of artillery in the mid-12th century, militaries have increasingly integrated indirect fires with maneuver units in order to destroy enemies at depth with layers of weapon platforms and munitions. During the course of our nation's wars, the U.S. Army Field Artillery, nicknamed the King of Battle, has molded an inseparable relationship with the Infantry — the Queen of Battle. Although both the Field Artillery and the Infantry operate at many echelons in existing combined arms maneuver formations in the U.S. Army, few other relationships have evolved quite like that of the 2nd Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment (Red Lions) and the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment (Tomahawks). The 1-37 FA and 1-23 IN work daily to maintain a high level of combat readiness with their battalion headquarters only 50 meters apart and their units' ties even closer.



Department of Defense photo

*Soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Division on the march during World War II.*

Originally constituted as a degraded infantry regiment in 1812 and a single firing battery in 1918 respectively, 1-23 IN and 1-37 FA have enjoyed acclaimed histories with active participation in the following American wars: the Indian Wars, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Throughout four of these campaigns (WWII, Korean War, OIF, and OEF), the regiments served in combat together and created a relationship that continues to grow and evolve bounded by changes to equipment, technology, doctrine, and global threats.

As direct support for the 23rd IN during WWII, 1-37 FA introduced new tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) that provided maneuver forces with artillery fires never before seen in the U.S. Army. Among these TTPs was the centralization of the call for fire, which provided greater oversight and procedural verification of artillery fire missions. While the Germans initially depended on horses to move artillery, 1-37 FA accelerated its mobility via self-propelled guns and motorized howitzer displacement and re-emplacment,

effectively providing an exponential increase in range for fires. Additionally, the artillery's increased number of operational field radios allowed virtually every Army lieutenant the ability to call for fire. As a result, 1-37 FA effectively delivered fires in support of the 23rd IN in Normandy, northern France, the Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe.<sup>1</sup>

The units' WWII partnership forged most notably during the Ardennes forest battle of Elsenborn Ridge in December 1944, which was the only sector of the American front lines at the Battle of the Bulge where the Germans failed to advance.<sup>2</sup> After enduring a strong German offensive on 16 December, the 2nd Battalion, 394th Infantry Regiment retrograded west of Elsenborn Ridge to the town of Murringen while 1-23 IN prepared to reinforce their position and halt the German advance through the Ardennes by capturing and defending a village 1,500 yards south of Murringen.<sup>3</sup> In concert with a 1-23 IN counteroffensive on 17 December, 1LT Charles W. Stockell, a forward observer with 1-37 FA, "raced across the open fields," and established a prime observation post inside a church steeple; 1LT Stockell proceeded to adjust fire on the German assembly area, effectively disrupting the enemy

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formation and neutralizing the impending attack.<sup>4</sup> According to CPT F. Luchowski, the battalion operations officer, Stockell's fire missions "gave them [Germans] hell," and characterized a critical event that enabled the Americans to defend their sector successfully.<sup>5</sup>

Another direct support assignment that impressively solidified 1-37 FA's relationship with the 23rd IN occurred during the famous Korean battle of Chipyong-ni in February 1951. According to historians and Soldiers, Chipyong-ni represented the decisive battle that halted Chinese Communist forces and turned the tide of the Korean War in the Americans' favor. During the course of the battle, 1-37 FA successfully accomplished its mission of digging in perimeter defensive positions outside the town of Chipyong-ni and firing hundreds of artillery missions with thousands of rounds while simultaneously reinforcing the front lines with cannoneers who served as riflemen.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to the three-day conflict, CPT John A. Elledge, a liaison officer who was acting in a role similar to what is now a battalion fire support officer, planned and integrated fires with Company G to support a joint defense established to stop Chinese advancement further into Korea. In the heat of battle, CPT Elledge selflessly laid his life on the line by running back and forth between the howitzer gun line, the fire direction center, and the thin infantry front lines in order to physically place reinforcements at the front and flanks. Despite receiving shrapnel from a grenade, CPT Elledge carried out the mission in support of the infantry defensive stand. More importantly, CPT Elledge and his fellow artillerymen represented the valor and strength of the 1-37 FA and its cannoneers' willingness to accomplish the mission in support of the Infantry. Thus, having driven the Chinese out of Chipyong-ni, the Soldiers of the 23rd Infantry Regiment, with their 1-37 FA brethren alongside them, handed the Chinese their first defeat since entering the Korean War.<sup>7</sup>

