

KOREAN WAR TIMELINE

September 1945 - One of the penalties imposed on Japan at the end of World War II was the loss of Korea. A precursor of the causes of this mid-century Korean War was the decision to divide (rather than unify) Korea along the 38th parallel. Soviet Union controlled the north as a result of entering the war against Japan during the last days of World War II and the United States the southern half of the peninsula.



1 October 1949 – Mao Ze Dung and his communists People's Republic of China was established after Chiang Kai-shek evacuated from the mainland to the island of Taiwan.

13 January 1950 - Jacob Malik, the Soviet representative to the United Nations, storms out of a meeting of the UN Security Council after the Security Council votes down to replace Chiang Kai Chek's Nationalists Chinese representatives with Representatives of Mao Ze Dung's Peoples Republic of China. This event begins a Soviet Boycott of the United Nations Security Council.

25 June 1950 - United Nations Security Council called into emergency session. Soviet Union boycotts session due to permanent seating of Taiwan representing China instead of Communist mainland government. In Soviet absence and their veto power not in effect, Council Resolution 82 passed demanding that North Korea end invasion. This legitimized United Nations actions and the most dramatic of the early events in the pantheon of Korean War facts.

27 June 1950 - UN passes Resolution 83 finding North Korea violated the peace and demanded that their forces return to north of the 38th parallel. Soviets absent for the vote so cannot block it in the Security Council.

30 June 1950 – President Truman commits American Military Forces to South Korea as the majority military force along with other countries in a coalition military.

7 July 1950 - UN passes Resolution 84 requesting member nations to supply troops to join a military action under a U.S. commander. 16 nations comply and mission known as a “police action”. General Douglas McArthur takes command on following day.

4 August – 18 September 1950 - North Korean troops drove U.S. and ROK forces to southeastern corner of South Korea and established a defensive position about the port of Pusan and known as the Pusan perimeter.

15 September 1950 - General McArthur constructed a daring plan to rescue the defenders of Pusan and cut N. Korean supply lines. His U.S. Marine troops made an amphibious landing at the port of Inchon, drove inland creating a pincer movement with a counter attacking Pusan force that destroyed the North Korean army.

29-30 September 1950 - UN forces recapture Seoul and drive north. Washington authorizes General McArthur to cross northward over the 38th parallel. Chinese premier Zhou Enlai warns Washington that China will intervene in the event UN forces cross 38th parallel.

7 October 1950 - UN forces cross 38th parallel.

14-15 October 1950 - Chinese troops respond to UN crossing 38th parallel and enter North Korea crossing international boundary, Yalu River. Chinese refer to their soldiers as “volunteers”. Almost simultaneously with Chinese crossing into N. Korea, General McArthur met with President Truman on Wake Island to report on the progress of the war and assured Truman that Chinese would not intervene. There appeared to be a meeting of the minds which would unravel by April.

24 November 1950 - McArthur orders a bold offense intending UN troops to drive to the Yalu River and tells his troops they will be, “home for Christmas”. Chinese troops effect an ambush and drive is a disaster including surrounding thousands and US Marines and Soldiers near the Chosin Reservoir. Over the next three weeks US Marines and Soldiers would first defend their positions and then conduct offensive actions to retreat out of the area toward escape to the sea which would be go into the legends of military history, especially within the Marine Corps.

Jan 1951 - Chinese capture Seoul. Ultimately retaken by UN March 18. The offensives undertaken by the belligerents underscore a stalemate which was, nevertheless, deadly in terms of casualties.

11 April 1951 - McArthur increasingly at odds with Truman over strategies. The general publicly declaring a desire to blockade Chinese coast and bomb their mainland. Truman fearful that this would invite Soviet entry into the war. A potential prelude to World War III. Truman recalls and removes McArthur from command and asserts civilian control over the military. Appoints General Matthew Ridgeway as replacement.

