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In 1987, military strategist Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., proclaimed that, "The Korean War appears to be the model for America's future wars." The truth of this statement became apparent in the Persian Gulf, where a coalition of nations fought a limited war to stop aggression.¹

The booming of artillery awakened Captain Joseph R. Darrigo. Soon shell fragments and small arms fire were striking his house on the northeast edge of Kaesong. It was 5:00 a.m. June 25, 1950. As he headed south in a jeep to give the alarm, he could see the railroad station a half a mile away where two or three battalions of troops were off-loading. Previously, the track had been taken up by North Koreans to seal off their border with South Korea at the 38th parallel. Evidently it had been re-laid during the night, and an all-out invasion had been launched by the North.

Captain Darrigo, a member of the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG, pronounced Kay-Mag) assigned to the 1st Division of the Republic of Korea (ROK), was the only American officer on the parallel that morning. The attack was not expected because it was still the rainy season.

Jack James, a prize winning journalist with United Press in South Korea at the time, says many expected an invasion but thought it would come only after the rainy season. The North Korean build-up of forces on the border had been reported, but U.S. officials had questioned the report. There had been hundreds of border clashes in the past and the ROKs had a tendency to enlarge the number and severity of these instances to justify more military aid.

The North Koreans fielded a highly capable, Russian-trained, Russian-equipped army of 135,000 of whom almost one-third were veterans who had fought with the Chinese Communists. These forces had defeated the Nationalist Chinese, who fled to Formosa (Taiwan) in November the previous year and made China a Communist country.

Fearing the South would attempt to invade the North, the U.S. had only lightly armed the ROK army of 65,000 and had supplied 500
American advisors (KMAG). The ROKs also had 45,000 policemen, but they were neither armed nor trained for combat.

The North Korean Peoples Army (NKPA) was spearheaded by Russian-made T-34 tanks, believed by many to be the best tank of World War II. Without adequate anti-tank weapons, brave ROK soldiers attacked these steel monsters with satchel charges. But after losing ninety men without much results, this practice was stopped.

The ROK defenses crumbled under the heavy weight of the NKPA attack. About one-third of the South Korean soldiers were on leave. Refugees fled the panic stricken capital of Seoul. Unfortunately, the bridge over the Han River was blown prematurely, which prevented ROK troops from withdrawing south with what little heavy equipment they possessed. Many of their good officers and NCOs were lost north of the Han. The NKPA occupied Seoul June 28th. Political opponents by the thousands were rounded up and executed. Later, when in North Korea, the ROKs wanted to reply in kind, but close supervision by U.N. officials kept these reprisals on a smaller scale.

Colonel Paik Sun Yup did manage to get two of the three regiments of his 1st ROK Division south of the river. Shocked and dismayed by this initially overwhelming defeat, the staff officers repeatedly voiced the question, "Will the Americans help us?" "Will the Americans help us?"

Some time later, American fighter-bombers came in low and mistakenly strafed these ROK troops. Although saddened by this loss to "friendly fire," Colonel Paik did turn to his staff and state, "See there, the Americans will help us."

Why had war erupted on the Korean Peninsula? Why was the United States getting involved?

UNITED NATIONS AND AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT

Washington got word of the invasion from Jack James' UPI dispatch, which arrived before the official cable to the State Department. President Harry Truman and the United Nations, which had supervised the elections in South Korea, were notified. Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the U.N., declared, "This is war against the United Nations." President Truman ordered Five-Star General Douglas MacArthur, U.S. Commander in the Far East, headquartered in Tokyo, to provide logistical support for the ROKs while the U.N. called for withdrawal of North Korean troops. When this appeal was ignored, the U.N. called for its members to "...furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security to the area." Truman ordered U.S. naval and air forces to assist the ROKs. After a personal reconnaissance revealed the plight of the ROK troops, General MacArthur advised that only U.S. ground troops could halt the invasion. These were ordered to Korea on June 30th by the President, his most difficult decision while in office.

Although excluded from the American perimeter of defense, General Omar Bradley noted in a 1948 meeting of the National Security Council that some moral obligation did exist since the Republic of Korea was an American creation. It was decided that one possible way to save South Korea, should it be invaded, would be by a United Nations "police action" to which the U.S. could contribute troops.

The bulk of the U.N. forces to serve in Korea would be American, whose peak strength reached 348,000. Altogether 5.7 million were in uniform during the period, while 1.8 million were rotated in and out of Korea. Battle deaths for the three-year period numbered 33,627 as compared to 47,367 for the ten-year Vietnam War. Combat deaths in Korea by service were: Army 27,704; Marines 4,267; Air Force 1,198; Navy 458.

Other countries to furnish combat units, with their peak strength, were: Australia (2,282), Belgium/Luxembourg (944), Canada (6,146), Colombia (1,068), Ethiopia (1,271), France (1,119), Greece (1,263), Netherlands (819), New Zealand (1,389), Philippines (1,496), Republic of South African (826), Thailand (1,294), Turkey (5,455), and the United Kingdom (Great Britain 14,198).

Medical units were furnished by Denmark, India, Italy, Norway, and Sweden.

The Republic of Korea's armed forces reached a strength of 590,911 and suffered 272,975 casualties – killed, wounded, missing. Korean civilian deaths, both North and South, have been estimated to have been over 2 million.

Both the U.N. and ROK troops were placed under command of General MacArthur. For the first time in history, a world organization would use force to stop military aggression.

During World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt had asked the leader of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, to enter the war against Japan. Stalin said he would two or three months after Germany's surrender. He could hardly refuse. The U.S. and Great Britain had
shipped, free of charge, huge quantities of war supplies, including almost 500,000 American-made trucks and jeeps to the Soviets, which enabled them to stave off a defeat by the Germans during the early part of the war.

The Germans surrendered in May 1945. By August, the Soviets were trying to obtain more concessions and incentives for entering the war against Japan. The U.S. refused because Japan was on the verge of collapse and Russian help was not needed. The first atomic bomb was dropped on August 6 and the second bomb was dropped on August 9, the same day the Soviets declared was on Japan. The Japanese surrendered on August 14, 1945, five days later.

The Soviet failure to conduct free and open elections, in accordance with the Yalta agreements, in Poland and other eastern European countries, which they had overrun, had aroused U.S. suspicion and had sown the seeds for the cold war. As their troops moved into Korea, which the Japanese had annexed in 1910 and harshly occupied, the U.S. contacted Moscow and asked them to accept surrender of the enemy troops above the 38th parallel, while the U.S. would do so south of that line. The Soviets agreed. Japan traditionally had regarded the Korean peninsula as a dagger pointing at their country.

