

“KEEP UP THE FIRE”

THE 9TH INFANTRY IN COALITION WARFARE

DAVID PERRINE

Editor's Note: *As today's Soldiers fight as part of an international force to restore stability in a part of the world beset by fanatical insurgents armed with weapons equal to their own, it is worth remembering that the U.S. Army's 9th Infantry Regiment faced similar challenges a century ago in China. The fight was a costly one for American and Allied units, and the lessons learned in those hot July days of 1900 have contributed to our doctrinal literature as we lead a coalition in the global war on terror. I want to thank Mr. David P. Perrine for his superb work in the research and preparation of this article.*

Coalition operations involving nations whose equipment, culture, military skills, and language differ from our own are nothing new to the United States Army. Whether operating under the aegis of the United Nations as during the Korean War, alongside like-minded allies in the Gulf War in 1991, serving as peacekeepers in the Balkans, or leading the way in the global war on terror, our Army has amassed considerable knowledge on what works and what does not. During the Boxer rebellion at the beginning of the last century, American Soldiers fought alongside troops of Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Italy, Russia, and Japan to restore stability and rescue embattled foreign nationals in China. This was our first coalition war with foreign troops, fighting on foreign soil that was home to a common adversary that vastly outnumbered them. Adding to the difficulties of the operation were the animosities between the coalition partners themselves; the Russians and Japanese refused to serve either under

one another or even adjacent to one another, and within five years of this operation they were themselves at war.

As foreign powers expanded their spheres of influence in China, beginning in the 1840's the Chinese Imperial Court strongly resented their own concomitant loss of control over their own destiny and sought ways to expel those whom they saw



Map 1

property. As the violence grew into massacres, the diplomats, dependents, and civilians attached to the various nations' legations in Peking barricaded themselves in the city's Legation Quarter, defended by their respective embassy guards, and before the telegraph line from Peking was cut on June 10, 1900, the British Ambassador requested that a military force be mobilized to come to their aid.



Map 2

as intruders. While not having her own imperialist aspirations, the United States nevertheless saw China as a potential trading partner and had established a legation in the capitol at Peking or Pekin, present-day Beijing (Map 1). The Dowager Empress encouraged the sentiments and actions of a religious society, the translation of whose name varied, but which was most commonly called “The Righteous and Harmonious Fists.” Nicknamed “Boxers” by Westerners, they set about killing missionaries and Chinese Christian converts, burning missions, and destroying

Tientsin lay astride — and hence dominated — the route from the sea to Peking (Map 2). In order for a relief force to reach Peking, they had to go through Tientsin. The British had fought over this area years before, and they knew the countryside could support an attacking army. The Chinese insurgents also knew that a relief force had to get through Tientsin and were determined to deny them the route. Tientsin actually comprised two cities: the rectangular, native Walled City (Map 3) and a much larger city of foreigners surrounding it, which abutted the Pei Ho River to the southeast. Access to the Walled



Map 3

City was controlled by massive gates on each of the four sides, the walls were thirty feet high, and a water-filled moat surrounded the city. The surrounding terrain was an open plain dotted with many pools and ditches. The foreign settlements were surrounded by a mud wall whose extremities were tied into the Pei Ho River north and south of the city. Chinese defenders had a commanding view of the battlefield, since the city's walls had countless loopholes for their riflemen and embrasures for their field guns, which maintained an incessant bombardment of the foreigners' compounds. On June 15, the native city in Tientsin was seized by the Boxers, and foreign legation civilians and military detachments — much as their colleagues in Peking had done — barricaded themselves within their compounds adjacent to the west bank of the Pei Ho River. They now found themselves besieged in a roughly triangular area defined by the West Arsenal, the Railway Station, and the Chinese Military College.

As the situation in China deteriorated, the U.S. War Department directed that all regiments bound for the Philippines be prepared for possible service in China, and that a decision to divert to China would be made when the transport ships arrived in Japan to take on coal. At the same time, U.S. forces in the Philippines were ordered to deploy one infantry regiment to the Chinese port of Taku as rapidly as possible. On June 17, 1900 the 9th U.S. Infantry Regiment received orders to assemble in Manila. The commander of the 9th

Regiment was Colonel Emerson H. Liscum, a 39-year veteran who was held in high regard by his officers and men, and who was still recovering from a serious wound received in combat at Santiago. All of the battalion commanders were Civil War veterans who had been with the regiment since the war's end, while the company commanders' service ranged from 11 to 28 years.

