

Introduction

On June 25, 1950 the forces of North Korea crossed the 38th Parallel into the Republic of Korea. This marked the beginning of hostilities which were to rage for three full years and more, throughout that country known to its people as the Land of the Morning Calm. The magnitude of the assault made it clear that this was a full-scale invasion.

This was the first open act of aggression since the establishment of the United Nations Organization and its actions were of great significance for its prestige and credibility - in fact for its very future. The invasion was declared a breach of the peace, and 16 member nations joined forces to resist the aggression.

Canada's contribution, exceeded only by that of the United States and Great Britain, demonstrated her willingness to uphold the United Nations ideals and to take up arms in support of peace and freedom. All told 26,791 Canadians served in the Korean war and another 7,000 served in the theatre between the cease-fire and the end of 1955. The names of 516 Canadian dead are inscribed in the Korea Book of Remembrance.

Canadian participation in these hostilities marked a break with traditional policy. It was the beginning of a new era of involvement in world affairs which saw Canadian troops deployed around the world in truce teams, peace commissions and emergency forces. A new page in Canada's proud military history was written.

This book is dedicated to those Canadians who served - in the mountains and rice paddies, on the sea and in the air - to halt aggression and maintain world peace.

Outbreak of War

Background of the Conflict

The history of Korea is marked by successive conquest. Long dominated by China, the peninsula had passed into Japanese control in 1910 following the Russo-Japanese War.

During the course of the Second World War the leaders of the Allied nations of Great Britain, the United States and China met to decide what would be the fate of Japan and her territories when hostilities ended. In their Cairo Declaration of November 1943, they promised that "in due course Korea shall become free and independent."

When the Japanese surrendered in 1945 the Soviet Union occupied North Korea; the United States took over control in South Korea. The 38th Parallel was chosen as the dividing line. It was assumed that the occupation would be temporary and that a unified, independent country would eventually be formed.

Unfortunately, the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945 did not bring peace to the world. The western allies soon found themselves engaged in a new struggle with their former ally the Soviet Union. As the Cold War developed in other parts of the world, in Korea the 38th Parallel gradually hardened into a permanent boundary. In the north the Russians established a communist regime which they proceeded to arm. In the south the United States set up a shaky democracy under the leadership of Syngman Rhee. Complicated by the artificial boundary, the economic and political situation grew desperate, and by 1946 Syngman Rhee was appealing for an end to the division of his country.

In September 1947 the United States announced its intention of laying the whole matter before the United Nations. The Soviet Union countered by suggesting that both sides withdraw their forces leaving the Koreans free to choose their own government. The Americans rejected this proposal which would have left the South Koreans at the mercy of the heavily armed north. They submitted the problem to the United Nations General Assembly.

The Assembly, on November 14, 1947, created a Temporary Commission to Korea to supervise free and secret elections and to oversee the withdrawal of the occupation forces. As the Communists denied the Commission access to North Korea, it was directed to implement the program in those parts of the country which were accessible. On May 10, 1948, elections were held in South Korea; on August 15, the Government of the Republic of Korea was established. This Government was recognized by the United Nations General Assembly which recommended the withdrawal of occupying forces and established a new United Nations Commission. The Soviet Union immediately created in North Korea the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" under the control of a communist guerrilla leader, Kim Il Sung.

In December the Soviet Union announced that it had withdrawn its troops from North Korea and thus forced the United States to follow suit in South Korea. The South Korean Army, armed with small arms and mortars and without tanks, heavy guns or aircraft, was left to face a large, well-equipped North Korean force.

Trouble soon flared up along the border as both sides claimed the right to rule all Korea. North Korean patrols began to invade the southern Republic and the United Nations Commission repeatedly warned of impending civil war.

Invasion and World Reaction

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On the morning of June 25, 1950, the North Koreans invaded with force.

World wide reaction to this, the first open act of aggression since the establishment of the United Nations Organization, was swift. At the request of the United States, the United Nations Security Council met on the afternoon of June 25. It determined that the armed attack was a breach of peace and called for immediate cessation of hostilities, and the withdrawal of North Korean forces to the 38th Parallel. Fortunately, the Soviet Union was boycotting all UN meetings over another issue and could, therefore, not exercise its veto power.

It was soon evident that the North Koreans had no intention of complying with the United Nations' demands. As their forces pressed southward, President Truman ordered the United States Navy and Air Force to support the South Koreans by every possible means.

On the same day, a second UN resolution called on the Members to "furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the area." This was, in effect, a declaration of war on North Korea. On June 30, President Truman authorized the commitment of American troops. Other UN member nations offered forces and the Security Council recommended that all troops be placed under a single commander. Thus, a United Nations Command was established in Tokyo under General Douglas MacArthur of the United States.

Meanwhile, the North Koreans were pushing rapidly forward through the valleys and rice paddies of the Korean peninsula. The South Korean capital, Seoul, was occupied on June 28, and by the first week of August the UN forces were confined within the "Pusan Perimeter," a small area in the southeast of the peninsula.

Canadian Reaction to the Invasion

The Canadian Government, while agreeing in principle with the moves made to halt aggression, did not immediately commit its forces to action in Korea. At the close of the Second World War the Canadian Armed Forces had been reduced to peacetime strength, and were specially trained for the defence of Canada. The Regular Army (or Active Force as it was then known) was composed of three parachute battalions (the Mobile Striking Force), two armoured regiments, a regiment of field artillery and a few basic supporting units such as signals and engineers. The limited strength of the Active Force – 20,369 all ranks – meant that it was not able to provide an expeditionary force without seriously weakening home defence.

Furthermore, the Far East had never been an area in which Canada had any special national interest. While Canadian opinion supported UN action, Canadian contribution to the conflict, of necessity, came piecemeal.