1945 TO 1950

Korea may well be called the 'Belgium of the East" because being located between the great powers of China, Russia, and Japan, it has been caught up in their conflicts such as the Sino-Japanese War 1894-1895 and the Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905.

The Koreans are an ancient, hardy, and talented people who developed movable metal type, devised a 26-letter alphabet (although it failed to gain wide usage), an ironclad ship, and produced a body of skilled workers. Their peninsula was a pathway for cultural, educational, religious, scientific, and industrial exchanges between Japan and continental Asia. Twice in the late sixteenth century, Japan invaded Korea, caused appalling levels of brutality, death, and destruction, and took many of the Korean skilled artisans back to Japan. Unfortunately for the Korean people, foreigners once again would bring war, misery, and suffering to their country on an unprecedented scale.

However, U.S. troops landing in the south in 1945 brought much needed assistance in the form of Government Aid and Relief in Occupied Areas (GARIOA). Because of Soviet intransigence in eastern Europe, President Truman set aside a previously agreed plan for a trusteeship, which included the Soviets, to oversee Korea until self-rule could be established.

Feeling fully capable of governing themselves, most Koreans initially were against the trusteeship. But when the Soviets called for the trusteeship, those factions with communist sympathies sided with the Soviet Union. No agreement could be reached on free elections since the Russians wanted to deny the vote to those who were against the trusteeship and those accused of collaboration with the Japanese, while the U.S., of course, felt everyone should have a vote.

The U.S. sought to dissolve the barrier at the 38th parallel between North and South, but the Soviets refused to do so until a united Korean government had been established. Also, the industrial North (population 9 million) added to the chaos in the agricultural South (population 21 million) by greatly curtailing the supply of coal, electricity, and other goods, such as fertilizer, to the ROKs. Additional hardships had to be borne because approximately two million people fled to the South to escape the atrocities and plunder of Russian troops, and to avoid persecution because of their opposition to Soviet occupation policies. These refugees had to be fed and housed in the South. Several thousand crossed over from South to North.

The U.S. measured each action in its sector so as not to offend the North; allowed political dissent, which was mostly restricted in the North; and refused to recognize any political faction until free elections could be held, although these groups continued to multiply causing political confusion and instability. Syngman Rhee, an exile, who had lived in the U.S., arrived against State Department wishes. Unable to reach an agreement with the Soviets, the U.S. turned the problem over to the United Nations in September 1947. Elections, under the auspices of the U.N., were held in May 1948, but North Korea refused to participate. A National Assembly of 198 members was elected. One hundred seats were left vacant for North Korea to fill, but without response.

Syngman Rhee was elected president, while in the North a Soviet style election was held which chose a Korean exile who had lived in the Soviet Union, Kim IL Sung, as premier. Both leaders advocated unification, by force if necessary. The North became a closed society. A British minister, who was a well experienced Asian
hand, visited the South and declared the ROK government the most encouraging he had seen. It did have flaws, however, but democracy had no tradition in the Orient.

The Russians trained and equipped an army in the North, withdrew, and challenged the U.S. to do likewise. The South Koreans wanted the American troops to stay, however the Army had neither the will to leave troops on the Asian mainland nor funds to provide them for both Korea and the newly forming North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Europe. They were withdrawn.

Over 200 historians attending a seminar on the war, agreed that had the U.S. troops remained, there would have been no war. U.S. troops remained in West Germany and Communist East German did not invade. Clearly, the Korean War could have been prevented by an adequate peacetime defense budget.

Hearts were saddened in the North, as well as in the South, over the division of their country. Kim IL Sung pointed out how his Communist comrades had fought with the Chinese to help defeat the hated Japanese. They now would fight to unite Korea. The youth developed a zeal for this reasonable, desirable goal and great crusade.

According to Nikita Khrushchev's memoirs, which were published in 1970, Kim went to Moscow for Stalin's approval. Russian staff officers planned the details, but Stalin, fearing Americans would detect Soviet involvement, withdrew most of the 7,000 Russian advisors in Korea. Khrushchev believed that had they remained, the North would have succeeded. Kim had promised that the war would last only a short time because the South Koreans would rise up against Rhee's oppressive government and overthrow it. This never occurred. For the most part, South Koreans remained loyal to their government.

**TASK FORCE SMITH**

On July 4, 1950, two rifle companies, B and C, one-half of Headquarters Company, one section of 75mm recoilless rifles, and two 4.2 inch mortars, under their battalion commander Lt. Colonel Charles "Brad" Smith, were air-lifted from Japan to Pusan, Korea. They were from the 21st Infantry Regiment, 24th Division, on Japanese occupation duty. A train took them north where they were deployed near Osan, about 35 miles south of Seoul. They were joined by a battery from the 52nd Field Artillery Battalion. Rifleman had 120 rounds of ammunition and each man had two days of "C" rations. They stood 540 men strong.

Their mission: make an arrogant display of force and delay the main advance of the NKPA until more U.S. troops arrive. Brad Smith was 34. Most of his men were twenty years old or younger. About one in six had combat experience.

Many were draftees, while others had volunteered for the draft in order to get their service obligation behind them. Some had joined to "see the world." Fighting? Why should there be any fighting? We beat the Germans and Japanese, didn't we?

From a soft life in Japan, with servants to wash their clothes and shine their boots, these American youth were suddenly uprooted and flung into harm's way. There was no "Remember Pearl Harbor." Why were they there? Some bandits had crossed the border and would flee as soon as they saw American uniforms, was the circulating story.

The next morning at 7:00 a.m., NKPA troops appeared in the distance. They were elements of two regiments, about 5,000 men with thirty-three T-34 tanks. Artillery and recoilless rifle fire had no effect on the advancing tanks. The 105mm howitzer was not an anti-tank weapon; however, a special HEAT (high explosive anti-tank) round had been developed for emergency purposes. One field piece had been deployed well forward for direct fire down the road. The crew only had six HEAT rounds, which was 50% of the allotment for the Far East. The rest had been shipped to Europe, which had priority.

These teenagers were able to destroy two tanks before running out of HEAT rounds. The next tank knocked them out. As the ammunition supply dwindled, LTC Smith gave the order to withdraw at 2:30 p.m. It didn't reach one platoon and the task force suffered most of its casualties during this phase. Panic seized some as
they fled to the rear, weaponless but careful to skirt the village where the enemy tanks were.

These American youngsters had held up the enemy for almost a day and inflicted 130 casualties while losing 185 of their own. Brad Smith reported that the fighting qualities of the NKPA had been greatly underestimated by U.S. Intelligence.

