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PMM BLOG ARCHIVE

The Korean War, 70 years Ago, The Times, Chester, PA

Korean War Weekly Front Pages

24 December – 30 December 1950

The Times, Chester, PA

Another Christmas had come and gone.



The US Tenth Corps and Eighth Army forged a coast-to-coast defense line to meet Communist forces spearing toward Seoul. Red troops stabbed across the 38th Parallel to within 28 miles of the South Korean capital, and General MacArthur's headquarters warned that Chinese probing attacks were being accompanied by a massive

buildup for a new offensive south of the border. The Chinese attacks across the frontier were accompanied by a "final warning" from the Peking [Beijing] radio telling American forces to get out of Korea or face the full fury of a Chinese assault. Braced to meet the offensive were the troops on the 140-mile-long line, including the 105,000 men of the Tenth, who had recently been evacuated from the frozen Hungnam beachhead in a massive 13-day amphibious operation.

Enemy patrols had now gained at least seven miles inside South Korea. They struck out from an attack force of 300,000 Reds massed in two formations, one within 35 miles of Seoul and another in the east. A full-scale offensive against the city was expected within weeks. These front-line troops were backed up by more than a million Communist reserves. The main threat to Seoul loomed to the north, where 200,000 Chinese and North Koreans continued to build up striking power astride the ancient Mongolian invasion route to the Korean capital. Against all these forces the UN had arrayed an estimated 250,000 men.

By Thursday the main body of the US Eighth Army had completed its withdrawal behind the Imjin River line 21 miles northwest of Seoul while Allied warplanes hit back at the Chinese Reds. The UN withdrawal abandoned the major South Korean border stronghold of Kaesong. Troops identified as from the Chinese 4th field army moved into Kaesong and pushed on in force two miles south. Army HQ reported that Red China had now thrown her power into the Korean Conflict on a full war footing.

American and Russian-made jet fighter planes tangled in the biggest aerial dogfight of the Korean War on Saturday while ground fighting was confined to bitter patrol actions near the 38th Parallel. Between 35 and 40 MIG-15s attacked a formation of 15 American F-86 Sabre jets south of Sinuiju, the Yalu River North Korean port opposite the Manchurian city of Antung in the northwest corner of Korea. Two of the Communist planes were damaged; all the American planes returned to base safely after the fierce air fight between the fastest known American and Russian jets. Sabre jets had reached speeds in excess of 650 miles per hour.

The US government took practically complete allocation control over supplies of cobalt in a move that would cut deeply into civilian supplies of radios, television sets and household items. Cobalt was used in high speed tool steels without which arms production would fail. The National Production Authority announced that beginning February 1st every purchase of more than 25 pounds of the strategic metal would require NPA approval, including defense orders. It was the first top-to-bottom allocation order issued since the government had revived World War II control powers to mobilize American industry for military production. The government was also getting ready to ration meat, and may slap price controls on all foods, rent and some other "living essentials" by Summer 1951. Gasoline rationing may also come sooner than the nation thinks, and tax increases were expected to meet mounting defense costs in countering Communist aggression.

General MacArthur told the Japanese that they may have to rearm for self-preservation. His prepared remarks on the subject were distributed to Japanese newspapers but were withheld from UN correspondents in Japan. He expressed belief that a peace treaty with Japan would be consummated in 1951 and that Japan would exert a deep influence on Asia's future. The present Japanese constitution contained a clause renouncing war as an instrument of national policy. It would have to be amended to permit rearmament.

Government strategists believed that Red China's military campaign may bring an eventual split between China and Russia over which the Communist nation shall be the supreme power in Asia. It was felt that China might use a victory in Korea as a springboard for seizing Formosa [Taiwan], Tibet, Nepal, Indo-China and other southeast Asian countries.

(Photo courtesy newspapers.com, Chester Times)