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UN COMMAND

The quiet of a peaceful Sunday morning was abruptly shattered by the crash of cannons and the snarl of automatic weapons as soldiers of North Korea marched south on June 25, 1950. The invading horde breached the 38th Parallel and rolled back the lightly-armed Republic of Korea Army constabulary forces toward their capital of Seoul.

Two days later, on June 27, the United Nations called on the countries of the world to unite and assist in driving the invader from South Korea. In its resolution, the U.N. Security Council named the United States as executive agent to implement the resolution and to direct United Nations military operations in Korea.

President Truman, armed with the U.N. resolution and recognizing a threat to the Free World, determined the United States could no longer remain neutral while Communist powers trampled the free nations of the world. He immediately ordered General Douglas MacArthur, Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command, to provide whatever assistance was needed to repel this invasion. General MacArthur committed U.S. Air and Naval forces and established General Headquarters, United Nations Command, in Tokyo on July 24.

UN Appeal

By now, the United Nations had issued a further appeal to all member nations to provide what military and allied aid they could to assist the government of the Republic of Korea in pushing out the invaders. The first ground troops to enter battle on the side of South Korea were advance elements of the United States 24th Infantry Division. Units were airlifted from occupation duties in Japan to form "Task Force Smith". The unit was committed on July 5th a few miles north of Osan.

Staggering in the face of overpowering odds, the Republic of Korea Army, bolstered by arriving American aid, fought delaying actions as they withdrew down the peninsula. The outnumbered and outgunned ROKs were trading space for time as they waited for the pledged assistance from other countries of the United Nations.

On August 29, 1950, the British Commonwealth 27th Brigade arrived at Pusan, Korea, the first element to join the United Nations Command, which until then included only ROK and U.S. forces. The 27th Brigade moved into the Naktong River line west of Taegu.

Troop units from other countries of the United Nations followed in rapid succession -- the Philippines, Australia, Thailand, Turkey, The Netherlands, Greece,

Canada, New Zealand, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ethiopia and Columbia.

The Union of South Africa provided air units which fought alongside the air forces of member nations. Medical units were provided by Norway, Sweden, India, and Denmark. A hospital was provided by Italy, even though Italy was not a member of the United Nations.

Keep the Free World Free

During the three years of the Korean War, military forces of these nations fought and died together as members of the United Nations Command. They fought for the freedom of the Korean people and to demonstrate U.N. determination to stop unprovoked aggression.

Through freezing winter and the sweltering heat of the Korean summer, men from Ethiopia, Britain, Turkey, Thailand, the United States, the Republic of Korea, and other contributing countries, unswervingly demonstrated individual and collective heroism in facing human waves of North Korean and Chinese aggressors. Few battles in the history of modern warfare have wrought the heartbreak and the frustrations of the struggle.

The Pusan Perimeter, Chosen Reservoir, Hamhung, Heartbreak Ridge, Bloody Ridge, Iron Triangle, Hwachan Reservoir, and the Punch Bowl -- all were mile-posts in the seesaw battle for Korea's freedom. The dust of Old Baldy was crimsoned with blood of valiant members of the United Nations Command; the Han and Imjin Rivers ran red with blood of U.N. fighting men.

On July 27, 1953, the shooting ended.

An Armistice was signed at Panmunjom which provided for the end of the fighting and eventual political settlement of the war. The shooting ended, but the troops remained, each side pulling back 2000 meters from the line of military contact to insure peace, to watch the Demilitarized Zone, and to guard against any resumption of hostilities.

The Price of Freedom

In a green field at Tangkok, located not many miles from the port of Pusan, stand myriad reminders of the Korean War. Simple white crosses, standing near the sign of the Crescent and the Star and the Star of David, are bleak symbolic representatives of the 33,629 Americans, numberless South Koreans, 717 Turkish soldiers and 690 soldiers of the United Kingdom who gave their lives during the struggle. Also sharing this place of honor are the symbols for the dead of the 12 other nations whose fighting men died that Korea might remain free.