The 34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Division was the next U.S. unit to engage the invaders. The equipment furnished the regiment was a national disgrace, according to the operations officer (S-3), Major John J. Dunn, who claimed that between 25% and 50% of the small arms were unserviceable. Sergeant Roy F. Collins found in their first combat that twelve of the thirty-one rifles in his platoon were defective. 4 Mortar ammunition was so old that, in some cases, eight out of ten rounds failed to explode. Few radios worked.

In order to get to Korea, the rest of Task Force Smith's regiment had to commandeer three rusty Japanese freighters and a couple of war surplus LSTs (Landing Ship Tank) before they could embark. One GI said, "It was a hell of a way to go to war."

AMERICAN DEFENSE POLICY

Again and again, U.S. forces committed piecemeal to battle were outnumbered, out gunned, and outflanked by the highly motivated NKPA. The greatest nation on the face of the earth had committed its youth to battle, understrength, undertrained, ill-equipped, and ill-supplied. Experienced field grade officers lamented that, "It was just criminal to commit our troops to battle, manned and equipped the way they were." In peacetime, Army units stood at two-thirds strength, meaning that infantry regiments had only two rifle battalions instead of the usual three, around which battlefield tactics were formulated. In practice, rifle companies were mostly 50% or more below their authorized strength of 200 men.

At the end of World War II, the United States had the greatest armed force the world had ever seen. But now, five years later, she was hard pressed to stop a fourth-rate power, North Korea. Why? Why?

Traditionally, America had never been prepared for a war. It was a dispute over a peacetime defense budget that initiated the events which led to the Revolutionary War. The colonists wanted the protection of the British troops during the French and Indian War. With the Crown's treasury depleted when the fighting ended, the King's minister asked the Americans to pay one-third of the cost of the twenty battalions of redcoats stationed in the colonies. They refused, fearful that large standing armies could support oppressive governments or military strongmen who would arise. Determined to collect some funds, the sugar tax was rigorously enforced and when that didn't work, there was the Stamp Act, and then the tax on tea, all of which brought forth "taxation without representation" which, of course, led to the revolution.

While teaching a class at the Army War College, which involved a crisis in American history, Colonel Harry Summers, Jr., was asked by an officer from a third world country - many of whom were in attendance - "What was the chance of a military coup?" The American officers just laughed. The principle of civil control is so ingrained in the military that never, never has such an act been possible in this country, although it has happened throughout the world.

Being true to form, post-war defense budgets were small. Thinking to get more bang-for-the buck from the Air Force, who would drop A-bombs on any enemy and win a quick victory, the Truman administration gave that branch the largest portion. The Navy was out some, but the biggest reduction was handed to the Army. Everyone knew the next war would be fought with push-buttons, rockets, missiles, etc. . . . and there would be little need for foot-slogging riflemen. This proved to be a grave mistake, costing the country numerous unnecessary casualties and some humiliating defeats.

In August 1949, the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic bomb. The U.S. no longer had a nuclear monopoly. By October of the same year, the Red Chinese controlled the mainland, China became a Communist country. Due to these changes in the international scene, the National Security Council recommended to the President (NSC-68) that U.S. ground forces would have to be built up to an unprecedented peacetime level in order to counter the threat of the huge conventional forces of the Soviet Union. Although favorable to the idea, Truman knew that neither the Congress nor the American people would approve of spending the 50 billion dollars the plan called for, for peacetime defense. The present budget was 13 billion. NSC-68 remained on the shelf until the North Korean attack, at which time it was approved.

Previously, in 1948 when first elected premier of North Korea, Kim IL Sun had repeatedly asked Stalin for permission and support to invade the South. Stalin continued to refuse, not on moral grounds, but
because Kim’s army was not strong enough and because of the adverse world opinion it would cause. The Soviet leader suggested that should the South attack the North, this would justify offensive action by the NKPA.

Only after a buildup of North Korean forces and only after the change in the international situation did Stalin agree. At the time of the invasion, the Communists claimed the South had attacked first. This idea was propagated in the United States by well known journalist I.F. Stone. The opening of the Russian archives revealed that Stone had been on the KGB payroll.

WITHDRAWAL CONTINUES

The NKPA main thrust was along the Seoul, Taejon, Taegu, Pusan axis. The U.S. 25th Infantry Division (Tropic Lightning) began arriving July 10. It was positioned to back ROK troops in the central sector and prevent an enemy drive on Taegu. But the ROK troops were able to hold in this better defensive, mountainous area where few T-34 tanks were employed.

So well, in fact, that the NKPA corps commander was relieved because of his slow progress.

On July 19, the town of Yechon, an important road junction, fell but was retaken by the all black 24th Infantry Regiment of the 25th Division. War correspondent Tom Lambert reported it as the "... first sizeable American ground victory of the Korean War." Captain Charles Bussey, a black fighter pilot during World War II, won a Silver Star as a combat engineer. Back in the U.S., blacks began appearing at the recruiting offices, asking to get in that 24th Regiment.

On the morning of July 18, Lieutenant General Walton Walker, commander of the U.S. Eighth Army, which included all American and ROK forces in Korea, arrived at Taejon and asked Major General William Dean, the 24th Division Commanding Officer (CO), if he could hold the city until the 20th when units just landing from the U.S. 1st Cavalry Division would be in position to reinforce him. (It was "cavalry" in name only.) Although he had intended to evacuate Taejon, Dean told Walker he could hold. It was the biggest mistake of his life. Attacked, outflanked, and overrun by the NKPA 3rd and 4th Divisions, the city fell. Dean was captured and spent three years in POW camps.

American GIs fought bravely at times. At other times when confronted with overwhelming, numerically superior forces, they "bugged-out" to the rear, cursing their government for sending them to this stinking, God-forsaken place where human feces were used to fertilize the land.

The battered U.S. 24th Division, which was relieved by the 1st Cavalry on July 22, stood at about one-half its strength 17 days earlier. It had lost enough equipment to field a full division, including thirty-one 105mm and five 155mm howitzers. There was a terrible toll on senior officers. Besides General Dean, three regimental COs were lost, one killed, one wounded, and one relieved. One regimental executive officer was wounded while two staff officers were captured. Five rifle battalion commanders were lost, including two killed, one captured, and two medically evacuated. Numerous other field-grade officers were killed, captured, wounded, or sacked, including two from the field artillery battalions (FAB).

PFC Sheffield Clark, whose 63rd FAB entered combat on July 6, remembers it this way: "It was the frantic hit-and-run tactics - and the running war south. We were short on ammo and supplies. Tiger tanks (Russian T-34s) were our nightmare and we had no ammo for our rocket launchers (anti-tank weapons). At one time, our field artillery unit was 2,000 yards ahead of the 34th Infantry we were supposed to be supporting.