The first Canadian aid to the hard-pressed UN forces came from the Royal Canadian Navy. On July 12, 1950, three Canadian destroyers, HMCS *Cayuga*, HMCS *Athabaskan* and HMCS *Sioux*, were dispatched to Korean waters to serve under the United Nations Command. Also in July, a Royal Canadian Air Force squadron was assigned to air transport duties with the United Nations. No. 426 Squadron, consisting of six North Star aircraft (later increased to 12), flew regularly scheduled flights between McChord Air Force Base, Washington, and Haneda Airfield, Tokyo throughout the campaign.

The Canadian Army Special Force

On August 17, 1950, as the Korean crisis deepened, the Government authorized the recruitment of the Canadian Army Special Force (CASF). It was to be specially trained and equipped to carry out Canada's obligations under the United Nations Charter or the North Atlantic Pact.

The CASF was to be raised and trained as part of the regular army. The new citizen volunteers, many of them Veterans of the Second World War, were enrolled for a period of 18 months or for a further period, if required, under certain conditions. The new field units were established as separate units of existing Active Force regiments. The ranks would be filled, where necessary, by Active Force members.

Later, as the requirements for overseas forces continued, important changes in policy were introduced. A system of rotation was adopted which included the Active Forces Units. These units proceeded to Korea and were replaced at home by volunteers from among the returning Korean Veterans.

The original components of the Special Force included the second battalions of The Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR), Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI), and Royal 22^e Régiment (R22^eR); "C" Squadron of Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians); 2nd Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (RCHA); 57th Canadian Independent Field Squadron, Royal Canadian Engineers (RCE); 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade Signal Squadron; No. 54 Service Corps (RCASC); and No. 25 Field Ambulance, Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps (RCAMC).

On August 8, 1950, Brigadier J.M. Rockingham returned from civilian life to accept command of the Canadian Infantry Brigade for service under the United Nations. During the Second World War Brigadier Rockingham had commanded the 9th Canadian Infantry Brigade in the campaign in Northwest Europe.

The Landing at Inchon

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In mid-September 1950 the military situation in Korea was dramatically reversed. The UN forces, confined within the Pusan Perimeter, were still being hard-pressed when a daring amphibious assault was launched at Inchon, the port of Seoul. Sailing from Japan, the US 10th Corps landed on September 15 and quickly overcame all enemy resistance in the seaport area. By September 26 Seoul was re-captured. Meanwhile, the Eighth US Army had broken out of the Pusan Perimeter and had linked up with the 10th Corps. By the end of the first week of October they were driving the shattered enemy across the 38th Parallel.

The United Nations Forces then moved northward, crossed the North Korean border, captured Pyongyang the capital, and advanced toward the Yalu River, the boundary between North Korea and China.

Following the Inchon landings and the UN successes of September and October, the end of the war in Korea seemed imminent. These events appeared to reduce the need for additional troops. It was, therefore, decided to limit the Canadian contribution to one battalion to be used for occupation duties. The remaining units of the CASF would continue training in Fort Lewis, Washington, during the approaching winter. The move to Fort Lewis was marred by tragedy when a train carrying troops of the 2nd Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery collided head-on with another train on November 21. Seventeen soldiers were killed.

At Fort Lewis the units formed the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade and this term was generally used in place of the "Canadian Army Special Force."

The battalion selected to serve in Korea was the 2nd Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Stone. On November 25 the Patricias sailed for Korea with an embarkation strength of 927 including an administrative increment.

It was estimated that the battalion (which had yet to do any serious advanced training) would be ready for action by March 15, 1951. As it turned out the unit went into the line a full month earlier, suffering its first battle casualties in the Korean hills on February 22, 1951.

The Chinese Intervention

When the Canadians sailed from Seattle on November 25, 1950, the war in Korea seemed to be near its end. When they reached Yokohama on December 14 the picture had completely changed. Communist China had intervened.

By the end of October 1950 six Chinese armies had already crossed the Yalu River and, with an approximate strength of 180,000, were concentrated in front of the advancing United Nations forces. Conducted at night with great secrecy, these large scale Chinese movements had gone undetected by UN forward troops and air reconnaissance units. Unsupported reports by prisoners of massive build-up were not believed. On October 27, at a time when thousands of organized Chinese troops were pouring across the Yalu, General Headquarters, United Nations and Far East Command showed them still poised for action in Manchuria.

As the Chinese build-up developed, the United Nations forces continued their advance northward reaching the main enemy positions between Pyong-yang and the Yalu River on November 26. Then, the Chinese launched a massive attack which turned the UN advance into a retreat to new positions along the Imjin River north of Seoul.

It was in this atmosphere of unexpected disaster that the 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry arrived in Korea in December 1950. The occupation role which they had expected to fill no longer existed. Instead the emphasis had shifted to the speed with which the battalion could be thrown into action. The Patricias began an intensive training period at Miryang near Taegu as grim news continued to arrive from the north.

The New Year opened with another crushing offensive by the Chinese which forced a further general withdrawal. Seoul again fell to the Communists on January 4, 1951. A new line was established some 64 kilometres south of the former capital.

While these events were taking place the Canadian battalion underwent the further training in weapons and tactics required before they could be committed to battle, and carried out limited operational tasks, such as anti-guerrilla patrols.

Canadians in Action 1951

Canadian Troops in Action

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In mid-February 1951, the 2nd Battalion PPCLI entered the line of battle under the command of the 27th British Commonwealth Infantry Brigade. This formation, which had participated in operations in Korea since the early stages of the conflict, consisted of two British and one Australian battalions. Artillery support was provided by a New Zealand Field Regiment and medical care by the 60th Indian Field Ambulance. The Patricias rounded out its Commonwealth character.