10 July 1951 - Belligerents' forces face each other over the 38th parallel and first truce talks at Kaesong, N. Korea, a city located on the 38th parallel. Talks fail although they agree on agenda.

23 September 1951 - UN forces advance several miles north of 38th parallel and engage North Korean forces over 3 week period and take "Heartbreak Ridge" and Start of Operation Summit (First Helicopter Deployment).

27 Nov 1951 - April 1952 - New truce talks commence in tents at Panmunjom, North Korea. Parties agreed on truce line, 38th parallel, but could not agree on nature of prisoner exchange. Both sides relatively inactive during heavy winter weather, and casualties commensurately reduced.

June-July 1952 - Both sides had utilized the prior relative winter calm to strengthen their positions and engaged in fierce artillery battles and limited outpost skirmishes.

August-Sept 1952 - The battle for hills and ridges began a new aspect to the war. The control of the mountainous redoubts was considered a first line of defense for each side. Battles were inconclusive with control changing hands constantly. Although limited in scope, casualties weighed heavily on American leaders. Major battles include Battle of Bunker Hill and Hill 122 which saw the first Major Marine Combat in Western Korea, and on 29 August the UN launched the war's largest air raid of over 1,4000 Sorties flown.

14 Oct 1952 - In an effort to convince the Chinese of their intentions to prosecute the war, Americans mounted large offensive to take Triangle Hill, but were unsuccessful after heavy casualties on both sides. Thereafter, the sides retired to their winter positions and repeated the 1951 scenario.

Jan 1953 - Dwight Eisenhower elected president after campaigning to conclude the war. Nevertheless, communist leaders were fearful that this election might signal a hard line to continue the war.

March 1953 - Joseph Stalin dies shifting Soviet's position on the war.

26 April 1953 - Negotiators return to Panmunjom and Communists agree to voluntary repatriation.

May 1953 - Communist forces commence new attacks hoping that additional territorial gains would strengthen their positions in the final armistice terms.

June 1953 - While the negotiators hammered out details of the agreement, Communist forces commenced a new offensive attaining several miles of new territory. Historians look at this Korean War fact and believe these last "minute" actions were meant to bolster a history of communist victories. In response the Navy and Marine Corps aircraft fly 910 Sorties (Highest single day total on June 15) and the air forces destroy 16 MIG's (Largest single day total on June 26th).

6 July 1953 - A last communist successful offensive to dislodge Americans from a hill outpost called "Old Baldy".

27 July 1953 - Signing of Armistice (US, Korea and China) ending the Korean War (No treaty signed between North and South Korea).

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE EVENTS DEFENSE AT BREAKOUT OF CHOSIN RESERVOIR



Following the successful Inchon landing, U.N. forces had North Korean troops on the run, but communist China's unexpected entry into the Korean War threatened that progress. At Chosin Reservoir, the 1st Marine Division found itself surrounded and outnumbered 8-to-1 by the Chinese army. The worst weather in 50 years cut off air support and assaulted the Marines with snow, wind and temperatures of -40 degrees F. Even so, the "Chosin Few," as they would come to be called, decimated 10 Chinese infantry divisions and fought their way back to the sea to rejoin the American forces. No Marines have ever faced worse weather, terrain or odds than those who fought at Chosin Reservoir, but to anyone familiar with the Marines' spirit of determination, there was no doubt the 1st Marine Division would prevail.

Lieutenant Colonel Thomas L. Ridge, commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines (3/1), predicted the Chinese attack would come on the night of 28 November. Almost everyone, including rear support units with little combat training, was pressed into the front line due to the manpower shortage, and the entire perimeter was on full alert by 21:30.