"Infiltrators were picking us off - dressed up like old Korean women - with pistols held at real old Korean women to get past our outposts, posed as refugees moving south away from the fighting. Our position was overrun by infiltrators who came in behind us. The attack was so swift that our machine gunners were killed and our own machine guns were turned against us. They captured our 105s, then captured a trainload of ammo for them. There were only twelve of us left out of my battery by the time we got back to Taejon."

The need for replacement in these front-line units was acute. Supply and service personnel in Japan were reclassified as infantry and sent to Korea. Reservists were quickly called to active duty. Master Sergeant Ralph Yelton, who saw combat in Europe during World War II, was re-called, given five days' orientation, and sent to Korea where he participated in the heavy fighting during the first year. He was wounded for a second time and paralyzed from the waist down.

Bewildered Korean youth were taken off the streets, given ten days' training, and assigned to U.S. units. Thrown in with strangers with a strange language and strange customs, some performed remarkably well. But most were, not surprisingly, unable to do what
was expected of them, so the KATUSA (Korean Augmentation To The U.S. Army) was gradually phased out.

This extreme shortage of front line replacements was the “necessity” that became the “mother” of full integration in the Army. Although President Truman ordered such in 1948, in practice black soldiers were still assigned to all black units, such as the 24th Infantry Regiment. The 9th Infantry CO, Chin Sloane, would accept black fillers. Butch Barberis, one of his battalion commanders, remembers it this way: “I was very, very low on men - less than half strength - and raised hell to get more troops. The division G-1 (personnel officer) called and, knowing that I had previously commanded a battalion of black troops, said he had almost 200 from labor units in Pusan that had served in my battalion who would transfer to infantry if they could serve with me. I agreed. In fact, I was proud to have them. They were good fighting men.”

From this beginning in Korea, the Armed Services have become an outstanding equal opportunity employer. While blacks make up only 13% of the population, the services are well over 30% black. African-American General Colin Powell became a highly regarded and effective recent Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Jim Harris, a member of the 70th Tank Battalion serving as school troops at Fort Knox, was scheduled to get out of the service soon. When war broke out, the 70th was given 96 hours to pack up for the move to Korea. A special appeal was made to the 13 men who did not have enough time left on their enlistment to be sent overseas: “American GIs were being shot to hell by Russian-made tanks. They need your help.” All 13 reenlisted except one, who later showed up in Korea with the 2nd Division.

The battalion was so short of tanks that those on concrete pedestals as monuments around Fort Knox had to be taken down and made operational by installing engines, transmissions, and other equipment. Such parts had to be flown in from various areas of the country. The men worked straight through with almost no sleep, but the deadline was met.

When these M-4 and M-26 medium tanks, which could stand up the enemy T-34s, roared up to the front lines on August 14, the haggard, combat-worn, and weary front-line troops, some openly sobbing, ran forward to meet them. They crowded around the ugly steel monsters and patted them as if they had been bloodied horses. It was then that Jim Harris knew that he had done the right thing to come to the aid of his countrymen. The emotion is still there as he tells the story today.

Rustling hulks were collected from old Pacific World War II battlefields, refurbished in Japan and used to equip another, much needed tank battalion, the 89th. Its commander, 34-year-old Tom Dolvin (West Point ’39), received verbal orders on a golf course in the United States on July 12 and was in combat in Korea on August 2. Whew!

The 1st Cavalry Division, which relieved the luckless 24th Division, had only 11,000 of its authorized wartime strength of 18,900 men. Around 750 of its noncommissioned officers had been transferred to the 24th when it first went into action. The Cav made a strong stand on the Taejon-Taegu road and delayed the advance of the NKPA. During the heavy fighting, one battalion (the 2nd of the 8th regiment) was encircled and cut off. Artillerymen found themselves fighting as infantry. They lowered their tubes for direct fire into the oncoming enemy. Repeated attempts to break through to the surrounded men failed, but cost 275 casualties. Finally, on the night of July 24/25, the battalion split up, leaving their vehicles and heavy equipment, and infiltrated back to friendly lines.

The 27th Regiment (Wolfhounds) of the 25th Division was the first American regiment to completely defeat a full-scale NKPA attack. One of its two battalions was on line, with the other well to the rear in reserve. The initial assault was repulsed after heavy, close combat; however, six tanks penetrated to the battalion command post (CP). Three were destroyed by ground fire, while the other three were knocked out by Air Force F-80 jets.

Believing the enemy would remount the attack that night, Lt. Colonel John Michaelis (CO) had the front-line unit pull back, quietly, along side the reserve battalion just after dark. The attack was renewed at dawn. The NKPA, seeking to double envelope the abandoned position, moved troops around both flanks which naturally passed in front of the two Wolfhound battalions. Their heavy fire was so devastating that it was quite awhile before the enemy could mount an offensive in that sector.

Michaelis said, “The kids won a battle - won it big - and that was very important for the outfit. They developed that all-important confidence right away. In fact, they became so cocky they were almost intolerable.” General Walker would use the Wolfhounds in the coming weeks as his fire brigade, sent to trouble spots around the perimeter.
THE PUSAN PERIMETER

As the Eighth Army continued to reel under the withering blows of the NKPA, General Walker received a visit from General MacArthur, who promised, "Help is on the way." Walker would be reinforced by the 2nd Infantry Division, the 5th Marines and the Army's 5th Regimental Combat Team (RCT). There were to be no more withdrawals. Walker had to hold for six weeks while a reserve force of two divisions was built up and landed behind enemy lines at the port of Inchon on the Yellow Sea. This would cut off supplies to the NKPA in the south and assure their defeat. Without question, the Eighth Army must hold. Walker issued to his troop commanders what the press dubbed as his "stand or die" order. There would be no more retreating. "We are going to hold this line. We are going to win."12

The U.N. forces dug in along their meager toehold in southeastern Korea, which became known as the Pusan Perimeter. The western edge, manned by U.S. troops, ran from the Korea Strait north along the Naktong River for about 85 miles. Just north of Taegu, the line turned east and ran for about 50 miles to Pohang on the Sea of Japan. ROK troopers defended in this mountainous sector. They had performed better than expected and inflicted severe casualties on the attackers. They had naval gunfire support from U.S. and British ships. Once retreating down the coast, the 3rd ROK Division was surrounded. The Navy took them off and landed them farther south.

Kim IL Sung ordered his North Korean troops to take Pusan by August 15 (Korean time), regardless of casualties. It was the anniversary of the Japanese surrender. Astrological reckoning, timing, and dates are important in the Orient. The fighting was furious. The NKPA suffered the casualties, but they did not take Pusan. It was a moment to be proud of American arms.

