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A Bath on the Han—

Marines Wash Off Grime Of War, Get Clean Clothes, Then Move To New Battles

By FRED SPARKS, Times Foreign Correspondent

SEOUL, Korea, Oct. 5—You haven't washed or brushed your teeth for maybe two, three or four weeks. You've been tramping around the dustiest place in the world, namely Korea.

For the moment nobody is shooting at you. A man comes up and he says "there are hot water showers."

What do you do? You are very happy indeed. You reach

into your knapsack and pull out a towel with a lump of yellow soap clinging to it and you take off, but quick, in the direction indicated.

I am sitting with some Marines on the outskirts of Seoul, a city slightly blown up and then tramped upon by various armies, when news of these hot showers arrives.

Personally, I am comparatively practically as clean as a starlet doing a 15th retake of a bubble bath scene, having washed four days before.

But my associates! These Marines can look like prehistoric men of the kind that used to drag young ladies into caves by their hair after tapping them lightly

around the base of the skull with a club to avoid arguments.

Furthermore, these Marines inspected closely by people without colds, smell quite unlike "April Dawn" more like an overdue camel caravan.

No Privacy

There are 50 shower nozzles strung over damp boards in the open air, on the edge of the Han

River. These Marines have as much privacy as seals in the big pond in New York's Central Park and about as many spectators.

Watching Marines wash, it seems, is quite the thing to do with business currently stalled due to the war.

Some of the citizens sitting and walking around are from the better families perhaps because the

ladies carry dainty parasols and the men have well-combed straggly beards like a handful of shoe laces.

I would not be at all surprised if an enterprising chap sold cold drinks and maybe little books explaining in Korean the various tattoos every second Marine wears

on his body, which run all the way from the standard "Semper Paratus" to "Shanghai Sue" and "Rock Happy." (Imagine this comparison. A foreign army captures Washington, D. C., and sets up open air showers along the Potomac. A local Ladies Aid and Rotary Club comes along to watch and gossip!)

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