 ripple to the penstock site.

essential for moving any Treadway
of bridging to repair the damage and
area. They blew up a 20 foot section of
border, including the critical bridge
controlled the road to the Chinese
Corps and Army units on the east side of
Reservoir plateau. Except for the towns
in November of 1950, there was
(surrounded and isolated all Marine
in late November, 1950 and quickly
future repairs.

Treadway Bridge sections for any
decided that it would be best to use
officer, Lt. Col. John H. Partridge,
road. Indeed the bridge was damaged
from moving north or south on the
would effectively block any vehicles
that if the bridge was destroyed, it
could be a disaster.

hydro-electric plants at the foot of the
spanned three huge pen stocks, which
carried water from the reservoir to the
village of Koto-ri. It was a single lane
trail, climbing over 3,000 feet to the
road ran through the Sudong Valley
only one road leading north. That

in November, 1950, there was
(Changjin) Reservoir in North Korea
ordered to proceed to the Chosin
Division during this 60th anniversary of

Bob Talmadge
Contribute

Chosin veteran remembers ‘The Bridge’

(EDITOR’S NOTE: Retired Master Gunnery
Sgt. Bob Talmadge, a member of the Chosin
First, shares a pivotal story of the 1st Marine
in the Battle of Chosin Reservoir.)

When the 1st Marine Division was
ordered to proceed to the Chosin
(Changjin) Reservoir in North Korea
in November of 1950, there was
was only one road leading north. That
t road ran through the Sudong Valley
to the village of Chinhung-ri, then
became a torturous, twisting ox-cart
trail, climbing over 3,000 feet to the
village of Koto-ri. It was a single lane
t road and, initially, only wide enough
to accommodate ox-carts and small
vehicles.

Two miles below Koto-ri, the road
spanned three huge pen stocks, which
carried water from the reservoir to the
hydro-electric plants at the foot of the
mountains.

The Marine commanders realized
that if the bridge was destroyed, it
would effectively block any vehicles
from moving north or south on the
road. Indeed the bridge was damaged
three times in November, but each
time it was repaired by Marine engineers.

The 1st Marine Division engineering
officer, Lt. Col. John H. Partridge,
declared that it would be best to use
Treadway Bridge sections for any
future repairs.

Chinese Army forces entered the war
at late November, 1950 and quickly
surrounded and isolated all Marine
Corps and Army units on the Chosin
Reservoir plateau. Except for the towns
of Koto-ri, Hagaru-ri and Yudam-ri,
and Army units on the east side of
the reservoir, the Chinese forces now
controlled the road to the Chinese
border, including the critical bridge
area. They blew up a 20 foot section of
the bridge on Dec. 4, 1950.

Engineers would need four spans
of bridging to repair the damage and
neither the Marines nor the soldiers
had any Treadway bridging material in
the reservoir area. Additionally, neither
of them had any Brockenow Trucks, essential for moving any Treadway
bridging to the penstock site.

With the Chinese in command of
the main supply route, all re-supplies
were dropped into each occupied
location by parachute, but bridge
sections weighing 2,200 pounds each
had never before been dropped by
parachute.

Although only four bridge sections
were needed, Partridge decided that
a total of eight sections would be air
dropped to ensure that the needed four
sections would arrive safely at Koto-ri.

It was then discovered that there
were four Army Brockenow trucks at
Koto-ri, each containing material for
the new Tenth Corps command center,
and infantry units clearing the
hillsides of enemy troops, the bridge
sections were quickly moved to the
new Tenth Corps command center,
Koto-ri, each containing material for
the new Tenth Corps command center,
and infrastructure teams had
material for any Treadway bridging
sections would arrive safely at Koto-ri.

The Air Force cargo officer,
responsible for the drop, stated that
larger chutes, and in greater number,
were needed and they would be flown
in from Japan that afternoon. He
stated that there would be another
test drop in the morning. With time
running out for the forces trapped on
the Chosin Plateau the Marine Corps
engineering lieutenant told him, “We

in the morning we will have them

had never before been dropped by
parachute.

Its commanding general, Maj.
Gen. Oliver P. Smith, would keep the
promise he had made two weeks earlier,
that the Marines would come out of the Chosin
Reservoir fighting … with its men, its
wounded, its dead and its equipment.
They would come out as Marines … or
they would not come out at all.”