Undaunted by these losses, the North Koreans poured more troops into the area to continue the struggle. Time was against them. They must prevail now before the U.N. forces were built up to a level which would preclude a NKPA victory. Astonishingly, they were able to maintain a high morale and keep their troops supplied, in spite of the U.N. control of the air, by moving men and material at night. ROK Colonel Min Ki Sik had formed a scratch force of regimental size (Task Force Min), delayed their advance through the southwest, and added to their ration problem by confiscating much of the rice in the area and shipping it to Pusan. The NKPA was expected to live off the land.

The Pusan Perimeter was not a series of two-man foxholes every few yards - there were too few troops for this - but rather an offensive-defense. Observation posts were strung along the front and when enemy movement was detected, troops located in strong points well to the rear would come forward to attack and push the NKPA back across the Naktong River. They were greatly aided by the Air Force and Navy performing observation and close ground support. Forty-four percent of these tactical missions were flown by the Navy and Marines from carrier decks stationed off shore. The Air Force operated at considerable disadvantage at this time, however, for there were only two strips in Korea suitable for use by F-51 and C-47 type of aircraft - K-2 at Teagu and K-3 at Yonil on the east coast. Both were dirt strips. Most of the tactical planes flew from Japan.

The fighting was fierce. U.N. forces were holding on by the skin of their teeth. New units arriving at Pusan were quickly thrown into the battle. Two battalions of the 29th Infantry from Okinawa were committed before they had cleaned all the cosmoline (packing grease) from their newly issued weapons.

The Wolfhounds, in Army reserve, were shifted here and there to the hot spots. Twice the First Marine Provisional Brigade was called to eject an enemy penetration at the Naktong Bulge. The Army troops of the 24th and 2nd Infantry Divisions had fought their hearts out for eleven days in this area and stopped the enemy advance, but were too weak to push the North Koreans back across the river.

Lt. William R. Ellis, who experienced combat in World War II, says the 9th Infantry Regiment fought magnificently. "The original group of officers was gallant and far under-ranked. Most of the company commanders were (only) first lieutenants, which was a disgrace itself. They were forty-year-old, gray-haired World War II veterans (reserves called up) and still lieutenants in combat in 1950. I knew them all and have regretted at times that I did not join them (in death) for they by-and-large died unknown and unrewarded for their bravery." E Company had all its officers wiped out on five occasions.13

Enlisted man, Charles Payne of the 34th Infantry regiment, remembers it this way: "Masses of gooks (enemies) poured over the hills and through the gaps like a flood. Our people were fighting like seasoned troopers, but were just being overpowered.... Hour after hour we held the North Koreans off ... time and time again gooks rushed us. Each time we would lose a man, they would lose many. The ground was covered with their dead. We stacked our dead around us for protection. The battle seemed to go on forever."14
Few Americans today, or even then, know of the desperate struggle, the pain and suffering, the utmost heroic effort and valor displayed to stop the North Korean assaults. The U.S. suffered its highest casualties of the entire war during these six weeks. If and when the public does become conscious of this all-important battle, it will, no doubt, be ranked alongside Bunker Hill, the Alamo, Bataan, and Corregidor.

THE INCHON LANDING

This clever and risky operation of landing at Inchon far behind enemy lines was conceived by General MacArthur on his personal reconnaissance to Korea June 29, but it had to be postponed to commit the troops he planned to use in order to delay the NKPA steamroller pushing down the peninsula.

The Navy and Marines, the country's amphibious experts, as well as most Army people not on MacArthur's staff, were against the operation. One admiral said, "We drew up a list of every natural and geographic handicap to a landing and Inchon had them all." The narrow channel to the landing site could easily be blocked, currents were as high as 8 knots, there were no beaches, only the easily defended city of Inchon ... and many more. The worst of all were the 32 feet high tides which left nothing but mud flats at low tide, forcing a 12-hour wait for a second landing.

At a Tokyo meeting on August 23, the Navy spent 85 minutes in a gloomy presentation of the obstacles, but concluded that while it would be a most difficult operation, it was not impossible. Present were chiefs of Navy, Army, Fifth Air Force, General MacArthur, and some of his staff.

MacArthur then made a masterful presentation of the complex military operation. "Spellbinding" was how Navy Chief Admiral Forrest Sherman and Army Chief General J. Lawton Collins described it. Admiral James Doyle said that if MacArthur had gone on stage, the world would have never heard of John Barrymore (famous American actor of the 1920's and 1930's).

The Inchon Landing became one of the most brilliant moves in American military history. The slaughter of slugitng it out head-to-head and toe-to-toe around the Pusan Perimeter would cease; thousands of casualties would be prevented and a decisive victory would be won.

No other nation in the world had the means and the knowledge to put together, on such short notice, over 200 ships to land 70,000 troops successfully in such a precarious place. "The Navy has never shone more brightly" were the words of the Far East Commander.

The First Marine Division landed a battalion (2 BN, 5th Regiment) on Wolmi-do (the fortified island guarding the entrance to Inchon) at 6:33 a.m. on September 15, 1950. An hour later, the island was secure. Because of the high tides, the next 12 hours would be sweatied out before the other landings at Inchon proper could take place. When they did, the 1st Marine Regiment and the remainder of the 5th reached their objectives with light opposition from the surprised enemy; Marine and Naval air ruled the skies.

ROK Marines occupied Inchon while the U.S. Marines, moved out toward Seoul twenty miles away. The 7th U.S. Infantry Division landed and moved south of the city to protect the Marine flank, cut off NKPA personnel fleeing from the South, and link up with forces breaking out of the Pusan Perimeter.

The landing troops were designated X Corps and under the command of Major General Ned Almond, a brusque, overbearing officer who had offended the 1st Marine Division Commander, Oliver Smith. Smith was suspicious and resentful of being under Army command. As the Marines attacked the heavily fortified area west of Seoul, General Almond suggested to Smith that he send one regiment to the south and cross the Han river right into the capital city. Major General Smith refused, saying that he wanted to keep his regiments together. As Marine casualties continued to mount, Almond sent the Army's 32nd Regiment across without losing a man or piece of equipment. They were followed by the 17th ROK regiment. After a strong attack on the Army unit the major NKPA force withdrew, but their rear guard continued to offer stiff resistance to the Marines fighting into the heart of the city.