It was not long before the Peoples Volunteer Army (PVA) 173rd Regiment attacked the western and the southern perimeter, while the 172nd Regiment struck the hills on the northern perimeter. Despite the preparations, the understrength garrison was overwhelmed, with the Chinese opening several gaps in the defenses and reaching the rear areas. The resulting chaos, however, caused a breakdown in discipline among the Chinese soldiers, who began looting food and clothing instead of exploiting the situation. The defending Americans managed to destroy the Chinese forces in counterattacks, while a breakdown of communications between the Chinese regiments allowed the gaps to close. When the fighting stopped, the Chinese had only gained the East Hill on the northern perimeter. Another attack was planned for the night of 29 November, but air raids by VMF-542 broke up the Chinese formations before it could be carried out.

Given the critical manpower shortage at **Hagaru-ri**, Smith ordered a task force to be sent north from **Koto-ri** to open the road south of **Hagaru-ri**. In response, a task force was formed with 921 troops from the 41 Royal Marine Commando, G Company of the 1st Marines and B Company of the 31st Infantry. The task force was dubbed "Task Force Drysdale" after its commander Lieutenant Colonel Douglas B. Drysdale, who also commanded 41 Commando. On the afternoon of 29 November, Task Force Drysdale pushed north from **Koto-ri** while under constant attack from the PVA 60th Division. The task force's harrowing experience later earned the road the nickname "Hell Fire Valley". As the Chinese attacks dragged on, the task force became disorganized, and a destroyed truck in the convoy later split the task force into two segments. Although the lead segment of the task force fought its way into **Hagaru-ri** on the night of 29 November, the rear segment was destroyed. Despite suffering 159 wounded and 162 dead and missing, the task force managed to bring in 300 badly needed infantrymen for the defense at **Hagaru-ri**.

As more reinforcements arrived from Hudong-ni on 30 November, the garrisons attempted to recapture the East Hill. All efforts failed despite the destruction of a Chinese company. When darkness settled, the PVA 58th Division gathered its remaining 1,500 soldiers in a last-ditch attempt to capture **Hagaru-ri**. The reinforced defenders annihilated most of the attacking forces, with only the defenses around the East Hill giving way. As the Chinese tried to advance from the East Hill, they were cut down by the 31st Tank Company.

By 1 December, the PVA 58th Division was virtually destroyed, with the remainder waiting for reinforcements from the 26th Corps of the 9th Army. But much to the frustration of Song Shi-Lun, the 26th Corps did not arrive before the Marines broke out of **Yudam-ni**. The airfield was opened to traffic on 1 December, allowing UN forces to bring in reinforcements and to evacuate the dead and the wounded. With the Marines at **Yudam-ni** completing their withdrawal on 4 December, the trapped UN forces could finally start their breakout towards the port of **Hungnam**.

After a short period of rest, the breakout began on 6 December with the 7th Marines as the vanguard of the retreating column while the 5th Marines covered the rear. At the same time, the much-delayed PVA 26th Corps arrived at **Hagaru-ri** with its 76th and 77th Division relieving the 58th and 60th Divisions. As the 7th Marines pushed aside the PVA 76th Division south of **Hagaru-ri**, the 5th Marines took over the **Hagaru-ri** perimeter and recaptured the East Hill from the 76th Division. In a last effort to stop the breakout,

the customary Chinese night attack returned with the 76th and 77th Division striking the **Hagaru-ri** perimeter from all directions. The Marines repulsed the Chinese attacks, inflicting heavy casualties.

Meanwhile, the 7th Marines opened the road between **Hagaru-ri** and **Koto-ri** by capturing the high ground surrounding the road. But as soon as the marines pulled out, the 77th Division returned to the peaks and attacked the column. Chaotic fighting broke out within the column and the retreat was slowed to a crawl. The Marine night fighters, however, returned to subdue the Chinese forces, and the fighting destroyed most of the blocking troops. On 7 December, the rest of the column managed to reach **Koto-ri** with little difficulty with the last elements arrived at **Koto-ri** that night.