The Fighting Ninth had spent the last 13 months on the Philippine island of Luzon and had campaigned hard during the summer and fall of 1899. Armed with the .30-40 Krag Jorgenson rifle, which had been adopted as our service rifle only six years earlier, the infantrymen were combat veterans whose marksmanship skills had been honed both on the rifle range and in combat against a tough, determined adversary. But malaria and dysentery had taken their toll on these veterans, and their ranks were thin. Rifle companies authorized 112 men operated with 75 or fewer fit for duty, and only one of three officers was present for duty. Despite these shortcomings, the men of the regiment were proud to have been chosen for the new mission and were eager to serve. Many men lied to get out of hospital to join their comrades in Manila. The regiment was to eventually sail with 32 officers and 1,230 men, but many were far from healthy and only four of 12 company commanders deployed with their men. The last men and support troops closed in on Manila on June 25, 1900, and sailed several days later, the men on board the transport *Logan* and the baggage, wagons, and horses on the *Port Albert*. During the crossing to Japan, soldiers further familiarized themselves with their weapons and drilled on deck.

While the ships were refueling and taking on supplies at Nagasaki, Colonel Liscum learned from the U.S. Consul that the legations were in desperate straits and that several of them, including the U.S. legation, had already been burned. He returned to the ship and ordered that it sail as soon as the coal and water were on board, departing just after midnight on July 4, 1900. Meanwhile, the War Department directed that additional troops and artillery be sent to China from the Philippines; on July 18 eight companies of the 14th U.S. Infantry and a battery of artillery



U.S. Army photo

Soldiers from the 9th Regiment come ashore joined by a 350-man Marine battalion.

sailed for China. The *Logan* arrived off Taku on July 6, and on the following morning the British Navy arranged to transport two battalions to the inland depot of Tong Ku (Map 2). Despite late arrivals of barges, two battalions of the 9th Regiment came ashore (see photo page 31) joined by a 350-man Marine battalion from the Cavite naval station and advanced on Tientsin, arriving there July 11. The 3rd Battalion of the 9th, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Coolidge, regimental executive officer, was the last to debark.

Colonel Liscum received orders to postpone the attack until daybreak on July 13, which allowed his men to become more accustomed to their surroundings. Units of other nations — British, French, German, Russian, Japanese — had arrived in the meantime, and the Council of Generals, consisting of the senior commanders of the allied nations assembled to agree on a plan for the assault on the Walled City. Command relationships among the Americans were not simple: the senior U.S. officer on the ground was Colonel Robert L. Meade, commanding the Marine battalion that had arrived after the 9th Regiment, but Colonel Liscum was in command of three battalions. Any joint Army/Marine cooperation would have to be done by mutual agreement, since the overall commander — Army Major General Adna R. Chaffee — would not arrive for two weeks.

Early on the 12th, Colonel Meade alerted the 9th to occupy the railway station in the Russians' sector with a 200-man force — later changed to a 100-man force — by dusk, around 8 p.m. The Russians had sustained many casualties in holding this critical terrain, and the station and its adjacent pontoon bridge had to be held. The 1st Battalion's commander, Major Jesse M. Lee, and the regimental adjutant, Captain Charles R. Noyes, were to position the men at the railway station. At 6 p.m. Colonels Meade and Liscum attended a meeting of the allied generals to receive the following day's missions. The attack plan was vague and only specified the West Arsenal as the initial objective. Neither Meade nor Liscum was familiar with the terrain, but they did learn that the Americans were to provide a force of 1,000 men, with the 9th providing two-thirds of that number and the Marines the remainder.

The plan consisted of two independent attacks by the Allies (Map 4). On the east side of the Pei Ho River, the Germans and Russians were to attack at 10 a.m. and seize the Chinese batteries northeast of the city, while a second force of Americans, British, Austrians, French, and Japanese was to attack the Walled City and breach the South Gate. This latter force moved out in three columns,

with 600 French infantry on the right flank; 150 Japanese cavalry and 1,500 infantry in the center; and with the largest force consisting of 800 British, 300 Chinese, 30 Austrians, and 1,000 American soldiers and Marines on the left flank. This force was to attack the West Arsenal as an intermediate objective, to divert Chinese combat power away from the Germans and Russians fighting east of the river.

