

USMC Korean War Chronology, June – September 1950

June 1950

25 June

Seven infantry divisions and an armored brigade of the North Korean People's Army swept across the 38th Parallel into South Korea with two infantry divisions in reserve.

27 June

U S air and naval forces were ordered into action as the U N invoked military sanctions against the North Koreans.

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur established the General Headquarters Advanced Command Group at Suwon under the command of Brigadier General John H. Church, USA, to reorganize the demoralized ROK forces.

30 June

President Harry S. Truman authorized General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander Allied Powers, to send certain supporting US ground force units to Korea. An American naval blockade of the entire Korean coast was ordered, and Japan-based Air Force planes were given authority to bomb specific military targets north of the 38th Parallel.

Marine Corps strength as of this date was 74,279 men.

July 1950

2 July

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur requested an immediate dispatch of a Marine Corps Regimental Combat Team with its own air support for duty in Korea. The Commanding General, 1st Marine Division, received the following message from the Commanding General Fleet Marine Force Pacific, "This is a warning order. Prepare to embark..."

3 July

The Joint Chiefs of Staff decided to send Marines with their air units to Korea as requested by MacArthur who had only four Army divisions in Japan. The 1st Marine Brigade of about 7,000 men expected to be shipped out by sea

from Camp Pendleton. Marine air units are to leave from El Toro, California, where the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW) is stationed with 144 fighter planes and 59 other craft. Marines flew F-4U Corsairs adapted to low-altitude operations. Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, 53, commanded all Marine troops and Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman, 55, the Marine air units.

Major General William F Dean was named commander of United States forces in Korea

5 July

The first clash between United States and North Korean troops occurred near Osan, Korea when an American force of two infantry companies, reinforced, collided with a North Korean People's Army division; the American force withdrew after a delaying action.

The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (Forward Echelon) commanded by Brigadier General Thomas J. Cushman was formed at El Toro, California to become a supporting unit of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade.

General MacArthur began to plan for amphibious operations against the NKPA.

7 July

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, composed of the 5th Marines, 1st Battalion of the 11th Marines, and Marine Aircraft Group 33 (MAG-33), was organized.

The UN Security Council authorized the United States to establish a unified command of the United Nations forces in Korea; President Harry S. Truman named General of the Army MacArthur as Commander-in-Chief.

President Harry S Truman authorized the use of the draft by the armed forces if necessary to increase strength to meet the Korean crisis.

12 -14 July

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade sailed from San Diego on board the USS *Anderson*, *Achenar*, *Bandoeng Strait* (MAG-33); *Fort Marion*, *Gunston Hall*, *Alshain*, *Whiteside*, *Pickaway*, *Clymer*, *Henrico* (ground forces) for Pusan, Korea.

12 July

The North Korean Army occupied nearly half of South Korea as four U. S. battalions completed their withdrawal across the Kum River which was the main U. S. defense line above Taejon, US Field Headquarters and provisional South Korean capital.

14 July

The sailing of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade from San Diego was the last publicized troop departure of the Korean War.

15 July

R-5Ds of two Marine transport squadrons were assigned to the Pacific for airlift operations to and from Korea.

16 July

The Advance Echelon of the 1st MAW (Forward Echelon) departed for Tokyo by aircraft in company with Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, Commanding General, 1st Provisional Marine Brigade and his staff.

19 July

The Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Clifton B. Cates, alerted the Organized Reserve for recall to active duty.

General of the Army MacArthur requested the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide a war strength Marine division with appropriate air support for duty in Korea.

President Harry S Truman called the Organized Marine Corps Reserve to active duty.

20 July - 4 August

All 47,000 men and women of the Organized Marine Ground Force Reserve were called up for duty during the Korean emergency.

20 July

The North Koreans launched a major drive spearheaded by tanks against American positions around Taejon and bitter fighting around the key center was in progress. General Dean was reported missing in action.

22 July

The Commandant of the Marine Corps directed that sufficient units and personnel be embarked by 10 August to bring the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in Korea to full war strength.

25 July

The Commandant directed that the entire 1st Marine Division be brought to full war strength and embark between 10 and 15 August for duty in Korea. Marine aviation elements in the Far East were to be increased simultaneously from a single group to a wing.

27 July

President Harry S Truman signed a bill lifting the legal limit on the size of the armed forces and extending some enlistments due to expire in the next 12 months for one year.

31 July

The air arm of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (Reinforced) arrived at Kobe, Japan and disembarked.