With the coming of the armistice, members of the United Nations Command turned their attention to the tremendous task of assisting in rebuilding a war-torn economy. Assisting the people of the Republic of Korea in restoring and reconstructing a nation almost completely devastated by war which leveled cities and destroyed farmlands was the gigantic project facing the U.N.

US Soldiers Are Members of Three Teams

Today, the United Nations Command continues to be an international team headed by General Charles H. Bonesteel, III, as the Commander-in-Chief (CINC). In addition,

General Bonesteel is Commander, United States Forces, Korea, a joint headquarters (U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force); and Commanding General, Eighth U.S. Army. In short, three commands -- International, tri-Service and Army -- under one commander.

The US soldier stationed in Korea today represents three teams. He is a member of the United Nations; a member of the United States Forces, Korea; and, a member of the Eighth U.S. Army.

United Nations, United States and Korea

How does the United Nations Command (UNC) fit into the current overall defense picture of the Free World? What is the role today of the United States Forces, Korea (USFK)?

The missions of CINCUNC are established by the Joint Chiefs of Staffs in Washington, because the United States is the executive agent for the United Nations. Now primarily a planning command, UNC would become operational in event of a renewal of hostilities.

In comparison, missions of COMUSFK, the commander of a subordinate unified command within the Pacific Command, are established by the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific, located at Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

US Air Forces

Within the UNC/USFK structure is the U.S. Air Force, Korea, with headquarters at Osan Air Base. Here is based the 314th Air Division. From here operational control is exercised over the air defense systems in Korea provided by the U.S. 38th Artillery Brigade (AD).

One major role of the 314th Air division is advising the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) in building a modern, jet-equipped, air arm. This mission is performed by the 614th Air Force Advisory Group, based at ROKAF headquarters in Seoul.

U.S. Air Force activities in Korea are primarily located at Osan, Kunsan and Kimpo Air Bases.

US Naval Forces

The U.S. Navy also plays a prominent role in the UNC/USFK from its Naval Headquarters in Seoul. In fact, CINCUNC has delegated operational control to Commander, Naval Forces, Korea, (COMNAVFOR) of all Naval Forces assigned to Korea in support of the United Nations.

Under this authority, COMNAVK has operational control of the ROK fleet and the ROK Marine Corps. These forces at present consist of the ROK Navy Fleet based at Chinhae, near Pusan, and the ROK Marine Division located at Pohang on the Sea of Japan. The 1st ROK Marine Brigade defends the Kimpo peninsula.

As the Naval component command of USFK, the staff also exercises operational control over all U.S. Naval and Marine Corps units assigned to COMUSFK. At present, no Naval or Marine units are assigned in Korea, except for Naval Headquarters, a Naval Advisory Group and a Marine Advisory Group at Seoul, and detachments of these groups at Chinhae, Pohang and Kimpo.

Other United Nations Forces in Korea

One nation besides the United States and the Republic of Korea maintains a ground unit in Korea. A Royal Thai Company serves with the 7th Infantry Division. Thailand maintains an Infantry company in Korea as a symbol of their devotion to the cause of freedom, world peace, and to the principles of the United Nations.

In addition, a British Army contingent at UNC headquarters, consisting of one officer and 15 enlisted men, are members of the Honor Guard. The unit serves in this capacity for ninety days. Each three months similar contingents rotate between their parent British Army unit stationed in Hong Kong. A U.S. Army platoon, members of the ROK Army, Navy and Air Force, Thai and Turkish personnel are also included in the colorful Honor Guard.

Today in Korea the UNC must be ready for a renewal of hostilities at all times. An uneasy truce, not a peace, is all that exists between the Communist regime of North Korea and the United Nations Command.

For defense purposes, CINUNC exercises operational control over all Republic of Korea military forces. This control extends back to 1950 when the Republic of Korea placed the ROK Armed Forces under command authority of the UN Commander. As a result of subsequent agreements, this action was modified to operational control in 1953, and reaffirmed in 1961.