The arrival of the Canadians coincided with the second general United Nations advance toward the 38th Parallel. In this new offensive the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade was to advance northeast to its final objective the high ground northwest of Hoengsong.

Sharing the brigade lead with British Argylls, the Patricias, on February 21, began to advance up the valley north from the village of Sangsok. Rain, mixed with snow, made progress treacherous, but fortunately enemy opposition was light. "D" Company made the first contact with the enemy when its leading elements came under fire from the high ground to the northeast.

In the days that followed progress became more difficult. Hills ranging from 250 to 425 metres, rose on either side; hill positions had to be dug through deep snow; the weather was bitterly cold and enemy resistance increased. On February 22, "C" Company sustained the battalion's first battle casualties when four soldiers were killed and one wounded in an attack on Hill 444. The other Commonwealth troops encountered similar difficulties. Yet, by the first of March, the brigade had advanced 25 kilometres over difficult country against a stubborn rearguard action.

On March 7 the advance was resumed. The objectives were Hills 410, assigned to the Australians, and 532, assigned to the 2nd PPCLI. The valleys now ran east and west cutting across the axis of advance and provided the enemy with a natural line of defence. At first resistance was heavy from the enemy who was well dug in and camouflaged. The attack slowed down to a series of stubbornly fought section battles. Then, suddenly, the enemy withdrew.

In the next several days it became apparent that the Chinese were withdrawing all across the front. On March 15 Seoul was liberated by the 1st Republic of Korea (ROK) Division. Following a retreating enemy, the 24th US Infantry Division advanced toward the 38th Parallel west of the Kapyong River, while the Commonwealth Brigade proceeded up the Chojong valley to its first objective, a massive hill called 1036, on the Benton line. By March 31, this objective was reached and the brigade was moved east to the valley of the Kapyong River. On April 8, the Patricias successfully attacked objectives across the 38th Parallel.

Meanwhile, the question of crossing the 38th Parallel was being heatedly debated on both the military and political levels. Two courses of action were open to the United Nations forces. The first was to press for complete military victory. This would require additional forces and the extension of the conflict beyond the Korean borders into Manchuria. The alternative was military stabilization combined with UN negotiations to end the conflict. General MacArthur pressed for an all-out effort to achieve victory even at the risk of open war with Communist China, and publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with the UN and the Truman administration which favoured negotiation. On April 11, 1951, he was relieved of his command and replaced by Lieutenant-General Matthew B. Ridgway.

General MacArthur's dismissal did not mean an immediate reversal of tactics. The advance which had begun in February continued. By mid-April almost the entire UN front lay north of the 38th Parallel.

The Action at Kapyong

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Evidence accumulated of a formidable Chinese build-up for a counter-offensive. The earlier withdrawal had straightened the enemy's lines, placed his forces on high ground north of the Imjin River, and had allowed him to replace tired troops and reorganize his equipment.

On the night of April 22-23, 1951 Chinese and North Korean forces struck in the western and west-central sectors. Both the 1st and the 9th US Corps were ordered to withdraw. In the 9th Corps sector the blow fell on the 6th ROK Division. Overwhelmed and forced to retreat, it was in grave danger of being cut off and completely destroyed.

Fortunately, the location of the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade, then in Corps reserve, was ideal for an escape route along which the South Koreans could withdraw. The area lay in the valley of the Kapyong River near its junction with the Pukhan River. Here the valley was some 2,800 metres wide. To the north it narrowed and curved and

was dominated by surrounding hills. From these hills the exits and entrances to the valley could be controlled. A defensive position was established with the 3rd Royal Australian Regiment at Hill 504, the 2nd PPCLI dug in on Hill 677 and the 1st Middlesex Regiment south of the Patricias.

The Australians were the first to come under attack and withstood a heavy engagement during the night of April 23-24. The next day the Chinese infiltration intensified forcing the Australians to withdraw under great pressure. The Australian withdrawal exposed the Patricias' position to enemy attack. The battalion defences covered the north face of Hill 677: "A" Company was on the right, "C" Company in the centre, and "D" on the left flank.

"B" Company, which at first occupied a salient in front of "D", was moved farther south to a hill immediately east of tactical headquarters. From this location it could observe the enemy build-up across the valley of the Kapyong to the north and east, near the village of Naechon. About 10 p.m. enemy mortar bombs began to fall on the Patricias' position, and shortly thereafter the forward platoon came under attack. The platoon was partially overrun but was able to disengage itself and move back to the main company position where a counter-attack was organized.

While the attack on "B" company was in progress the enemy also attempted to infiltrate at other points including a probe against tactical headquarters. These attacks were driven off by battalion mortar and machine-gun fire.

"D" Company, in its exposed position to the northwest, bore the brunt of the next attack as the enemy assaulted in large numbers from two sides. As one platoon and a machine-gun section were overrun and another platoon cut off, the company commander called for supporting fire on top of his own position. After two gruelling hours the enemy advance was stemmed.

Through the night the enemy persisted in his attacks, but each was driven off by artillery fire. With the approach of daylight the pressure subsided and "D" Company was able to re-establish its former position.

Although the Patricias had maintained their positions, the battalion was surrounded and the supply route was controlled by the enemy. With ammunition reserves and emergency rations depleted, Lieutenant-Colonel Stone requested air supply. The parachute drop was made within hours of the request. By 2 p.m. the Middlesex Regiment had cleared enemy groups from the rear and the road to the PPCLI position was re-opened.