August 1950

1 - 5 August

More than 9,000 officers and enlisted men of the 2d Marine Division and the newly activated organized reserve units arrived at Camp Pendleton, California to reinforce units of the 1st Marine Division which were assigned to duty in Korea.

2 August

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (Reinforced) arrived at Pusan, Korea.

3 August

The first Marine aviation mission against North Koreans was flown from the USS *Sicily* by eight Corsairs of VMF-214 in a raid against installations at Chinju and Sadon-ni.

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade (Reinforced) moved from Pusan to Changwon where it took up defensive positions astride the Changwon - Masan road.

4 August

In the extreme south of Korea, US and ROK troops continued their planned retreat to the Naktong River line while Communist units probed the new defenses. American reserves were being rushed into position for the expected battle.

6 August

The first Marine aviation missions to be flown from the *Badoeng Strait* against the North Koreans occurred when Majors Arnold A. Lund and Robert F. Steinkraus led two divisions of F-4Us in strikes against areas west of Chinju, along the Namgang River.

The 1st Marine Brigade moved forward to relieve the North Korean pressure in the Chinju area.

7 - 10 August

The Americans staged their first strong counterattack of the Korean War east of Chinju when the North Koreans were driven back about 13 miles.

10 August

The 1st Marine Brigade reached the coast in the American push to Chingju.

The 1st Marine Division (-) sailed from San Diego, California for Korea.

12 August

General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, commander of UN forces in Korea, announced that the counterattack by Marines and Army troops west of Pusan had "attained its objective" with the taking of hill positions just east of Chingju. The force, known as Task Force Kean, made a 27-mile advance to turn back the North Korean threat to Pusan. Marines in the Chinju drive were shifted to the Naktong front below Taegu.

14 August

Brigadier General Edward A. Craig, USMC, received orders to move the Marine Brigade with all possible speed to Miryang, Korea.

15 August

Marines previously committed in the Chinju attack arrived at Miryang, Korea on their way to block the enemy crossing over the Naktong River.

16 August

Principal elements of the Army's X Corps activated with Major General Edward S. Almond in command were 1st Marine Division and 7th Infantry Division.

17 August

7th Marines activated from two under strength battalions of the 6th Marines augmented by more Regulars and Reserves.

Marines stormed a 1,000 foot hill commanding the Naktong Bulge, a Communist bridgehead across the Naktong River.

19 August

The North Korean drive for Taegu appeared to be broken as the defenders counterattacked to push back twin enemy offensives. The Marines gained more than three miles near Changnyong, southwest of Taegu, and were nearing the Naktong River.

20 August

Marines and the US 24th Infantry Division completed the elimination of a bridgehead established by a division of Communists across the Naktong River near Changnyong, 25 miles southwest of Taegu.

General MacArthur ordered capture of Inchon-Seoul area by amphibious assault using RCTs 1 and 5, 1st Marine Division.

24 August

The 1st Marine Division (less the 7th Marines and units in Korea with the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade) sailed for Korea.

September 1950

1 - 5 September

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade counterattacked west of Yongsan to contain a second enemy crossing of the Naktong.

5 September

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was disengaged from active combat with the enemy at midnight on this date and moved to Pusan.

13 September

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in Korea was disbanded and absorbed into the 1st Marine Division.

15 September

The 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines landed on Wolmi-do Island in Inchon Harbor and secured it prior to the main landing. The 1st Marine Division under the command of Major General Oliver P. Smith landed at Inchon and began the Inchon-Seoul Campaign.

At 0633, following an intense air, rocket and naval gunfire bombardment, landing craft carrying the first wave of Marines from the 3rd Battalion Landing Team (BLT,) 5th Marine Regiment, reached Green Beach, on the north arm of Wolmi-do and the first amphibious assault by American forces against an enemy since 1 April 1945 at Okinawa was underway. The initial landing was unopposed and the Marines quickly moved inland against scattered and very light resistance. One and a half hours after the initial landing the Marines raised the American flag on Radio Hill although light, scattered fighting continued for several more hours. 3rd Battalion casualties for this operation were 17 wounded. North Koreans defenders lost over 200 KIA while another 136 surrendered. Once Wolmi-do was secure the 3rd Marine BLT took up defensive positions facing Inchon and prepared to support the main landing later in the day.

