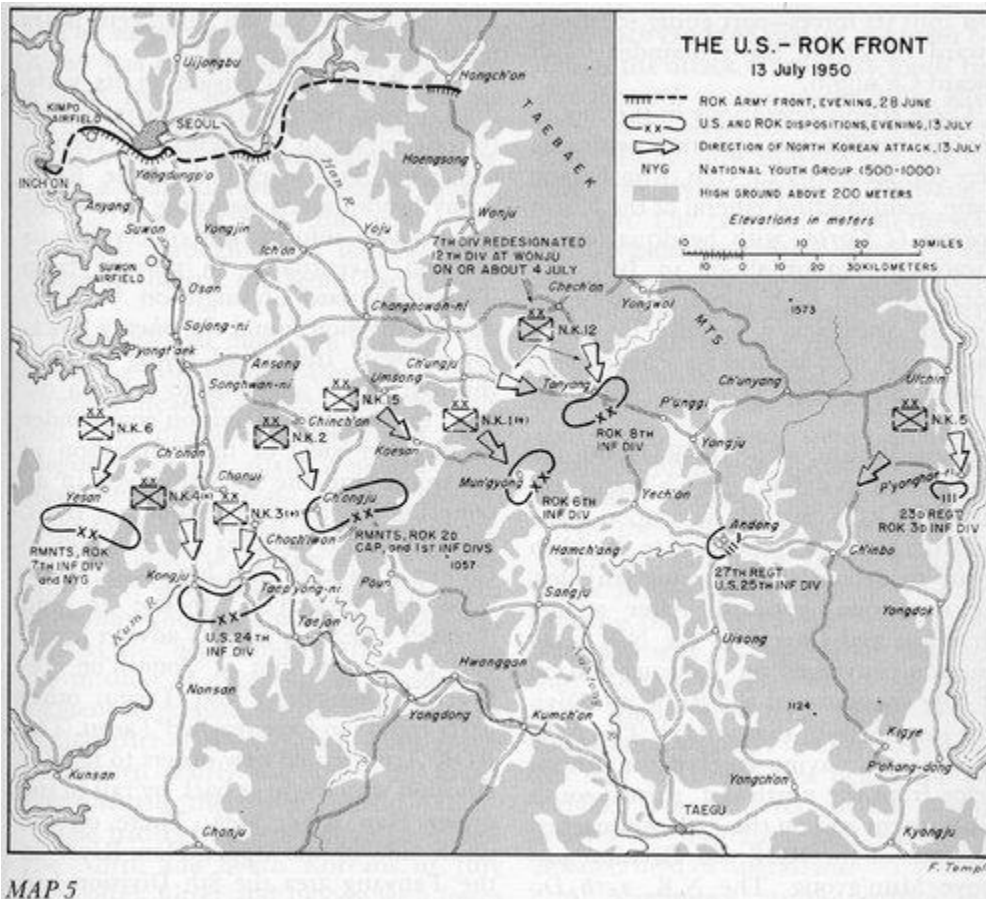


June 25, 2020

June 25, 1950 - The Korean War Starts

(Pennsylvania Military Museum, T. Gum, Site Admin)



MAP 5

Photo of map, July 1950.

Seventy years ago today, June 25th, 1950 the Korean War began when more than 135,000 North Korean invaded South Korea. It is the war that never really ended... it just, stopped by way of an armistice. The damages, physical, political, culturally, and otherwise are still felt today.

Falling between World War II and the Vietnam War, it is unfortunately skipped over by many pieces of curriculum & textbooks, and the public - even military historians call it the Forgotten War. For those that survived, and for families of the fallen, the Korean War was never, and will never, be forgotten.

