

reinforcements would start to flow into Korea within two to three months. He added that new regular army divisions would be organized, National Guard units would be called into service and some replacements for American troops were already going to the front. The “reconnaissance in force” continued the next day as an Allied combat team drove into the Communist held town of Suwon, 17 air miles south of Seoul, then withdrew to a defensive position after dark. Suwon was the first major objective of the western offensive. The scouting forces were on missions to test enemy strength south of Seoul.

Mid-week, tank-led Allied troops battled two companies of Chinese Reds in brief but fierce clashes on the western front. The UN patrol under air cover then smashed out of a threatened enemy envelopment. On Friday a UN prowl force reoccupied the ruined and abandoned railway hub of Wonju without meeting any opposition. Supported by air, two Allied attack regiments (nominally 6,000 men) on another sector of the snow-clad east central Korean battlefield killed 1,000 Reds and routed the remainder of their strong force in a continuing fight. “We put the enemy on the run,” said an officer, but Allied commanders expected a general Communist offensive may come at any time.

At the end of the week Allied troops in Wonju were hit from three sides by Red forces. Fighting raged inside the key rail hub on the central front. The Red counterattack – perhaps the start of the expected offensive – flared as General MacArthur arrived in Korea and said “no one is going to drive us into the sea.” A fierce fight had developed at Wonju in the frigid mountains. It was not a major battle yet, but the Wonju attack had the stamp of Communist Chinese and North Korean strategy. A try to drive on Taegu, keystone of the old Pusan Perimeter, turned the flanks and rolled Allied forces back against the east and west posts. Communist troops in unknown numbers were on the east and west edges of the rubble town and strung along the twisted bombed rail line to the northwest.

The government was expected to order a general price and wage freeze within the next few days. A roll-back of prices to 1 January was under consideration. The decision was attributed to the director of the Office of Defense Mobilization.

President Truman sent Congress a \$71.6 billion [\$713 billion in 2021] spending budget for the government next year and said a tax boost of \$16.5 billion [\$164 billion in 2021] was needed to balance it. In his message to Congress he said, “This is a budget for our national security in a period of grave danger.”

The total of US combat casualties in Korea rose to 45,137, including 6,509 killed, 29,951 wounded and 8,676 missing.

(Photo courtesy newspapers.com, Mauch Chunk Times-News)