The Canadians in this action had maintained their position – vital to the brigade defence – while at the same time inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. The relatively light casualties (10 killed and 23 wounded) which they, themselves, had sustained testified to the skill and organization with which the defence was carried out. For their gallant stand at Kapyong the 2nd Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and the 3rd Royal Australian Regiment received the United States Presidential Citation.

By May 1 the enemy offensive had ended. The 1st and 9th U.S. Corps then held an irregular line some 30 kilometres south of the 38th Parallel forming an arc north of Seoul. Plans were begun at once for a return to the Kansas line, the code name for a range of hills just above the 38th Parallel. At the same time the defensive position was strengthened against a possible new Chinese offensive. To the north the Chinese shifted their forces eastward in preparation for an assault against the Eighth Army sector.

The Arrival of the 25th Brigade

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On February 21, 1951, the Minister of National Defence, the Honourable Brooke Claxton, announced the decision to send the remainder of the 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade (see above) to Korea as originally planned.

The brigade landed at Pusan at the beginning of May and, after a short period of training, moved north to join the 28th British Commonwealth Brigade (which had relieved the 27th Brigade) on the Han River. They came into the line as the United Nations forces began their third general advance to the 38th Parallel. The artillery regiment was committed almost immediately in support of the 28th Brigade north of the Han, firing its last operational round on May 17.

Since opinion in the United Nations still favoured stabilization of the military situation and negotiation, the overall aim of the new operation was to relieve pressure on the embattled sectors, while preventing Communist armies from recovering their strength and launching another massive offensive.

Battle tactics and strategies were determined by the relative strengths and nature of the opposing forces. With air supremacy and superior material strength, the battlefield aim of the United Nations forces was not "to close with and destroy the enemy," but to force him back behind the mountain barriers along the 38th Parallel, using manpower sparingly. On the other hand, Chinese tactics were dominated by their chief asset, manpower. Thus, when an offensive failed to meet its objective, they tended to withdraw while reinforcements and supplies were brought forward for another attempt.

As a result, the UN operation was essentially a matter of regimental groups moving forward, singly or in conjunction with flanking units. The action by Canadian troops was similar to that in other sectors along the front.

On May 24, 1951, the 25th Brigade was placed under command of the 25th US Infantry Division and moved to an area north-east of Uijongbu. The brigade's first operation,

code-named Initiate, was an advance through a series of phase lines to the line Kansas south of the Imjin River. It was preceded by Task Force Dolvin, a combined tank-infantry battle group designed to move rapidly forward to seize and hold the objective until the main force arrived to establish strong defensive positions.

The brigade's axis followed the valley of the Pochon River. One battalion, supported by tanks and a detachment of the Royal Canadian Engineers, advanced along each side – the 2nd Royal Canadian Regiment on the left and the 2nd Royal 22^e Régiment on the right.

Advancing in the face of light resistance, the brigade reached positions on line Kansas on May 27. It took over from Task Force Dolvin on May 28 and the next day began an advance north of the 38th Parallel. It halted near a burnt-out village at the foot of a formidable mountain barrier named Kakhul-Bong (Hill 467).

The Attack on Chail-li

Kakhul-bong dominated the line of advance of the 2nd Royal Canadian Regiment. Therefore, a battalion attack was organized against this feature and the village of Chail-li that lay beyond it.

The battalion plan was for "A" Company to seize the village of Chail-li to the north of the hill; "B" Company was to secure the left flank by occupying Hill 162 to the west; and "C" Company was to capture Hill 269 between Chail-li and Hill 467. The main assault of Kakhul-bong was assigned to "D" Company. The battalion was supported by the 2nd Regiment RCHA.

The operation began early in the morning of May 30 in a driving rainstorm. "A", "B" and "C" companies reached their objectives with relative ease, but "D" Company met strong resistance and suffered casualties from enemy machine-gun fire.

Early in the afternoon the Chinese, while still holding the hill, counter-attacked against "A" Company and the village of Chail-li, circling to the rear to surround and cut off the company. Meanwhile "C" Company, located on Hill 269 between the two points, was unable to provide effective aid to either. Poor visibility made it difficult to identify the troops in the valley, and the distance was too great for company gun-fire to reach the enemy.

Kakhul-bong was vital to the Chinese supply lines and their system of communication across the Chorwon Plain and they strongly resisted "D" Company's advance. Repeated attempts failed to dislodge the defenders who took advantage of an extensive trench system and a well placed machine-gun on the pinnacle of the hill. In addition the brigade's overall situation was precarious. The advance had created a deep salient in the enemy lines leaving the brigade flanks without protection. Since it appeared that the

Royal Canadian Regiment could not continue to hold Chail-li or take Kakhul-bong, Brigadier Rockingham ordered a withdrawal in order to form an organized defensive position. With the Chinese pressing closely, the RCR fought their way back to their new position.

The action at Chail-li was the brigade's first serious engagement and it had acquitted itself well. The casualties – six killed and 54 wounded – testified to the sharp engagement which had been fought.

On May 27, the 2nd PPCLI, which had remained with the 28th British Commonwealth Brigade during this period, moved south to rejoin the Canadian command it had left more than six months before in Fort Lewis.

Canadian Operations – June and July 1951

From June 2 to 18, 1951, the 25th Brigade remained in reserve south of the Imjin-Hantan junction. At this junction the Imjin River swings sharply southwest creating a deep salient in no man's land. Control of this salient was vital since the tip lay close to the supply route from Seoul through Uijongbu to the Chorwon area. During June the United Nations Command dominated the area by strenuous patrolling. Later in the year operations would be carried out to remove the salient.