After the failure of the 26th Corps at **Hagaru-ri**, the PVA High Command ordered the 26th and the 27th Corps to chase the escaping UN force with the 20th Corps blocking the escape route. But with most of the 20th Corps destroyed at **Yudam-ni** and **Hagaru-ri**, the only forces between **Koto-ri** and **Hungnam** were the remnants of the 58th and the 60th Divisions. In desperation, Song Shi-Lun ordered these troops to dig in at **Funchilin Pass** while blowing up the vital **Treadway Bridge**, hoping the terrain and obstacles would allow the 26th and the 27th Corps to catch up with the retreating UN forces. The PVA 180th Regiment that occupied Hill 1081 blew up the original concrete bridge and two improvised replacements in succession, believing the bridge was rendered irreparable. In response, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines (1/1) attacked Hill 1081 from the south, and the hill was captured on 9 December after the defenders fought to the last man. At the same time, the 7th Marines and RCT-31 attacked the **Treadway Bridge** from the north, only to encounter defenders that were already frozen in their foxholes.

With the path to **Hungnam** blocked at **Funchilin Pass**, eight C-119 Flying Boxcars flown by the US 314th Troop Carrier Wing were used to drop portable bridge sections by parachute. The bridge, consisting of eight separate 18 ft (5.5 m) long, 2,900 lb (1,300 kg) sections, was dropped one section at a time, using a 48 ft (15 m) parachute on each section. Four of these sections, together with additional wooden extensions were successfully reassembled into a replacement bridge by Marine Corps combat engineers and the US Army 58th Engineer Treadway Bridge Company on 9 December, enabling UN forces to proceed. Outmaneuvered, the PVA 58th and 60th Divisions still tried to slow the UN advance with ambushes and raids, but after weeks of non-stop fighting, the two Chinese divisions combined had only 200 soldiers left. The last UN forces left **Funchilin Pass** by 11 December.

One of the last engagements during the withdrawal was an ambush at **Sudong** by the pursuing PVA 89th Division, which Task Force Dog of the 3rd Infantry Division repulsed with little difficulty. The trapped UN forces finally reached the **Hungnam perimeter** by 21:00 on 11 December. By the time the UN forces arrived at **Hungnam**, MacArthur had already ordered the evacuation of the US X Corps on 8 December in order to reinforce the US Eighth Army, which by then was badly depleted and retreating rapidly towards the 38th parallel. Following his orders, the ROK I Corps, the ROK 1st Marine Regiment, the US 3rd Infantry Division and the US 7th Infantry Division had also set up defensive positions around the port. Some skirmishes broke out between the defending US 7th, 17th and 65th Infantry and the pursuing PVA 27th Corps, but against the strong naval fire support provided by US Navy Task Force 90, the badly mauled 9th Army was in no shape to approach the Hungnam perimeter. In what US historians called the "greatest evacuation movement by sea in US military history", a 193-ship armada assembled at the port and evacuated not only the UN troops, but also their heavy equipment and roughly a third of the Korean refugees. One Victory ship, the SS Meredith Victory evacuated 14,000 refugees. The last UN unit left at 14:36 on 24 December, and the port was destroyed to deny its use to the Chinese and North Korean forces. The PVA 27th Corps entered Hungnam on the morning of 25 December.

Teaching Resources for the Korean War

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8pCXezlGI4>

Excellent YouTube video British Documentary taking you through the entire Korean War.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amgLyixEahI>

Good Short Documentary focusing on the Marines at Chosin Reservoir and their break out to the sea.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3rf-KpVgus8>

Excellent Speech by Thomas Ricks about the great leadership of Oliver P. Smith

Useful Teaching Lesson Plans on the Korean War

http://sheg.stanford.edu/upload/Lessons/Unit%2011_Cold%20War/Korean%20War%20Lesson%20Plan.pdf

<http://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/korean-war-police-action-1950-1953>

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/koreanwar/>

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/korean-conflict/>

<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/banning.htm>

https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/teacher_lessons/korea_lesson.htm