NORTH KOREAN INCURSION

The Inchon Landing had changed the fortunes of war almost overnight, insuring a NKPA defeat. Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway said if it had been suggested that MacArthur could walk on water, most would have believed it. But now the Far East Commander made a serious mistake.
On September 27, he was ordered by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to cross the 38th parallel without fanfare and with little publicity. The objective was to destroy the remaining NKPA forces and unite the North under the government of South Korea. With some reluctance, the U.N. approved this action. Some of the reasons given (NSC-81) were (1) 2,500 American and 25,000 ROK POWs were being held; (2) Red China, which had massive economic and social problems and with an Army lacking armor, heavy artillery, and air support, would probably not intervene; (3) taking North Korea away from Russian influence would increase U.S. chances of rapprochement with China; (4) if left intact, North Korea might invade again after it recovered; (5) Syngman Rhee was intent on unifying the country and would be difficult to hold in check; (6) Americans were outraged at the atrocities committed by the enemy against U.S. forces; and (7) with the total victory of World War II so recent, it would be hard for the Truman administration, accused of being soft on Communism, to settle for anything less. MacArthur was to engage any Chinese forces encountered in Korea “...as long as, in your judgment, action by forces now under your control offers a reasonable chance of success.”

Needing additional port facilities to supply both the X Corps and Eighth Army, and to meet the possibility of stubborn resistance at the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, MacArthur withdrew the X Corps for a landing at Wonsan on the east coast. It would attack across the “narrow waist” of Korea toward Pyongyang from the east while the Eighth Army attacked from the south. This was a tragic mistake not only because of the delay it caused, which allowed some recovery among NKPA units and time for Chinese to deploy, unseen in Korea, but it overloaded the transportation system - heavily damaged by U.N. bombing - to the extent that it was very difficult to keep the Eighth Army supplied for its incursion into North Korea. It so happened that resistance was light and Pyongyang was taken by the 1st CAV and 1st ROK Division on October 19. The ROK troops advanced so rapidly up the east coast that they took the landing site of Wonsan before the X Corps arrived by sea.

A well executed air drop by the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team north of Pyongyang was too late to rescue a trainload of U.S. POWs, who were massacred before the paratroopers landed. A NKPA force of 500 was caught between the 187 and the Australian Battalion, 27th British Commonwealth Brigade advancing to link up with the troopers. Fearing their fire would hit the Americans, they fixed bayonets, charged the enemy, killed 270, and captured 200, while miraculously sustaining only seven wounded of their own.

CHINESE INTERVENTION

By the 1860’s, expansionist Russia, under the Czars, reached the Pacific at Vladivostok. Defeated in a conflict with Japan (1904-1905), Russia regarded that country as her natural enemy in the area. During the 1930’s and during World War II, Joseph Stalin had supported the Nationalist Chinese under Chiang Kai-shek because, from a practical standpoint, they were the only force capable of opposing the Japanese at that time.

Popular with the Chinese Communists was Mao Zedong, who, although not trained in Moscow as were other Chinese, would become the leader of the party in China. He was in a constant struggle to maintain his leadership within the party and to avoid destruction from his sworn enemy, Chiang Kai-shek. Relations between Mao and Stalin were cool.

When the Nationalists were defeated (October 1949) and the People's Republic of China was established by the Communists, U.S. far eastern policy changed. Support for Chiang had ceased sometime before because his corrupt regime did not have popular support.

In December of 1949, U.S. embassies were advised that should Formosa (Taiwan) - where the Nationalists had fled - fall to the Communists, it would not be considered a threat to U.S. security. A rapprochement would be made to the People's Republic, showing that Russia, coveting Manchuria as she did, was China's real enemy. It appears that Stalin became aware of this change. McLean, Burgess, and Philby, working in British Intelligence with access to U.S. information, were later discovered to be Soviet spies. (During the war MacArthur would sense that someone was reading his messages.) Continued success by Mao would make him a rival for the leadership of international Communism. As Stalin had promised to help the North Koreans, he had also offered aid to the Chinese who had massed 200,000 troops opposite Formosa for the invasion. Did Stalin coerce Kim IL Sung to invade first so that he would have an excuse to delay help to the Chinese? Was his support of the Korean invasion an effort to impede U.S./China rapprochement?
When the Inchon Landing changed the whole course of the war in Korea, Stalin urged the Chinese to intervene, promising them air power. At an October 1st meeting, most Chinese leaders were against intervention, although 80% of Chinese heavy industry was in Manchuria and most dependent on electric power generated in North Korea. General Peng Teh-huai, who would command Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) in Korea, said that if the Americans reached the Yalu River (border between Korea and Manchuria), they would find an excuse to invade China. Mao felt that China should come to the aid of its neighbor. A decision was made to intervene, which appeared to be based on their own national interest and not Russian pressure.

Moving at night and using excellent camouflage, troops of the CCF Fourth Field Army (200,000) already in Manchuria crossed into Korea while troops of the Third Field Army (120,000) headed north to reinforce them. These forces were undetected by U.N. aerial reconnaissance which was mostly employed in a strategic role: location of targets and evaluation of bombing. Chairman Mao instructed his commanders in the field to first destroy two or three divisions of the "puppet, running-dog Syngman Rhee." And, if the U.S. Forces did not advance beyond the Pyongyang-Wonsan line, the CCF were to wait six months while being supplied with Russian artillery and air power and then expel all enemy forces from Korea.

U.N. forces continued their advance and, on October 25 at Unsan (oon-san), about 70 miles north of Pyongyang, the ROK 15th Regiment was stopped by Chinese, who had crossed the border October 18 (American time) and deployed in the mountains. The U.S. 8th Cavalry Regiment sent to their aid was badly mauled , losing a whole battalion. A regiment from the 6th ROK Division made it to the Yalu, but was destroyed. Two other ROK regiments coming to its assistance were routed. Then the Chinese mysteriously withdrew. The same thing happened in the eastern sector where the Marines were stopped in their advance to the Chosin Reservoir, and then the enemy withdrew. Prisoners sent back to headquarters were confirmed to be Chinese. Intelligence estimated that there were no more than 27,000 (later upgraded to 70,000) Chinese in Korea. There were 320,000!

The advance of the Eighth Army (118,000) resumed on November 24, despite a shortage of supplies, including winter clothing. Some riflemen had as few as 16 rounds of ammunition. On the night of the 25th, the CCF struck the II ROK Corps on the Army's right flank with a massive attack which disorganized the South Koreans and sent them reeling to the rear. To their left, the U.S. 2nd and 25th Divisions were also hit with furious assaults and penetrated in some spots, but were able to restore the situation and hold. The collapse of the ROKs exposed the flank of the 2nd Division and forced the U.N. forces to withdraw. Two regiments of the 2nd were almost destroyed at Kunu-ri, but the rest if the Army withdrew in good order, using their mobility to outdistance the slower moving CCF, who could maintain an offensive for only a few days.