This attack highlighted a number of difficulties inherent in coalition operations of that era. As each nation was accustomed to its own tactics and standing operating procedures, these were not communicated in detail to allied forces engaged in the fight. When Meade and Liscum came away from the meeting of the allied generals — they had gone unaccompanied by any of their staff — they returned to their units knowing only that the West Arsenal was to be attacked, the time to move out, and the order of march. Since no reconnaissance had been conducted and no terrain information provided, they had no knowledge of the number, type, or restrictions posed by the mud walls and ponds to their front — something that was to prove fateful as the operation unfolded. In fact, Colonel Liscum told Major Lee: "We are to march out at three o'clock to the south and west, following the English Marines and attack the Taku Gate. I have the memorandum of the order to march in that column and that is all I know about it." He later confided to a reporter that "... he had the uncomfortable feeling of a man who goes into a fight without knowing just what to expect..." Liscum had been assured that there would be a meeting of officers on the field just before the fight, when the plan would be revealed, but this never happened. Colonel Liscum was not alone in his concern: Colonel Meade was likewise pretty much in the dark as

to what was supposed to happen.

Before sunrise Liscum positioned 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 9th Infantry Regiment between two parallel roads, ready to fall in behind the British Naval Brigade contingent, his assigned place in the order of march. He soon heard the Japanese cavalry, followed by their white-clad infantry, approaching along the far road. The Royal Welsh Fusiliers soon came within earshot on the nearer road, followed by a small colonial contingent from Hong Kong and two battalions of U.S. Marines, with 350 men and an artillery battery. When the British Naval Brigade had not appeared after a few minutes, Liscum's

Map 4



units fell into line behind the Marines. Even in the dark, progress was steady until the column swung off the road and began moving across terrain broken by dikes and ditches. Hampered by their field pieces, the Marines found the going difficult but continued with the column on a route that paralleled the city wall (Map 4). The French joined the column at dawn, as did the British Naval Brigade, which entered the column of march ahead of the 9th Inf., as originally planned.

At daylight the march shifted to a more westerly direction along a dirt road, the morning calm was interrupted by desultory firing ahead, as the British encountered and overran some scattered Chinese forward outposts. As the sun rose and the units crested a small rise to their front they could see their final objective, the South Gate of the Walled City lay 3000 yards ahead, with the multinational force arrayed across the landscape. Between them and the city at a range of 1,000 yards was their intermediate objective, the West Arsenal, its 12-foot high mud walls already under small arms fire. The intervening landscape was dotted with mud huts, and the ground was dotted with numerous large waterholes whose depth ranged from two feet to over a man's head. What the allied force could not see was a broad water-filled ditch, essentially a moat, that paralleled the walls of the arsenal. The U. S. forces drew up on the forward slope of the rise and watched the battle as it unfolded, until they were to be called into action.

By now it was after 5:30 and the British and American artillery opened fire on the Walled City in an attempt to silence the Chinese artillery. They were able to mass the fires of about 30 small field guns and a handful of larger British naval guns against the Boxers. The Japanese spearheaded the attack on the arsenal with the white-uniformed infantry, as Imperial Chinese troops and their Boxer allies engaged the attacking Japanese at long range from the Walled City. The U.S. infantrymen could occasionally see a white-clad soldier fall when hit, but the majority of the small arms fire passed over the heads of the Japanese infantry and plunged into the ranks of the Americans and British arrayed on the forward slope of the hill, where little cover was available. Within the next 45 minutes, one American was killed and eight wounded. Once the arsenal was secured

The 9th, positioned too far to the right, had to move parallel to and behind the arsenal wall in a file of companies until they reached a break in the wall which afforded passage.

and the fire from it ceased, the men descended the hill and found welcome cover. The battalion surgeon, 1st Lieutenant Charles Marrow, and some corpsmen remained on the hill, treating wounded. A huge explosion was suddenly heard to the northeast, in the Russians' sector, with the detonation of a large magazine. Lieutenant William Waldron reported that "...a huge bell-shaped cloud of smoke rose over the city. It was followed by a deafening report of an explosion which shattered window glass four miles away."