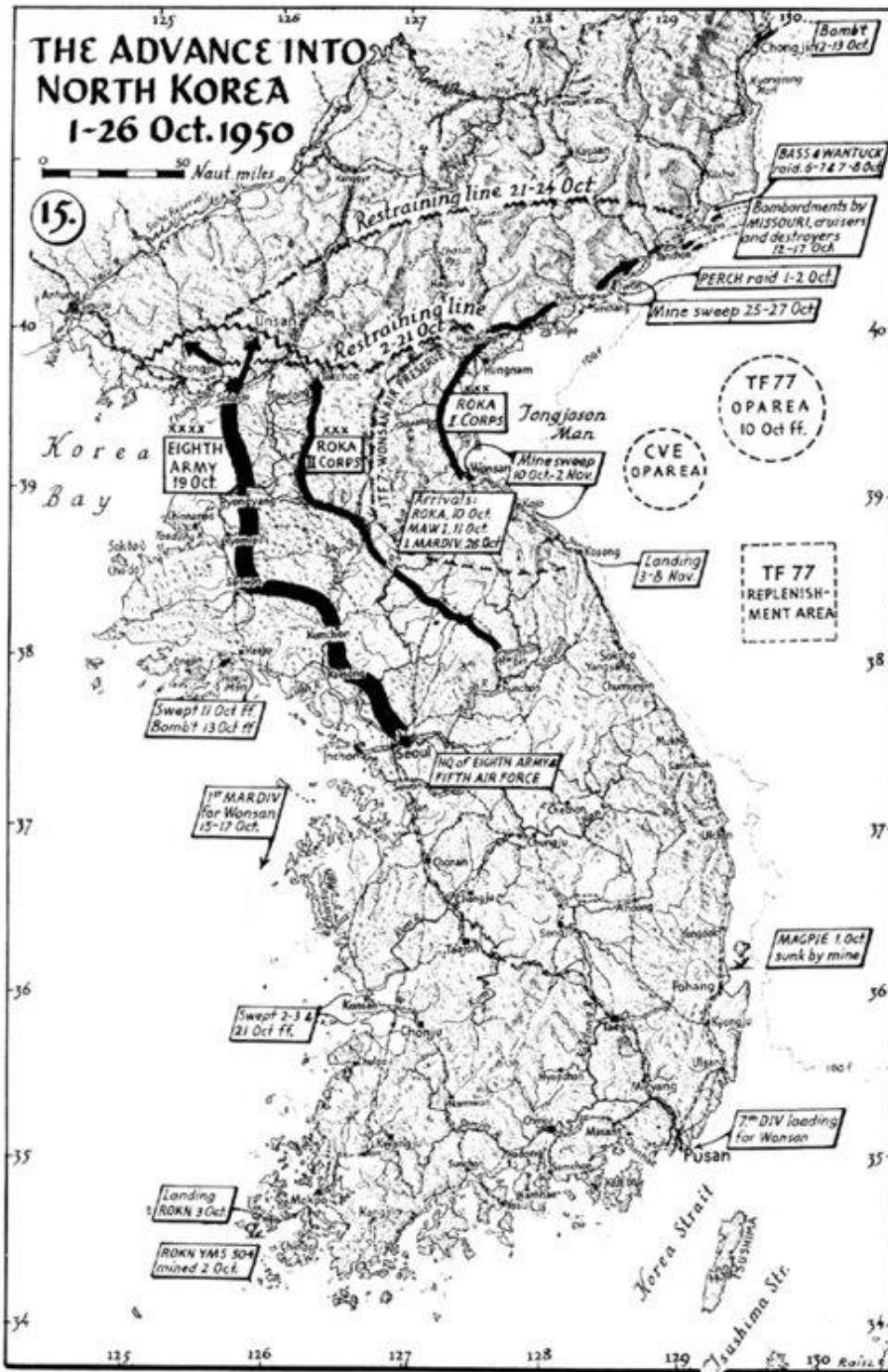


Photo of US Navy Map, Oct. 1950.

One little known fact about the War is that the 1st Cavalry Division of the US Army, along with their South Korean counterparts, captured Pyongyang, the North Korean Capital, in October of 1950. The capture was short lived, and eight weeks later the city would be taken back by the North.

But many ask, how and why was the Korean peninsula divided to begin with, and what kicked the war off? In short, after World War II the peninsula was occupied by the then defeated Japanese Imperial Army. As the Japanese departed, the peninsula was divided at the 38th Parallel, the north being under control of the Soviet Union and the south being controlled by the United States.

In 1949 the US occupation troops were pulled out which would eventually lead to Josef Stalin supporting the idea of Kim II Sung to invade the South and bring the entire peninsula under communist rule. But there was

hitch, to gain his full support, Stalin required Kim II Sung to secure the support of the Chinese (also a communist state), which was under the rule of Mao Zedong. With both “check-boxes” filled, the invasion would take place.

Fifteen nations would come to the aid of the South Korean people, including the United States, even though war was never declared. In technical terms, the military presence of the United States was a police-force. But if you were the Soldiers or Marines on the front line, there was little doubt this was a war, and the same would be said by the pilots, and Navy personnel.



Photo of Armistice Signing, July 1953.



Photo of DMZ by Stars and Stripes, 2017.

The Korean Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953. The Agreement created the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between the North and South and provided means for the return of prisoners. Lacking a peace treaty, the war continues, albeit frozen in place with both sides standing fire watch at the DMZ.



DOD Photo, Korean War Veterans Memorial.

In total, the United States would have 1,789,000 service members being deployed in direct action, with a peak strength of approximately 325,000 in-country. The Department of Veteran Affairs reports 54,246 deaths in & out of the theater of war, with over 100,000 wounded. Those numbers tell a story much larger than, and much more costly than a policing presence.

May we never forget.