

## Sgt Arthur D Buckley Jr

Korean War

Hometown: Swanzey, NH

Arthur D. Buckley, Jr., was reported *Missing in Action* on December 9, 1950, during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. He was a member of X Corps, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (ID), 31<sup>st</sup> Regimental Combat Team (RCT), and 2nd Battalion, E Company. The 31<sup>st</sup> RCT had the daunting task of protecting the right flank of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division as they retreated down the Chosin Reservoir, and paid dearly. The 31<sup>st</sup> RCT supplemented with other units formed Task Force Faith went into the engagement with 3,300 troops and only 385 reached UN Lines in Hangnam still fit for duty barely.



The 7<sup>th</sup> ID and 31<sup>st</sup> RCT had been stationed in Japan since 1948 but were stripped to supply troops to the units battling the North Koreans after they invaded South Korea on June 25<sup>th</sup> 1950. By September 1950 the 7<sup>th</sup> ID and 31<sup>st</sup> RCT were restored to full strength, which is when we believe Arthur Buckley, Jr. was assigned to this unit. On September 15<sup>th</sup> 1950, under General Douglas MacArthur's command, UN troops landed at Inchon. The 7<sup>th</sup> ID and 31<sup>st</sup> RCT landed at Inchon the next day with the task to secure the southern part of Seoul, South Korea. It was during these combat operations for the period 24-28 September 1950; PFC Arthur D. Buckley, Jr was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge. The recaptured of the capital city of Seoul was completed September 28, 1950, thus securing South Korea from its North Korean aggressors.

Initially there was no plan to invade North Korea, but since the thought was the North Korean Army was in disarray it would not be a difficult operation and it would unite Korea into one country. In preparations for the push north, MacArthur ordered the 7<sup>th</sup> ID and the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division off the line. Moving these two units back to Inchon and eventually back on boats was a larger task than first thought keeping them off the line for over a month. The two units then had to be sailed around the Korean Peninsula to conduct another amphibious landing.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division landed at Wonsan, North Korea between October 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> 1950. The 7<sup>th</sup> ID landed at Iwon, North Korea on November 4<sup>th</sup> 1950, and both units pushed northwest with the 7<sup>th</sup> ID getting greater resistance from the North Korean Army. UN forces had been engaged with some Chinese troops but MacArthur did not officially report this to the UN until November 6<sup>th</sup> and at that placed little value to it.

The 31<sup>st</sup> RCT engaged Chinese troops for the first time on November 8<sup>th</sup> atop a 7,700 mountain called Paek-San. After several hours of fighting the Chinese units withdrew. On November 12<sup>th</sup>, the 7<sup>th</sup> ID was ordered to advance to the China border with the 31<sup>st</sup> RCT to advance west of Kapsan, North Korea. At this time a severe cold front had moved in and temperatures dropped to 8 below Zero, with most American troops not having any winter clothing.

The massive Chinese Army attack came the night of November 25<sup>th</sup> in the Ch'ongch'on Valley, east of the 31<sup>st</sup> RCT position so it did not affect them at this time. The 31<sup>st</sup> RCT reached Sin'galp'ajin, North Korea by November 28<sup>th</sup> having suffered the most of all the 7<sup>th</sup> ID units from frostbite. 58 men of the division had to be evacuated because of frostbite, 33 of them were from the 31<sup>st</sup> RCT alone.

On November 30<sup>th</sup> the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division was surrounded by Chinese forces at the north end of the Chosin Reservoir. They begin to fight their way out driving south to reach Hagari, North Korea where a strong Marine defensive position has been positioned, and then on to Hangnam for evacuation by ship.

A Task Force is hurriedly put together on December 1<sup>st</sup> with the 31<sup>st</sup> RCT as the core unit and the Regimental Commander, Colonel Alan MacLean, is put in command. It was very common in the Korean War to put units together creating a "Task Force" to accomplish specific missions, in this case the mission was to fight their way to Hadong and the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines and assist in the drive south to Hungnam. Early in the fighting Colonel MacLean was seriously wounded and later died. Second in command, Lieutenant Colonel Don C. Faith, Jr. took command and while leading an attack on December 1<sup>st</sup> 1950, he too

was seriously wounded and later died. Faith was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions and the Task Force was latter called Task Force Faith in honor of him.

Since there was only one road south the fighting was fierce with the Chinese firing down on the convoy, placing strongly defended road blocks along the road, and blowing up key bridges. The troops fought in temperatures reaching 28 below zero and most ran out of ammunition. The Chinese troops dropped thermite grenades into trucks full of wounded American troops. It was during this intense fighting and extreme weather conditions that Corporal Arthur D. Buckley, Jr. was reported missing on December 9<sup>th</sup> 1950. The last of the men from the 1st Marines and Task Force Faith reached the port of Hungnam to be evacuated December 11th.

On December 31<sup>st</sup> 1953 Arthur was reclassified as presumed dead. He was posthumously promoted to the rank of Sergeant. His name was placed on the Courts of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial in Hawaii.

Arthur Delbert Buckley, Jr. was born July 26, 1930 to Arthur D. and Evelyn Mae (Lancey) Buckley in Keene, New Hampshire. His parents had only been married less than a year when he was born. Arthur spent most of his life living in Swanzey and attended schools in Swanzey and Keene. A grave marker was placed to remember him in the family plot in Mountain View Cemetery, Swanzey, NH.

His body is yet to be recovered but JPAC is still making efforts through diplomatic channels to get access to sites in North Korea to recover our Missing. There is hope as the body of Corporal Pryor Gobble, who was also in the 31<sup>st</sup> RCT and reported Missing near Hagaru-ri on December 11<sup>th</sup> 1950 (which is the same area and only two days after as Arthur) was accounted for on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 2012. Until they all come home.