Awaiting the final assault Colonel Liscum met with British Brigadier A.R.F. Dorward, the senior commander, to discuss the situation. The 9th was to follow the Japanese to the Walled City's South Gate and join the American Marines and Royal Welsh Fusiliers in supporting their right flank. Enemy artillery fire had by now shifted and concentrated on the troops in and around the captured arsenal, but fortunately most was fired high and overshot its intended targets. Friendly artillery continued to pound away at the Imperial forces until their ammunition ran out, and the artillerymen grabbed rifles and joined their respective units to fight as infantry. The larger British naval guns, however, had much more ammunition, and continued to pour a deadly fire into the city and atop its walls.

At 7:15 a.m. Brigadier Doward gave the signal for the final assault on the city. The Japanese poured out of the arsenal gate and were met with concentrated artillery fire; many were killed and wounded. The 9th, positioned too far to the right, had to move parallel to and behind the arsenal wall in a file of companies until they reached a break in the wall which afforded passage. Directed by a British staff officer to move through the wall, cross the moat, and take up positions to the left of the Japanese, the regiment attempted to do so, but soon ran

up against the rear elements of the Japanese and the French, who were now crammed into a small settlement of mud huts. Coordination with the Japanese was futile, as neither side could understand the other. Liscum decided to wait until the Japanese and French had cleared the area. Thirty minutes later, he saw that the Japanese were advancing on the city, but the terrain to their front slowed them down and caused them to drift to the left as they tried to negotiate the enormous ditches. As the 9th Inf. drew closer to the Welsh Fusiliers and the Marines, Liscum realized that he could not possibly maneuver his unit into the space he was supposed to occupy. To compound the problem, the French still remained in the village in small, uncoordinated pockets and showed no inclination to leave the protection of the huts, leaving the Japanese right flank unprotected. Seeing their exposed flank, Liscum reversed the movement of his units to the center, instead executing a right oblique movement to cover the Japanese right flank.

As these maneuvers were taking place Liscum's right flank unit, Major Jesse M. Lee's 1st Battalion, came under fire from their front, and Liscum ordered Lee to proceed to the bank of an elevated road that ran northeasterly toward the city walls. Here the battalion could find good cover and continue to support the Japanese. Lee's lead company, Company B, quickly closed on the road and took up positions as the other companies filled in on their left. They had no sooner settled in when the entire battalion was hit with heavy, concentrated, and deadly small arms fire from a line of mud huts to their right. The French were to have captured these huts, but had failed to do so because of heavy casualties. Now subjected to enfilading fire, Lee's battalion began sustaining increasing casualties from long-range small arms fire, largely because the blue uniforms of his soldiers so contrasted with the brown of the mud embankment. Liscum was stunned and realized that to remain there was suicidal. Anchoring his line on B Company, he wheeled them to face the enemy to their east. At this point, Lee's battalion was on the left flank and Major James Regan's 2nd Battalion was on the right. The 3rd Battalion had not yet arrived at Tientsin, and Liscum ordered Lee and Regan to advance by rushes until they were within

the 600 yard effective range of their Krag rifles. The allied artillery did not support the 9th during their advance because they were not aware it was taking place, and because their attention was focused on supporting the main attack of the Japanese. The rough, uneven ground offered more cover than the embankment, but the Chinese fire still took its toll among the advancing Americans. Colonel Liscum remained in an exposed position on the elevated road so he could see the maneuvering units and encourage his men. The battalion commanders likewise moved freely among their men, directing and encouraging them. Captain Edwin Bookmiller of G Company was shot through both hips and went down. First Lieutenant Edward Bumpus assumed command and led the unit on.

Up to this time the unit had not fired a shot, but once in range they poured volleys of fire into the mud huts at the base of the wall, where the enemy seemed to be concentrated. The advance of the 9th had slowed due to the exhausting movement across the wet, muddy ground and the increasingly accurate enemy rifle fire as they approached the city wall. In spite of the punishment being inflicted on them, Liscum's units continued to advance relentlessly, a tribute to the leadership of the officers and NCOs whose ranks were also being thinned by the marksmanship of the Chinese. Liscum was soon joined on the roadbed by Color Sergeant Edward Gorman, holding high the regimental colors.