Almost immediately after rejoining the 25th Brigade the 2nd PPCLI was again attached to the 28th Commonwealth Brigade and was assigned the task of establishing and holding a patrol base in the tip of the salient. Patrol bases were defended areas of battalion or brigade size set up in no man's land at various distances ahead of the forward defended localities. From these bases troops could maintain vigilance over the area and probe deeply into the heights beyond. On June 6 the Patricias set up their base. They held it until June 11 when they were relieved by the Royal 22^e Régiment.

Patrolling at Chorwon

By mid-June the Eighth US Army had broadened its salient on the east coast and advanced about 16 kilometres up the centre of the peninsula. This line was to remain substantially the same until the end of the war.

The Canadian brigade took over a 6,900 metre front extending southwest from Chorwon. To the northeast stretched the Chorwon Plain; to the front was a network of hills and narrow valleys. Here, in the weeks that followed, the troops were employed in raids and

patrols. The Canadian position was a vulnerable one. The valleys and gullies provided easy access for enemy infiltration, and the troops had to be constantly on the alert.

The first of the series of large-scale patrols on the brigade front was carried out on June 21. The patrol was composed of infantry from the Royal Canadian Regiment and tanks of Lord Strathcona's Horse supported by field artillery of the RCHA and a tactical air control party. A firm base was established near Chungmasan and the artillery was deployed there while the remaining elements of the patrol continued forward. When an air observation plane reported the enemy in strength on a nearby hill, the patrol called for an air strike on the position. It then withdrew to the brigade area. Subsequent patrols, in the main, followed a similar pattern and achieved much the same results.

The Beginning of Truce Talks and the Formation of the 1st Commonwealth Division

During the summer of 1951 two significant events took place. Early in July, at Communist request, cease-fire negotiations were begun. The truce talks ran into difficulties at the outset and the suspicion prevailed that the Communists never intended them to produce an early peace, but were using them to gain military advantage. Like the war itself, the talks would drag on for the next two years.

Also in July came the announcement that the 25th Canadian Brigade would join the newly-formed 1st Commonwealth Division under the command of Major-General J.H. Cassells. Upon its formation the division, under the operational control of the 1st US Corps, held a sector of the Kansas line extending 10,000 metres westward from the Imjin-Hantan junction. The main enemy positions were 5,000 to 7,500 metres north of the Imjin.

As noted earlier, enemy activity in this area threatened the supply route to Chorwon. Therefore, the next months saw the 1st Commonwealth Division involved in deep patrolling into the salient, followed by the actual occupation of the area in Operations Minden and Commando.

From June 28 to early September 1951 the 25th Brigade was in reserve, during which time it was assigned a number of tasks. In mid-August a battalion size patrol was carried out by the RCR. Later in the month the PPCLI and the Royal 22^e Régiment encountered only light resistance as they established firm positions and patrolled as far as Hills 187 and 208.

Across the Imjin

As peace negotiations remained deadlocked, the United Nations Command stepped up its offensive on the 1st Corps front. During September and October two operations, code-named Minden and Commando, were carried out to achieve defence in depth in the area and to provide greater flank protection to the Seoul-Chorwon supply route. In the first of these, Minden, the Wyoming line was extended to remove the salient created by the curve in the Imjin River.

D-Day for Operation Minden was September 8, 1951. The Commonwealth Brigade established a firm bridge-head in no man's land on the north bank of the lower Imjin. From this base the other two brigades would advance three days later to the objective, a line from Sanggorangpo to Chung-gol, code-named Wyoming. Engineers, meanwhile, constructed or re-opened roads through the area and built two bridges, Pintail and Teal, over the Imjin River. These bridges were vital links to the maintenance areas behind the Imjin and would play a major role in Canadian activities in the months ahead.

On September 11, the division moved north out of the bridgehead – the 29th Brigade on the left and the 25th Brigade on the right. The South Koreans and Americans advanced on either flank. By September 13 the operation was completed with little opposition and few casualties.

From the middle of September to Operation Commando which began on October 3, the 25th Brigade was engaged mainly in improving its positions and in routine patrolling. These patrols, it should be noted, were dangerous and often anything but routine for those who participated.

In Operation Commando, which involved all four divisions of the 1st US Corps, a new front line, known as Jamestown, was established. The Commonwealth portion of the line was on the high ground overlooking the valley of an unnamed tributary of the Sami-chon River. The American divisions were on the right and the 1st ROK Division was on the left. The brigades of the Commonwealth division launched their attacks on successive days so that each could be more heavily supported by artillery. The Canadians, with the 1st Royal Ulster Rifles attached from the 29th British Brigade, struck off on "D-Day plus 1." The main objective of the RCR was Hill 187, while the PPCLI objectives included a second Hill also numbered 187 and Hill 159. The Ulsters were to take the area between the villages of Yongdong and Chommal.

The Ulsters began the attack and, with little difficulty, secured all their objectives that afternoon. By late afternoon the next day, October 5, the RCR and the Patricias had signalled success as well. The 28th Commonwealth Brigade, which had meanwhile encountered greater opposition, succeeded in taking its objective, Hill 217, by October 8.

The division then lay on the Jamestown line between the Sami-chon and the Imjin rivers with Lines Wyoming and Kansas to the rear. It held a front of approximately 19,000

metres with seven battalions in the front line. In the landscape ahead the enemy main line was much closer than before and the newly-won hills were more open to attack.

These operations also served to weld the 1st Commonwealth Division, with its various national groups, into a formidable fighting force. A sense of cohesion and *esprit de corps* developed which would be most valuable in the long months which lay ahead.

The First Rotation - October - November 1951

During October and November 1951, the first rotation of Canadian troops was accomplished. The 1st Battalion PPCLI, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel N.G. Wilson-Smith, replaced the 2nd Battalion PPCLI in gradual stages to allow for the orientation of inexperienced troops.