In the X Corps sector in the east, one regiment of the 7th Division reached the Yalu at Hyesanjin, but the Marines were stopped at the Chosin Reservoir. Oliver Smith, sensing more enemy in the area than being reported, moved more slowly than Ned Almond was urging him. He stockpiled ammunition and supplies along the way. His caution contributed greatly to saving his command. An Army task force of two mismatched battalions, artillery, and other supporting units were hurried into position to protect the Marine right flank.

The bulk of the 120,000 CCF in the area hit the Marines and the Army Task Force. Winter had set in with temperatures of 24 degrees below zero. Flesh stuck to metal. Weapons and vehicles froze. In their fighting withdrawal, the Marines inflicted horrendous casualties on the enemy while sustaining 4,418 battle casualties and 7,313 nonbattle casualties (mostly weather-related). For the first time in history, flying boxcars (C-119-type aircraft) dropped a treadway bridge which enabled them to get their heavy equipment out over Funchilin Pass, where a bridge had been destroyed. Paratrooper Fred Fishel said a practice drop in Japan had failed. By December 11, the last man reached the safety of the lodgment area of Hungnam, held by the U.S. 3rd Division. Plagued by the Katusa factor, low ammunition, and the loss of all four senior commanders, the ill-fated Army unit (Task Force Maclean/Faith) held out for five nights and four days to its own destruction. Of its original strength of 2,500 only 385 were fit for duty, but they did protect the Marine right flank and rendered combat-ineffective the CCF 80th Division and elements of a second division.

The CCF forced the U.N. out of North Korea, but at a tremendous cost. Sources favorable to the Communist side estimate that the U.N. inflicted casualties on their adversary at the rate of 20 to 1. It was reported that General Peng flew to Mao's headquarters, dragging him out of bed to complain that the troops were exhausted and their clothing, equipment, and support was totally unsuited for such a campaign.

The X Corps was evacuated by sea with almost 100,000 civilians unwilling to live under Communist coming out with them. *'Christmas Cargo' - Story of Dr. Hung Bong Hauk who used his English proficiency and position as personal interpreter to Maj. General Almond to ultimately secure the rescue of an entire population. Amazing story on video: "Christmas Cargo"
Because of its shattered right flank the Eighth Army retired to a more narrow portion of the peninsula about 45 miles south of the 38th parallel where they were joined by the X Corps.

The U.N. asked for an armistice at the parallel, but the elated Chinese, who had gained world acclaim, refused to consider seriously the proposal. Pouring in more troops, their goal was the expulsion of U.N. forces in South Korea. General Walker was killed in a jeep accident on December 24. Lieutenant General Matthew Ridgway was given command of the Eighth Army, which was plagued with defeat, disappointment, and low morale. Ridgway, who believed the plight of the withdrawal had been greatly exaggerated in the press, soon had his troops turned around and began pushing the CCF and NKPA back into North Korea. Five-star General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint and Chiefs of Staff, said that his brilliant, driving, uncompromising leadership turned the tide of battle as no other general in American military history.17

AMERICAN POLICY

One false concept which hampered American policy throughout the cold war was that all Communists were directly controlled and every action dictated from Moscow. Although U.S. Russian experts, such as George Kennan, Chip Bolen, and Averell Harriman, believed that the Soviet Union was not ready for war, did not want war, Americans were ready to accept that the North Korean invasion might well be the beginning of World War III. Therefore, the U.S. 7th Fleet was sent to the Formosa Strait to prevent an invasion from the mainland of Nationalist China. This, of course, sent an entirely hostile signal to the People's Republic to whom, in December 1949, the U.S. was seeking rapprochement.

During World War II, victory in Europe was the first goal, while the Pacific was of secondary priority. After the turnaround at Inchon, the Joint Chiefs asked MacArthur how soon he could release a division or two for Europe. Here's where the real concern was. The Chinese intervention heightened U.S. fears of World War III. It was in reference to widening the war to mainland China that General Bradley said we would be fighting the wrong war at the wrong place at the wrong time. During the fighting in Korea, six U.S. divisions were sent to Europe, while the most U.S. divisions on line at any one time in Korea was seven. That's right, seven!

Fearing for Europe, President Truman wanted to cool down the war in Korea. The legendary hero of World War II in the Pacific, Douglas MacArthur wanted to expand the war, believing a victory in Asia would secure peace in Europe. Although warned, he continued to publicly express these views, so he was relieved of command in April 1951. A big uproar ensured, but soon died down in the public mind, as the war was to do also.

Seoul had been retaken in March as U.N. forces continued to push northward. A CCF counteroffensive failed in April to recapture the capital and, in May in east central Korea, their attack became known as the May Massacre because of their heavy losses. When the war broke out the year before and action was taken by the U.N. to support South Korea, the Soviets were boycotting the meetings because Red China had not been admitted. In June 1951, Soviet delegate to the U.N., Jacob Malik, who had returned, proposed truce talks.* The Chinese had suffered an unbelievable number of casualties, had shot their bolt, and were ready to talk peace. The Soviets had lost face in the Communist world. The U.S. had sent troops to aid its ally, South Korea, and Russia had not. Chinese influence in North Korea increased as Russia's decreased. Mao gained stature as a world leader. Both Great Britain and the U.S. embarked on huge rearmament programs. NATO became a reality under the command of an American general. West Germany moved toward being a sovereign state, with its own military force. American defense spending in Japan — Toyota was almost bankrupt — propelled her toward being an economic super power. The Soviets had come up short everywhere. Their only success: U.S./China rapprochement was delayed until President Nixon's time, 20 years later.

TRUCE TENT AND THE FIGHTING FRONT

The talks began on July 10, 1951. Expecting the cease fire line to be exactly on the parallel, the communists balked when the U.N. refused to move back from their good defensive positions just north of the line to where none existed at the parallel. The CCF/NKPA delegates

* The Russian archives indicate that the North Koreans and Chinese persuaded Stalin to ask for peace talks. Pulitzer Prize Winner John Toland, the only American to examine the Chinese archives, maintains that both countries were not only surprised but somewhat dissatisfied with Stalin's action.
walked out. The U.N. renewed their offensive action, which had been curtailed to show sincerity during the peace talks. In hard, hard fighting, the U.S. 2nd Division, the French Battalion, and some ROK troops forced the NKPA from Bloody Ridge and Heartbreak Ridge. The North Koreans claimed it was their most difficult battle of the whole war.