Through intense volley fire and maneuver, the 9th got within 200 yards of the Walled City, the standard distance at which they would begin their final charge to close with the enemy. Lee and about 25 men were in a low ditch, when Regan arrived, bent down, and spoke to Lee. Again standing up to get a good view of the enemy positions, Regan was hit in the right hip and went down, but continued to shout encouragement to his men, ordering them to fix bayonets in case of a Chinese charge. Shortly after Regan was hit, Lee rallied the men out of the ditch and again pushed doggedly forward. It took more than an hour to go those last 100 yards, and the men were exhausted and could go no further. Taking shelter in a water-filled ditch and behind dikes, they concentrated their fire against the firing slits in the

houses and atop the wall. Lee peered over the top of the ditch and was aghast at what he saw. An impassable moat 50 yards wide separated his men from the mud huts at the base of the wall; there was no way they could cross this obstacle under what was essentially point-blank fire. They were pinned down, unable to go back or forward. It was at that point that Major Lee received the worst news of the day: Colonel Liscum had been fatally wounded. It was only 10 a.m., and Lee was now in command of the regiment.

Colonel Liscum and the Color Sergeant had been on the road in full view of the enemy when a bullet smashed Gorham's knee. Liscum recovered the colors and continued to walk up and down the embankment until he was shot in the abdomen. Badly wounded, he remained lucid for only a few minutes, and his last words were: "Keep up the fire on the loop-holed huts."

The 9th had been under fire for less than three hours, though it seemed an eternity. Blue-clad wounded, dying, and dead strewn across the battlefield attested to the heroism, discipline, and determination of the 9th Infantry Regiment and her commander. Ammunition was low; some men had but 10 rounds of .30-40 in their belts. Captain Noyes, the regimental adjutant, wrote a quick note to Brigadier Dorward describing the 9th's situation and location and asked for a volunteer to go back across that fire-swept bog to deliver the note. Unhesitatingly, Private Thomas Caraher of B Company stepped forward and succeeded in getting through to deliver the message. Dorward read the note, wrote a reply, and Caraher again ran the gauntlet of fire to return to his unit. Later in the day, he again made the trip to request additional troops. Noyes recommended him for the Medal of Honor, but the recommendation was not completed until Noyes recovered from his wounds and no one would endorse the request. Instead, Caraher received the Certificate of Merit, the equivalent of today's Distinguished Service Cross. Dorward had scarcely enough men left to constitute a reserve, but he managed to alert a 100-man company of British soldiers and marines and 60 U.S. Marines to be prepared to move to the aid of the 9th. He also directed a party of Chinese troops to carry ammunition forward to the beleaguered Americans and

sent back to the allied base camp for two companies of Chinese troops with stretches to report to him. Led by First Lieutenant Lawton, the 1st Battalion adjutant, the 160-man relief force moved to the aid of the 9th, but by 1p.m. was pinned down by heavy fire 200 yards short of the unit they were to relieve. Lawton requested covering fire as the American Marines low-crawled into the right flank of the embattled remains of the 9th. At this point, Lawton was badly wounded in the right shoulder, but two privates dragged him to safety.

Lawton's return and the arrival of additional troops on the battlefield stirred up a hornet's nest. The Chinese in the walls and mud huts increased the volume of small arms fire on the Americans. Fearing a possible attack on their right flank, Lee ordered that a few sharpshooters be posted to observe the enemy's activities and shoot if they had a good target. One of these, Private Robert von Schlick had already been wounded twice earlier and once again fearlessly manned an exposed position, providing covering fire for Lawton's rescue. Hit yet again, he returned to his position where he continued to fight until he was struck in the face. He was recommended for the Medal of Honor, but the paperwork was lost and it was not until Major Lee, by now a major general, realized the error and reinitiated the process. In 1913, the now-disabled Private von Schlick walked to a post office in Syracuse, New York, signed a receipt for a small package, and received his belated Medal of Honor. Even today, official accounts of the Medal of Honor list him as a posthumous recipient.

By now the situation was desperate in front of the Walled City. Leaders redistributed ammunition with the lion's share issued to designated marksmen who had the best shots at the loopholes and enemy positions. Volunteers went out to retrieve ammunition from the dead and wounded. Later in the day a force of British colonials from Hong Kong was able to venture forward and deliver a resupply of ammunition, but they did so at the cost of several dead, including the captain who led them. The wounded and unwounded lay under the blazing sun, first drinking the last of their water and then the foul, brackish water in which they lay and bled. The Chinese stretcher-bearers ordered by Dorward arrived in mid-afternoon and under the costly, accurate fire of Chinese

sharpshooters managed to evacuate many of the casualties to the aid station at the arsenal. Late that afternoon, Lee received orders that all troops would pull back to the West Arsenal because the Japanese attack had stalled before the South Gate. Determined to blow the Gate early next morning, the Japanese refused to withdraw.