One company of the first Patricias had a taste of action almost two weeks before the unit officially entered the line. The occasion was Operation Pepperpot, the Canadian share in a number of raids on certain known enemy positions by the 1st Commonwealth Division. The purpose was to inflict damage and casualties on the enemy and at the same time to obtain information regarding its layout. For these operations, which began on October 23, the Canadian brigade provided one company from each battalion. Hill 166, the main objective of the Canadians, was assigned to the Royal 22^e Régiment's company, while supplementary objectives, Hill 156 and an unnamed feature in between the two were assigned to "A" Company of the 1st PPCLI and to the RCR respectively. The Royal Canadian Regiment and the Patricias reached their objectives in the face of relatively light opposition, but the Royal 22^e was stopped short of its goal by heavy machine-gun fire. The operation cost the Canadians. Five soldiers were killed and 21 wounded; the enemy lost 37 known dead, and as many more believed killed or wounded.

Enemy Attacks - November 1951

Meanwhile, the enemy, too, took the offensive. Beginning in mid-October, as a reaction to Operation Commando, the Chinese mounted a series of attacks which continued, with increasing intensity, into November.

On the night of November 2-3, the enemy attacked the centre of the Canadian front held by "A" and "C" Companies of the Royal Canadian Regiment. The first assaults were repulsed, but in an early morning attack the forward platoon, short of ammunition and reduced by casualties, was forced to withdraw. It did so while fighting an effective

delaying action. The enemy continued to threaten the company, but under fire by artillery and mortars he eventually withdrew.

On November 4, the 28th British Commonwealth Brigade suffered extremely heavy shelling followed by strong attacks. After a bitter struggle Hill 217 fell to the Chinese that evening, and Hill 317 followed during the night. While the fighting was still in progress on the 28th Brigade's front, the enemy launched a series of attacks on a company of the 1st PPCLI. The first attack was broken up by artillery and mortars; a second and third were repulsed by the fire both of supporting arms and the company's own weapons. After the failure of the third attempt the enemy withdrew.

The next action in which the Canadian troops were involved was another raid on Hill 166 on November 9, by "C" Company of the Royal 22^e Régiment. In this raid two platoons reached their intermediate objectives and the right forward platoon reached a point within 100 metres of the top of the hill. But now the enemy mounted a heavy counter attack, and the whole force, having essentially completed its task, was withdrawn.

An adjustment to the divisional frontages at this time narrowed the Commonwealth sector by some 4,600 metres. Hill 355 which dominated the centre of the front line passed to the American 3rd Division. The Canadian brigade assumed responsibility for a front of almost seven kilometres extending northeast from the Samichon River.

The Canadians, with all three battalions forward, completed occupation of their new area on the morning of November 22. That same afternoon the enemy began an intensive bombardment of the American-held Hill 355 which spread to the area of the Royal 22^e – particularly "D" Company. The shelling continued throughout the night. Rain changed to snow and the resulting mud made it extremely difficult for the engineers to keep open the roads to the beleaguered companies.

Next day the enemy stepped up the shelling. This was followed late in the afternoon by an attack on both positions. The Canadian company held its ground, but by early evening the bulk of Hill 355, which had borne the main brunt of the assault, was in enemy hands. In the meantime the Chinese had also reoccupied Hill 227.

The permanent loss of Hill 355 would have been a serious threat to the United Nations Forces. It would have given the enemy control of the lateral road running through the American sector and would have made the Canadian positions untenable. Already the enemy presence on Hills 227 and 355 had left the R22^eR in danger of being encircled. During the nights of November 23-24 and November 24-25 the shelling and attacks continued in increasing intensity on both fronts, as Hill 355 passed from Chinese to American to Chinese hands and back again. Each time the enemy gained control the R22^e Régiment was exposed to further attack. On the evening of November 25, after four days and nights of continual shelling, Hill 355 was again in American hands, and "D" Company of the Royal 22^e Régiment, although in a state of near exhaustion, still held its ground.

As cease-fire negotiations were renewed, orders were given on November 27 that no further fighting patrols were to go out and that artillery action was to be restricted to defensive fire and counter-bombardment.

Operations – December 1951 to April 1952

The partial cease-fire soon proved one-sided and temporary as the enemy continued to shell and to send out patrols. The Commonwealth artillery was soon authorized to resume normal activities and restrictions on the infantry were gradually lifted as well. The brigade program called for a fighting patrol from each unit as well as for nightly reconnaissance and ambush patrols. The objectives were to obtain information about enemy positions in preparation for raids and to take prisoners. On the night of December 10, 1951, a company of Patricias carried out a raid behind Hill 277, and the RCR sent a 35-man fighting patrol against Hill 166. Both patrols reached their objectives and succeeded in obtaining useful information concerning enemy defences.

In mid-January 1952, the 25th Brigade went into divisional reserve ending four and one-half months in the line. In reserve, the Canadians spent the next seven weeks primarily engaged in establishing defensive positions on the Wyoming and Kansas lines.

On March 9-10, the 25th Brigade moved back into the line in positions astride the Samichon River with two battalions (the RCR and PPCLI) west of the valley and one (R22^cR) to the east. The coming of spring saw an increase in enemy activity. On the night of March 25 the Chinese launched a strong, well-coordinated raid against Hill 132. The attack fell on a 1st PPCLI platoon which was holding the hill. The surrounded Patricias held their position until the Chinese finally withdrew some two and one-half hours later.

Holding the Line

First General Rotation

From the winter of 1951-1952 until the end of hostilities in 1953 a period of static warfare set in. United Nations forces held and improved their positions, reinforced their defenses, patrolled in no man's land, and repulsed enemy attacks. It became a war of raids, booby traps and mines, bombardments, casualties, and endless patrolling. There were to be no major battles, no large-scale operations: the end to the conflict rested in the hands of the negotiators in the Korean town of Panmunjom.