The pressure brought the Communist back to the peace table on November 27, 1951, and slow, slow progress was made, although they were most difficult in negotiations. The last item to be settled was the exchange of prisoners. A huge number of U.N.-held prisoners did not wish to be returned to the Communist side, while the Communists naturally argued that all should be returned. Disagreement on this point prolonged the fighting for 15 months and all the world could see that "...liberty and justice for all..." was not merely an empty phrase with the United States of America.

During the lull in U.N. offensive action, the NKPA/CCF improved their position to an extent not possible for their less mobile forces during normal activity. They brought up artillery until they had more guns on line than the U.N. They prepared well dug-in positions in depth, some as far back as 20 miles.

Static warfare developed. After November 1951, the U.N. forces staged no all-out offensives since the U.N. believed that peace was near at hand and ground gained would have to be relinquished. But, small actions were initiated by both sides to improve the positions they held. There were battles in the Punch Bowl and Iron Triangle areas, and names such as "Old Baldy," "White Horse," "Jackson Heights," "T-Bone," and "Pork Chop" became personal experiences where men were maimed, bled, and died while they struggled to be "king of the mountain," this mountain or that mountain. They fought the blistering heat, the stench, the rats and bugs, the rain, the extreme cold, the snow and ice, and life in the bunkers. They performed everlasting patrol duty to keep contact with the enemy. The 45th and 40th Divisions replaced the 1st CAV and 24th Divisions, which went back to Japan.

Highly valued by the ground troops was the close support U.N.-fighter-bombers provided. Initially, the Air Force encountered difficulty in establishing a uniform system of close support for ground troops - the most complex of its tactical missions - from the three different systems used in World War II: one from Europe, one from Central Pacific, and one from Southwest Pacific. Tactical Air Control Parties (TACP) were assigned to each infantry regiment which was expected to use its own artillery for any targets within 1,000 yards of its front line. The Marines provided controllers for each rifle battalion (three battalions per regiment at full strength) which expected to use air support as its artillery, based on the invasion of small islands during WWII where sufficient artillery was often not available. Controversy over the systems continued throughout the war.

The heavy bombing of North Korea certainly hampered their war effort, but proved to be not as decisive as its advocates claimed. Early in the war, the U.N. Air Forces easily defeated the small North Korean Force. B-29 Superforts ranged over the North but by November 1950 were forced into mostly night operations as China entered the war. Russian pilots, disguised as Chinese, flew their MiG-15 fighters from airfields in Manchuria (off limits to U.N. planes) to attack bombers over the north. In the first aerial combat between jet aircraft, the MiGs outclassed the U.N. F-80s and F-84s. However, the superiority of U.N. pilots maintained air supremacy until the arrival of the F-86 Saberjet, a match for the Russian plane. A 10-to-1 kill ratio was achieved over the MiGs. Communist air was never used to support their effort on the ground.

The new Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (M*A*S*H), stationed up close to the fighting front, reduced the deaths due to battle wounds by 50% of World War II figures. Helicopters were first used to evacuate wounded, supply and transport troops.

Most of the American POWs were captured during the first six months of the war. About 50% died due to wounds, disease, exposure, and malnutrition. Those that did survive in harsh, primitive, subhuman conditions were subjected to "brainwashing," a program to destroy faith in their country and convert them to Communism. Much publicity was given to the "turncoats," the 22 (one British) who stayed behind, while 3,766 Americans and 977 British returned to their homeland. The "brainwashing" could hardly be termed successful.

Embarrassed that so many of their POWs were refusing repatriation, the Communists instigated their hard-liners in U.N. custody to riot. They captured a camp commandant and although he was later released, it was a very humiliating incident. About 22,000 Communist-POWs screened by troops from neutral India refused to return. Another 25,000 were released against U.N. wishes by President Syngman Rhee to fade into the countryside.

In May and June 1953, the NKPA/CCF launched some of the largest attacks of the war, mostly against ROK troops, in an effort to influence the peace talks. Rhee was refusing to sign an armistice that left his country divided. Now with experienced leadership, better equipment, and better trained personnel, the South Korean units were
no longer the undependable force they had been at the beginning, but were able to hold and inflict heavy losses on the enemy. These greatly improved troops occupied two-thirds of the U.N. line. Rhee agreed not to invade the north, but never did sign the cease-fire agreement which the other belligerents did on July 27, 1953. Elected in 1952, President Eisenhower had let it be known in May '53 that if a negotiated settlement could not be reached, he was prepared to seek a military solution, implying the use of atomic bombs and earlier measures advocated by MacArthur.

The Korean War was one of the most important events of the 20th Century because for the first time force was used to contain communism. So stated PBS News Hour historians. Had North Korea succeeded in adding territory to the communist bloc of nation through a force of arms, they would have tried again and again. A degree of stability came upon the world scene because COMMUNISTIC MILITARY AGGRESSION WAS DEFEATED IN KOREA.

A worldwide alarm had been sounded to aggressors that force would be met with counterforce. A degree of stability came on the world scene which cannot be calculated. The U.S. had completely shed its traditionally isolationist shell and fully accepted the role of leadership of the free world thrust upon it by the results of World War II. Before Korea, America had only one commitment outside of the western hemisphere – NATO. By the mid-'50's, there were 450 military bases in 36 countries with links to 20 countries outside of Latin America, including Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Japan.

North Korea remains a closed, totalitarian state, widely regarded as a threat to world peace. South Korea is an economic miracle, America's seventh largest trading partner and staunchest ally. By 1995, she had become the world's eleventh strongest economy and the fifth largest producer of automobiles. For once, in their long history, able to act solely in their own national interest, they have produced an astounding level of prosperity, with the freedom to enjoy it.

"It was a war in which we turned the tide against Communism for the first time. Our defense of freedom laid the foundation for the march of democracy we're seeing today around the world."
President George Bush, May 1, 1990.

The U.S. Army, with a strength of 591,000 in 1950, had to be tripled in order to meet international commitments and fight a war on a 150 mile-wide peninsula.
In 2001, with almost twice the population of then, Army strength had been reduced to below the 1950 level.


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1. Personal interview
2. Personal interview
3. Appleman, South to the Naktong, pg. 24
4. Appleman, South to the Naktong, pg. 37
5. Ibid, p. 93
6. Personal interview
7. Blair, The Forgotten War, pg. 153
8. Personal interview
9. Blair, The Forgotten War, pg. 253
10. Personal interview
11. Blair, The Forgotten War, pg. 161
12. Appleman, South to the Naktong, pg. 205
13. Blair, The Forgotten War, pg. 205
14. Ibid, pg. 208
15. Ibid, pg. 225
16. Ibid, p. 231
17. Bradley, A General's Life, pg. 608

The author, who served with KMAG in Korea, has read all 56 books listed in the bibliography and is indebted to these writers for much of this presentation.