Assault troops from the 5th and 1st Marines began going over the side of their attack transports and into landing craft at 1530. The first wave of the 5th Marines reached the seawall of Red Beach at 1733. A Company, 5th Marines, encountered in the trenches and a bunker just beyond the seawall and an intense firefight ensued. The Marines lost 8 men killed and 28 wounded. However, 22 minutes after landing the company fired a flare signaling that it held Cemetery Hill, its first objective. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, had landed on the right side of Red Beach, encountered only spotty resistance and gained its objective.

Assault elements of the 1st Marines began landing over Blue Beach at 1732 and advanced to the Inchon – Seoul highway. By midnight, all first-day objectives had been seized.

16 September

In the Inchon area by 0730 the two Marine Regiments linked up and established a solid line on the east side of the city. Meanwhile, shortly after dawn, Marine Corsairs sighted six T-34 tanks and approximately 200 enemy infantry three miles east of Inchon on the main highway. The Corsairs attacked, scattering enemy infantry and destroying three tanks with 500 pound bombs and napalm. The remaining three tanks were destroyed a few hours later by Marine Pershing tanks as the 1st and 5th Marines advanced towards Seoul. By midnight, the 5th Marines occupied forward defensive positions overlooking the Seoul highway just west of ASCOM City.

The Eighth Army on the southern front under the command of Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker was reorganized into two corps: The I Corps under Major General Frank W. Milburn (forces north and east of Taegu) and the IX under Major General John B. Coulter (forces south of Taegu).

17 September

After capturing Kimpo airfield Marines crossed the Han River and captured a hill ten miles southwest of Seoul. The Marines advanced toward the Han River at a point less than two miles from Seoul.

And dawn broke, D Company, 5th Marines, saw six tanks on the road to their east. As the enemy armored force moved past undetected D Company positions a bazooka knocked out one of the tanks. At the same time, Pershing tanks opened fire on the enemy T-34 tanks, destroying the remaining five while D Company Marines opened fire on enemy infantry escorting the tanks. In a matter of minutes approximately 200 enemy soldiers, out of an estimated 250, were killed while the Marine loss was one wounded. Following this battle the 5th Marines advanced rapidly toward Kimpo Airfield and were at its southern edge by 1600. In the next two hours the 5th Marines seized the southern half of the airfield. Meanwhile the 1st Marines advanced east along the Seoul highway toward Yongdongp'o. During this advance, its armored spearhead destroyed four North Korean T-34 tanks. Three miles west of Sosa, a town halfway between Inchon and Seoul, the 1st Marine advance was slowed by a North Korean Regiment and at nightfall the Marine regiment dug in a mile west of Sosa.

18 September

Kimpo airfield was made serviceable.

Between 0200 and dawn the 5th Marines repulsed several company-size counterattacks on the airfield, inflicting heavy casualties on the attackers. The entire airfield was secured by 0800 and elements of the 5th Marines advanced toward Hill 99 on the south bank of the Han River, which they captured. That afternoon a lone Marine Corsair landed on Kimpo Airfield followed a few hours later by elements of the 33rd Marine Air Group. Meanwhile, during the evening, ROK Marines moved up to take positions alongside the 5th Marines.

At dawn the 1st Marines passed through and around the burning town of Sosa, seizing Hill 123, a mile east and north by noon. That afternoon the 1st Marines began receiving heavy artillery fire from the southeast, inflicting heavy

casualties. Despite losses, the 1st Marines continued their advance toward Yongdongp'o.

The 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, landed at Inchon. As soon as the regiment landed it began moving toward 1st Marines positions on the Seoul highway.

19 September

In the early morning hours 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, continued its sweep along the Han River and capturing the last high ground (Hills 118, 80, and 85) a mile west of Yongdongp'o. At the same time, the 2nd Battalion seized the high ground in its sector along the south bank of the Han. That night, at approximately 2200, a patrol swam the Han River at a ferry crossing eight miles west of Seoul. They found the crossing suitable for LCVPs. A five-man patrol then continued up the slope of Hill 125 but turned back short of the crest. Shortly before midnight nine Marine LCVPs began entering the Han River. Eight LCVPs were in the water when North Korean mortar and machine-gun fire began striking among the vehicles. Eight turned back to the south bank of the Han and the river crossing was rescheduled for dawn.

Meanwhile, the 1st Marines resumed their attack at dawn. The North Koreans mined the main highway between Sosa and Yongdongp'o; forcing Marine engineers to remove the mines before armor could advance, slowing the advance. Even so, the 1st Marines were able to advance to Kalch'on Creek just west of Yongdongp'o.