In a similar role, 1-37 FA supported various missions conducted by 1-23 IN during OIF and OEF as part of the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. In April 2004, 1-37 FA and 1-23 IN collaborated as members of Task Force (TF) Duke, which operated near the Iraqi cities of Mosul and Hammam al-Alil with the

mission of quelling Sunni and Shia challenges to coalition authority following the restoration of Iraqi sovereignty in the area.<sup>8</sup> According to current 1-23 IN Commander LTC Teddy Kleisner — who formerly served as a battle captain in the 1-23 IN element of TF Duke — 1-37 FA provided robust support from the Al Qayyara region just south of Hammam al-Alil while 1-23 IN and other TF Duke elements conducted both convoy escort operations on the main supply route and security operations around Mahmudiyah and Yusufiyah in the south. After two weeks of fighting Shia insurgents who attacked both American and Iraqi troops with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), small arms, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), TF Duke successfully defeated the opposition, enabling the 1st Armored Division to effectively control the area.<sup>9</sup>

The 1-37 FA's brilliant integration while directly supporting the 23rd IN in WWII, the Korean War, OIF, and OEF merely represents the early stages of an association that thrives today. In March 2015, 1-37 FA became attached to the 2nd Infantry Division Artillery (DIVARTY), centralizing all artillery assets under one command within 2nd ID. Nevertheless, 1-37 FA continues to provide direct support fires for 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT), which includes 1-23 IN. The return of DIVARTY will improve Soldiers' artillery and fire support competency through standardized certification and gated training that will provide a more capable combined arms team in future conflicts and on future battlefields.

The 1-37 FA and 1-23 IN relationship is celebrated through Soldiers like 1LT Stockell and CPT Elledge whose



Photo by SPC Aaron Ritter

**A gun crew with B Battery, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, works together to prepare to fire an M198 155mm Howitzer during a live-fire training exercise at Forward Operating Base Endurance in Iraq on 8 September 2004.**



courageous actions undoubtedly deserve credit for both units' numerous honors. Both 1-37 FA and 1-23 IN proudly possess Presidential Unit Citations and campaign streamers for their Soldiers' actions in France and Korea. Additionally, 1-23 IN was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation and streamer for actions in Iraq in 2004. Moreover, the training and integration during 1-37 FA's transition from SBCT to DIVARTY provides 1-37 FA and 1-23 IN a seamless opportunity to build upon experiences, enhance the support to the SBCT, and establish a highly trained combat arms team.

LTC John D. Williams, the current 1-37 FA commander, expressed the relevance of both units' history and the importance of integration throughout the ranks, when he said, "The historic relationship between these two units is humbling. Two units that have been closely aligned for nearly a century. Landing at D-Day and WWII; landing at Pusan; the Battle of Chipyong-ni; deploying three times to Iraq; deploying in 2011 to Afghanistan... the same infantry battalion counting on the same artillery battalion to deliver fires. The same artillery battalion answering the calls-for-fire from the same infantry battalion. It truly is a historic relationship. Moreover, I think it is our leaders' responsibility to share this relationship with present-day Soldiers in both the Red Lions and the Tomahawks. We are adding chapters to the maneuver-fires relationship every day."

Ready to face an ever-changing enemy on a fluid battlefield, 1-37 FA and 1-23 IN look to the past to reinforce successes; train and evaluate in the present to refine skills; and look to the future to anticipate concerns and shape the environment for future leaders. The Red Lions of 1-37 FA and the Tomahawks of 1-23 IN remain the Army's premiere field artillery and infantry battalions. When the call of duty rings

through the halls of these storied units, they will be more than ready to gather arms once again and just like at Eisenborn Ridge in WWII, at Chipyong-ni in Korea, and at Al Qayyara in Iraq, stand side by side to defend each other.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "World War II Technology: Land Warfare Weapons — Artillery," accessed 7 October 2015, <http://histclo.com/essay/war/ww2/tech/land/art/w2tw-art.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1965), 113

<sup>3</sup> William C.C. Cavanagh, *The Battle East of Eisenborn and the Twin Cities*. (South Yorkshire, Great Britain: Pen & Sword Military, 2004), 83

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 85.

<sup>6</sup> Russell A. Gugeler, "Chipyong-ni," *Combat Actions in Korea* *Combat Actions in Korea*, accessed 5 October 2015, [http://www.history.army.mil/books/korea/30-2/30-2\\_8.HTM](http://www.history.army.mil/books/korea/30-2/30-2_8.HTM).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> John J. McGrath, ed., *Between the Rivers: Combat Actions in Iraq 2003-2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 2012), 111.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 114.

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***Breakthrough at Chipyong-ni — In February 1951, the 23rd Infantry Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry Division, with attached French and Dutch units, while moving forward to attack in advance of the Eighth Army, was cut off and surrounded by an overwhelming number of Chinese communist forces in the narrow Korean valley of Chipyong-ni. The Chinese forces occupied the commanding ridges while the American commander, COL Paul Freeman, isolated far in advance of the general battle line, used a ring of lower hills within the valley itself for his defensive perimeter. For more than three days in near freezing weather, the defenders held these positions. The action pictured at right is on the fourth day when an American armored unit broke through from the south. At this time, the valiant 23rd Infantry Combat Team smashed out of the perimeter at the lower end of the valley to break the encirclement, and with its units and most of its equipment intact, rejoined the Eighth Army.***

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