At the present time, operational control of the well-trained and well-equipped First ROK Army (FROKA), which protects the southern portion of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) along with U.S. combat troops, has been delegated to Eighth U.S. Army by CINUNC. FROKA headquarters is at Wonju, southeast of Seoul. Second ROK Army (SROKA), which handles training and logistics has its headquarters at Taegu in the southern part of the Republic of Korea.

For more than a decade, Korean soldiers also have been serving along-side American soldiers in Korea as part of the KATUSA program. KATUSA is a military abbreviation that merely means Korean Augmentation to the U.S. Army. In other words, it designates a Korean soldier serving with the U.S. Army. (See Eighth Army Troop Topic 5-67 for details.)

This working harmony is a concrete example of the United Nations Command in "action."

What about other member states of the UN that participated in the Korean War?

Any nation which contributed troops, equipment or supplies to the United Nations Forces in the Korean War may send liaison officers to the UNC. The number of these officers vary from month to month as nations send and recall them on a periodic basis.

At the present time, there are liaison officers from Australia, Canada, Ethiopia, Philippines, New Zealand, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom at UNC Headquarters. In addition, France maintains a liaison officer at UNC (Rear) headquarters in Japan.

These representatives keep their respective nations informed of the current military situation in Korea. This liaison group demonstrates to the Communist forces, by their very presence, U.N. determination to oppose further aggression in Korea.

Armistice Commission

The functions of the United Nations Command in connection with the Armistice Agreement are the responsibility of the UNC Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC), with headquarters in Seoul.

The Senior Member, who acts as spokesman, is a major general or rear admiral. He serves for six months. His position is rotated among the three U.S. military services which also furnish staff personnel.

Each side appoints its own Secretary. The Chief, Armistice Affairs Division, UNC, is the Secretary for the UNC side. The Secretaries are responsible for providing translator-interpret services and performing record-keeping functions for meetings of the MAC or its agencies.

All passes authorizing entrance into the southern half of the Demilitarized Zone are issued by the Armistice Affairs Division. Meetings of the Military Armistice Commission (MAC) and the Secretaries are held on call of either side and are conducted at the conference site near Panmunjom.

The Armistice Agreement established the DMZ which is 4,000 meters (4,374 yds) wide and extends 151 miles, across Korea. The center of the DMZ is marked on maps by Military Demarcation Line (MDL), generally the line of contact that existed between opposing forces when the fighting stopped in 1953. No military activity is permitted in the zone except for civil police patrols from each side for security purposes.

The Joint Security Area (JSA), where over 220 MAC meetings have been held as of September 1966, was carved out of both halves of the DMZ. The MDL runs through the center of the JSA. The UNC Joint Duty Officer meets with his Korean People's Army (KPA) counterpart in the MAC conference building daily, except Sunday, to exchange messages and reports.

When serious DMZ violations are reported, UNC-KPA Joint Observer Teams (JOTS) agree to meet at the scene of alleged violations to question witnesses, examine material evidence and report their findings to the MAC.

Near the JSA is the village of Tae Song Dong, the only community in the UNC half of the DMZ. This village is governed by the UNC rather than the Republic of Korea, since it is located in the southern portion of the DMZ.

UNC and The UN Flag Tokyo to Seoul

More than 16 years ago when the United Nations Command came into being in Japan, the UN Security Council also authorized the new command, at its discretion, to use the United Nations flag in the course of operations against North Korean forces concurrently with the flags of the various nations participating. This flag was first raised in Tokyo, then the location of UNC Headquarters.

Today, that same flag is proudly flying over the United Nations Command headquarters in Seoul, Korea, symbol of the Free World, and willingness of the United Nations to back up words with deeds.

The UN flag is an effective symbol. It conveys to the world that the Free World's fighting men, when called upon by their governments to serve or fight for

freedom in Korea, or any other country, will answer the call.

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