The rotation of the remaining infantry battalions and other fighting units of the original 25th Brigade began in mid-April. The 2nd Battalion Royal 22^e Régiment and the 2nd Battalion Royal Canadian Regiment were relieved by their 1st Battalions, newly arrived from Canada, while the 1st Royal Canadian Horse Artillery took over the gun lines. "C" Squadron, Lord Strathcona's Horse remained in Korea until June when it was replaced by its "B" Squadron.

On April 27, 1952, the new Brigade Commander, Brigadier M.P. Bogert, took over command of the 25th Brigade on the Jamestown line. This line had been altered in mid-April when the Commonwealth Division took over responsibility for Hill 355 while the area west of the Sami-chon River passed to the Americans.

Patrolling – May to June 1952

During May and June 1952 the units of the Commonwealth Division patrolled vigorously. A policy laid down by 1st Corps Headquarters required each forward battalion to carry out one strong fighting patrol per week against known enemy positions. At least one prisoner was to be taken every three days. This difficult and costly task was later discontinued.

While the details of these patrols are too numerous to be recounted here, there were certain similarities in tactics and contacts. The raiding group varied from a 20-man patrol to an entire company and heavy supporting fire was provided by artillery and tanks. In the Canadian sector patrols first crossed their own wire and minefields at known gaps, then crossed the valley to the hills opposite. Firm bases were established as close to the objective as possible for defence and artillery. The actual raiding party then moved on to the enemy-held objective where it usually came under mortar and small arms fire. The objectives themselves were characterized by a maze of trenches which were often connected to tunnels through which the enemy could readily move. In this maze it was possible to inflict casualties, but the patrol itself was subject to attack and found it extremely difficult to take prisoners.

One such patrol was carried out by the 1st PPCLI on the night of May 20-21. The party of 33 was divided into a firm base group, a covering fire section and a fighting section. Supporting fire was provided by a troop of Lord Strathcona's Horse, a troop of the 1st Regiment RCHA, and the unit mortar and machine-gun platoons. A firm base was established on the floor of the Nabu-ri valley at 11 o'clock; the main body passed through at midnight. The covering fire section then took up positions at the base of the hill below the enemy's trenches. As the fighting section continued up the slope the enemy opened fire. The patrol group was outnumbered and had to withdraw. The patrol sustained one killed and four wounded; enemy losses were estimated at seven wounded or killed. No prisoners were taken.

In addition to fighting patrols directed at enemy territory, the Canadians also carried out a number of other types of patrols. Ambush patrols, standing patrols, and reconnaissance patrols were carried out in formidable numbers to seize prisoners, detect enemy movements, and serve as sources of intelligence about the location of enemy weapons.

At the end of May 1952 the Commonwealth Division was ordered to furnish two rifle companies – one British and one Canadian – to undertake guard duties over prisoners of war on the island of Koje. A Canadian unit of the RCR served on Koje until June 10.

At the end of June the 25th Brigade went into divisional reserve. In addition to the normal activities of reserve, working on the defences of the Kansas and Wyoming lines and refresher training, they engaged in an operation known as "Noah's Ark." The monsoon rains of July and the consequent rise in the Imjin River placed the bridges Teal and Pintail in danger of collapse. In spite of their efforts, Teal was washed out. However, by mid-September, when the flood abated, Pintail was still in use. Teal was being restored.

The Canadians, meanwhile, had returned to the line on August 10. The return to the line was marked by an important change in the overall situation. During the summer of 1952 the enemy had gradually become more aggressive. He moved into no man's land, sent out patrols, raided forward positions and increased the volume of shelling on the forward positions. This increased activity was to reach formidable proportions in October and November.

The brigade front lay between what had been the villages of Pajol-gol and Kojanharisaemal with the R22^oR on the left, the PPCLI on the right, and the RCR on Hill 355 in the centre. During the next three months the 25th Brigade was to experience heavier shelling and mortaring than in any other period in the line. Torrential rains would silence enemy artillery, but the water caused bunkers to collapse or become unserviceable. When the rain stopped the shelling would resume. Occupied with improving the defences, the Canadians did not patrol in any strength until the end of August when PPCLI and RCR fighting patrols crossed the valley.

During the first part of October heavy fighting took place on the American front to the east, but the Commonwealth Division remained comparatively undisturbed. This was not to last. Hostile shelling increased and resistance to patrols intensified. A raid against Hill 227, by "B" Company of the RCR on October 12-13, was ambushed short of its objective. Three nights later a 25-man patrol of the Patricias, clashing with a Chinese platoon in the area of Hill 217, suffered two killed and eight wounded. The increased enemy activity, particularly in the vicinity of Hills 227 and 217, indicated that the Chinese were up to something in that sector of the front. Their intentions became quite clear a week later.

The Attack on Hill 355

Hill 355, known as Little Gibraltar, had been the scene of bitter fighting since the area was first occupied during Operation Commando in October 1951. The most notable Canadian action had been the defence by the 2nd R22^oR of the positions on the Hill 227 saddle, on November 22-25. Since early September 1952 the Royal Canadian Regiment had guarded the Hill. Five company areas lay within its boundaries.

The enemy prepared for the attack with a heavy bombardment for the first three days of October, primarily on Area II which lay immediately east of the saddle between Hill 355 and Hill 227. Between October 17 and 22, the bombardment was renewed. Consequently, when "B" Company took over the area on October 22, it found the defences badly damaged, telephone wires cut and weapon pits caved in. Enemy shelling made effective work on defences and lines of communication impossible.