The 9th Infantry Regiment's executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Coolidge, arrived at Tientsin with the 3rd Battalion at 10 a.m. on the 13th of July. He could hear the sounds of the heavy firefight and ordered one company to relieve A Company and one to secure the bridge across the Pei Ho River (Map 3). Learning just before dusk that the regiment was to pull back, and ordered to bring all available men with extra ammunition, medical supplies, and water, Coolidge withdrew his companies from the

bridge and sped to the arsenal with Companies A, I, and L. Upon reaching the arsenal, Coolidge reported to Brigadier Doward and requested to move his battalion forward to join Lee. Doward refused, telling Coolidge of the extraction planned for the night of the 13th and that his men were to assist their comrades in the withdrawal. With Doward's permission, however, the battalion adjutant — Lieutenant Harold Hammond — was able to move a small party forward with ammunition without incident. Promptly at dusk, British and U.S. Marines on the left flank were withdrawn piecemeal with only one man wounded. Upon completion of that withdrawal, priority of artillery fire was shifted to the right flank and the withdrawal of the 9th began. With the assistance the British Naval Brigade, U.S. Marines, and Chinese stretcher bearers, all wounded were evacuated to the arsenal. The rest of the unit began its retrograde at 8:10 p.m. and completed the move to the base camp with only one death, Private Robert Golden of C Company, who was hit seven times. The 3rd Battalion spent the night at the arsenal, ready to participate in the assault on the morning of the 14th. Early the next morning the Japanese blew open the South Gate and poured into the city. They encountered only slight resistance, as the Imperial Army and the Boxers had fled during the night. Elements of the 3rd Battalion participated in the mopping up operation without casualties.

While the 9th and the Marines recovered in Tientsin, additional American troops arrived from the Philippines and America, along with allied units, to prepare for the march on Peking to relieve their embattled legations. It took them almost three weeks to agree on a plan and a start date. In the meantime the 9th's health deteriorated rapidly, with more than 300 men falling sick diseases such as dysentery, diarrhea, and typhoid, due in large part to the filthy water they had drunk and the poor sanitation of the city. Upon his arrival, Major General Adna Chaffee was appalled at the condition of the regiment and decided then and there that their role in the advance on Peking would be a minor one.



U.S. Army photo

This view of the raised roadbed where Colonel Emerson H. Liscum fell illustrates the water-filled ditches in which the 9th took up positions, and the row of mud huts from which the Chinese fought.

The fight for Tientsin cost the coalition force approximately 870 casualties. The Russians and Germans east of the Pei Ho sustained about 120 killed or wounded, while the fighting at the South Gate cost another 750 casualties. The Ninth had its commander and seventeen enlisted men killed and four officers and seventy-two enlisted men wounded. Approximately 21 percent of the regiment was killed or wounded, but we must remember that only wounds requiring hospitalization were reported. Wounds that could be treated on sick call went unreported. The U.S. Marines lost six men killed and 26 wounded. American dead were buried near their compound, but were later disinterred and shipped home to be buried in soldiers' hometowns or the military cemetery at the Presidio of San Francisco. When some of the U.S. units were transferred from China to stabilize the situation in the Philippines, the Ninth stayed behind to guard the large amounts of supplies that had accumulated there. The following summer, only one reinforced company remained in China when the regiment returned to Manila.

The Boxer Rebellion, seldom mentioned and little remembered a century after that bitter fighting against a tough, determined enemy, has a special place as the defining event in the history of the 9th Infantry Regiment. Many deeds of valor and feats of marksmanship were performed before the Walled City on those July days in 1900. Three men earned the Medal of Honor and 19 the Certificate of Merit. On the battlefield of Tientsin the Manchu regiment coined its motto, "Keep up the fire!" in recalling the dying words of Colonel Liscum, a courageous commander whose last thoughts were for his regiment, his men, and his mission.

Lieutenant Colonel David Perrine, U.S. Army, Retired, served 21 years in the Infantry including combat tours in Laos and Vietnam with the 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) and 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry (Airborne). He currently lives in Annandale, Virginia.