Arriving early in the morning the 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, took up positions alongside the 1st Marines on the south side of the Seoul highway. Meanwhile the 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, landed at Inchon.

Waegwan, northwest of Taegu, Korea, was recaptured by American forces in a UN offensive all along the southeast Korean front.

20 September

Marines crossed the Han River along a six-mile beachhead, eight miles northwest of Seoul. The Marine column cut the road to Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, and some units were reported in the outskirts of Seoul.

After heavy artillery preparation against Hill 125, I Company, 5th Marines, began the assault crossing at 0645. Enemy automatic weapons and small arms fire on Hill 125 caused heavy casualties to I Company Marines. Despite the casualties, I Company secured Hill 125 by 0940. While this battle was going on other 3rd Battalion Marines, riding LVTs, crossed the Han River encountering little or no resistance and continued north for about a mile cutting the Seoul-Kaesong railroad and the road at the village of Nung-dong. Here the attacking 3rd Battalion Marines turned right and the southeast along the railroad track towards Seoul. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines, followed the 3rd Battalion across the river with the whole battalion across by 1000. Even before the 3rd Battalion had completed crossing engineers began constructing a pontoon bridge. The 2nd Battalion passed through the 3rd Battalion and

continued the advance. By nightfall the 5th Marines, with 12 tanks, were across the river.

On the south side of the Han the 1st Marines, relieved by the 32nd Infantry Regiment the previous evening, had shifted northeast to occupy the hills formerly held by the 5th Marines. Company A took up positions on Hill 118. However the 1st Battalion failed to occupy Hills 80 and 85. During the night North Korean forces occupied Hills 80 and 85, then the counterattacked Hill 118 shortly before dawn. The attack was repulsed and the 1st Battalion advanced toward Yongdongp'o. A bloody battle ensued as the Marines retook Hills 80 and 85. Simultaneous with the North Korean attack Hill 118 a battalion sized North Korean force, accompanied by 5 T-34 tanks, moved out of Yongdongp'o and advanced toward 1st Marine positions on the highway west of the city. In the battle that ensued when the North Koreans met the Marines the North Korean force was annihilated. When the battle was over the 1st Marines continued their advance toward Yongdongp'o and by 0945 occupied the high ground on the west side of the city. They remained in their positions for the rest of the day while artillery and air attacks pounded enemy positions within Yongdongp'o.

As the 1st Marines fought its way along the Inchon-Seoul highway and into to Yongdongp'o, the 7th Infantry Division protected its right flank and engaged the units moving toward the battle area from the south. During the day the 32nd infantry Regiment captured T'ongdok Mountain and part of Copper Mine Hill, located approximately two miles south of Yongdongp'o and just northeast of Anyang-ni.

21 September

A Marine column approached Seoul, Korea from the southwest and entered Yongdungpo, across the Han River from Seoul.

At dawn a company sized North Korean unit attacked either 5th Marine positions or the Han River. The attack was driven off and the 5th Marines advanced southeast along the road and railroad paralleling the Han River. Resistance increased steadily as the Marines advanced. By evening the 5th Marines faced a line of low Hills running generally north – south along the west side of Seoul. Their position was approximately three miles from the main train station in Seoul.

On the south side of the Han River, the 1st Marines began their assault on Yongdongp'o following a preparatory artillery barrage and air strikes. Their advance met in the resistance and was slow. One company, A Company which was located at the far north end of the Marine lines – that is, on the south bank of the Han River, advanced without opposition and soon found itself entering the western part of Yongdongp'o. It advanced to the Seoul highway at the eastern edge of Yongdongp'o where it set up a roadblock and held this position throughout the day against repeated attacks. When night fell the North Koreans still held over half of Yongdongp'o but pulled out sometime during the night. As the battles were going on the 1st Marine Division's 7th Regiment arrived at Inchon and began landing.

Shortly after dawn the 32nd Infantry Regiment secured the rest of Copper Mine Hill. That afternoon the 7th Division Reconnaissance Company arrived at Anyang-ni where it was ordered to turn south on the Seoul-Suwon highway and proceed to Suwon, arriving there at approximately 1600 where it fought a number of small battles as it made its way through the town and to a blocking position three miles south of Suwon. After dark a tank-infantry task force from the 32nd (Task Force Hannum) arrived at Suwon. Shortly after arriving a short sharp tank battle ensued between tanks from B Company, 73rd Tank Battalion, and two North Korean T-34 tanks. One B Company tank was destroyed and one T-34 tank was destroyed.

