



Fortune Favours the Brave: The Battles of the Hook Korea 1952-53

A J Barker

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All too little remembered today, the Korean War was bitterly fought out under atrocious conditions of weather and terrain. Greatly outnumbered by their Communist Chinese and North Korean enemy, the United Nations forces fought with extraordinary resolve and gallantry.

The Hook, the name given to a prominent ridge on the Peninsula, saw more blood spilt than any other feature in this prolonged and grisly war. Not surprisingly it became known as 'the bloody Hood'.

The two costliest battles are described in detail in Fortune Favours The Brave, a classic account of the war. Both involved British infantry battalions of 29 Commonwealth Brigade. In November 1952, The Black Watch saw off a major Chinese attack against all odds. In May 1953 it was the turn of 1st Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment to face what must have seemed an overwhelming onslaught. Along a 1,000 yard front the greatest concentration of artillery fire since the Great War was brought to bear on Chinese human-wave attacks.

In the morning the Dukes still held the ground despite heavy casualties. This feat of arms, achieved by battalion made up mainly of young National Servicemen from yorkshire, ranks among the finest in the long and glorious history of the British Army.

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