22 September

Early in the morning the 1st Marine Division issued orders for the capture of Seoul. Under this plan the 1st Marines would attack across the Han River from Yongdongp'o while the 7th Marines would cross the Han River using the same crossing point as the 5th Marines and then deploy north of 5th Marine positions forming a line for a three regiment assault on the Seoul. Meanwhile, units of the 5th Marines were engaged in heavy fighting at the western edge of the city, making little or no progress.

Shortly after midnight four North Korean T-34 tanks attacked 7th Division Reconnaissance Company positions three miles south of Suwon. In this encounter two T-34 tanks were destroyed. The remainder of the night was fairly quiet and shortly after dawn the Reconnaissance Company proceeded to Suwon Airfield where it was joined at approximately 1000 by Task Force Hannum. Later that afternoon the 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division, arrived at Suwon Airfield and relieved the two units. Meanwhile, a number of small battles took place between the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry and North Korean units seven miles northeast of Anyang-ni. In these the 1st Battalion secured the hills south of the Han River railroad and highway bridges.

23 September

The 1st Marines linked with the 5th Marines on their left which had previously entered the western suburbs of Seoul.

The 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry, captured Hill 290, a dominating terrain feature three miles south of the Han River and seven miles southeast of Yongdungp'o. Hill 290 dominates the southeastern approaches to Seoul. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion 32nd Infantry seized the hills south of the railroad and highway bridges across the Han to Seoul.

North of the Han River the Marines, including a ROK Marine battalion, continued their attack against enemy positions on Hills 66 and 88, which blocked their advance into the city. Fighting was heavy and the Marines made only small gains throughout the day. Meanwhile the 7th Marines finished crossing the Han River and moved into position.

24 September

About 0400, the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry launched an attack toward the Han River. This attack caught the North Koreans asleep and the 1st Battalion quickly overran enemy positions, capturing a regimental headquarters as well as tanks and equipment. In the next few hours, the 2nd Battalion cleared all North Koreans from a fold in the Han River southeast of Seoul setting the stage for an attack on Seoul the following day.

North of the Han River the Marines continued their attacks on the enemy-held hills on the western approaches to the city. After a day of heavy fighting the Marines captured Hills 66 and 296 partially opening the way into Seoul.

25 September

U. S. Marines and infantry pushed across the Han River into Seoul. The infantry crossing came after an airlift brought reinforcements to Kimpo airfield.

At dawn the Marines resumed their attacks on the remaining hills blocking their entry into Seoul. Shortly after dawn the Marines were joined by two tank platoons from the 1st Tank Battalion, including a flame throwing tank. Resistance on Hill 105 was heavy until the flame throwing tank got close enough to destroy enemy trenches. At this point the enemy broke and more than 300 surrendered as the Marines took this position. Hill 88 fell shortly afterward and the Marines entered the western edge of the city. Marine casualties were severe while the North Koreans lost over 1750 men killed and an unknown number more wounded.

Meanwhile, beginning at 0600, the 32nd Infantry Regiment, 7th Division, crossed the Han River three miles southeast of downtown Seoul. The 32nd was followed across the Han by the ROK 17th Infantry Regiment. During the day these units took South Mountain, while others took Hill 120. The units on South Mountain and Hill 120 dug in for the night and awaited the expected counterattack. To the east, the 17th ROK advanced toward Hills 348 and 292

27 September

Marines raised the American flag over the Korean capital, Seoul, and at the United States Consulate.

The Battle of the Barricades continued inside Seoul throughout the day but by evening, except for small pockets and a few snipers, the city was free of North Koreans. Casualties were moderate

30 September - 1 October

The 1st Marine Division assumed responsibility for Seoul and the 32nd Infantry began moving south to rejoin the 7th Division in the Suwon-Osan area. Scattered fighting continued throughout the day as the Marines cleared the few remaining small pockets of enemy.

Except for mopping up, South Korea was back under its government's control.

Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Foreign Minister warned: "The Chinese people will not supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by the imperialists."

The 1st Marine Division advanced north of Seoul against Uijongbu still meeting opposition.

October 1950

1 October

South Korean Army crossed the 38th Parallel into North Korea; UN troops crossed the parallel the following week.

8 October

The Fifth Air Force assumed operational control of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Korea.

15 October

The 1st Marine Division embarked for a second amphibious assault on Korea's east coast.