Shortly after six o'clock on October 23, the enemy put down another heavy artillery concentration – and then attacked. Under heavy attack and with communications cut off, "B" Company withdrew to "A" Company's area. The battalion commander ordered tank and mortar fire on the lost areas as well as on Hill 227, on the area west of Hill 355 and on the valley to the north. He then called for a counter-attack. The counter-attack by "D" Company went in toward midnight. The left-hand platoon encountered considerable resistance and suffered some casualties, but succeeded in reoccupying the position.

The divisional front was relatively quiet for the remaining days of the brigade's tour of duty. Thus ended one of the brigade's most difficult periods of the war, and certainly its most costly – in less than three months the RCR had suffered 191 casualties, the PPCLI 18, and the R22^oR 74.

Second Autumn Rotation – November 1952

On November 3, 1952, the 3rd PPCLI replaced the 1st Battalion in the order of battle and began the last phase of their training before going into the line. They were also responsible for counter-attacks to retake any positions captured by the enemy from the Black Watch of the 29th British Brigade. As it turned out, a rehearsal for a counter-attack developed into the real thing on the feature known as the Hook. The Hook was to be the scene of many Commonwealth casualties in the months ahead.

Flowing from the west an unnamed tributary of the Sami-chon River divided the opposing forces in the Hook area. The valley of this tributary is dominated on the south side by a crest line which runs from northwest to southeast. Hill 146 forms the eastern end of the crest line. The Hook marks the western limit of the hill system. The lower Sami-chon valley could be observed from the Hook; it was therefore subjected to frequent enemy attacks.

The British Black Watch were guarding the hill line on the night of November 18 when the enemy attacked in battalion strength and succeeded in gaining a foothold on the Hook. As the Black Watch company from Hill 146 counter-attacked, the 3rd PPCLI (and a troop of Lord Strathcona tanks) came forward to reinforce the unit and to take over defence of Hill 146. By morning the Black Watch had cleared the main position and the Patricias occupied the feature without difficulty. The Patricias remained on the Hook for several days before rejoining the battalion in training for the brigade's return to the line.

At the end of November the 1st Commonwealth Division began a general redeployment of forces. Instead of two brigades in line each with three battalions forward, all three brigades were in line each with only two battalions forward. This meant that each brigade commander had a narrower front to control and each brigade had its own reserve battalion for counter-attack and intra-brigade reliefs.

As the Canadians moved back into line on the left of the division front, Brigadier Bogert assigned the Royal 22^e to the Yongdong feature east of the Sami-chon River and the Patricias to the Hook. The RCR were in reserve except for one company attached to the Patricias.

The next two months were relatively quiet. The most important activity was the improvement of defensive works particularly on the Hook. The importance of effective tunnels and trenches had been demonstrated in the October attacks on Hill 355 when Chinese shelling had so destroyed defences that resistance was impossible. In contrast, in the November 18-19 attacks on the Hook, when the open defences were flattened, the Black Watch defenders were able to take shelter in existing tunnels and call down artillery fire on the enemy. They, thereby, prevented the position from being overrun by the assaulting infantry. During this period in the line, trenches were deepened and extended, command posts, observations posts and bunkers were reinforced, and additional earthworks of all types were constructed. The tunnelling program was carried out by the greater part of the 23rd Field Squadron Royal Canadian Engineers together with three companies of South Korean labourers. The work was both difficult and dangerous. Cutting through solid rock and frozen ground, the Engineers added 112 metres to existing tunnels by the end of January.

Meanwhile, although enemy attacks and active patrolling continued, both were on a lesser scale than before. The Canadians did not engage in any company raids in this period, but standing, reconnaissance, ambush and fighting patrols, together with frequent "stand-to's" under warning of enemy attack, kept the force vigilant. However, to the right of the division front the 28th Brigade was not so fortunate. Several violent encounters in the Hill 355-227 area resulted in rather heavy casualties.

At the end of December the PPCLI and the RCR exchanged positions. The R22^eR remained on the Yongdong feature until January 30. The RCR's month on the Hook was also quiet. Although the unit patrolled actively, few contacts were made, and none of these resulted in heavy casualties.

On January 30, 1953, all of the 1st Commonwealth Division (except the artillery) went into reserve for the first time since its formation in July 1951. The divisional artillery remained forward in support of the relieving American units.

The 1st Commonwealth Division remained in reserve until April 8 during which time it carried out training exercises on battalion, brigade and divisional levels. Two important developments occurred during the period. The first was the addition of South Korean soldiers to the Commonwealth Division. The other was the beginning of the second major rotation of Canadian units in Korea.

Korean Personnel With the Canadian Forces (Katcoms)

Shortly before its return to the line in the spring of 1953, the Commonwealth Division was reinforced by 1,000 Korean soldiers, known as Katcoms (Korean Augmentation to Commonwealth). While South Koreans had served with the Commonwealth forces from the early stages of the war, their role had been of a non-combatant nature – as porters, messmen, interpreters. A Korean Service Corps for this purpose had been formed and a regiment had been attached to the 1st Commonwealth Division. Meanwhile, the United Nations command had undertaken the training of Korean nationals as infantry reinforcements. There were now more of these basically trained troops than could be equipped and absorbed into existing Korean units. South Korean soldiers were already serving in American formations.

In March 1953 the first of the Katcoms were integrated into the Canadian battalions. They were paid by the Korean government, but equipped, uniformed and armed by the units which accepted them. Although difficulties were encountered due to differences in language, outlook, customs and pay problems, the scheme worked reasonably well and provided valuable additional manpower.

Rotation 1953

The beginning of the Katcom program coincided roughly with the division's return to the front and with the second large rotation of Canadian units. The units which took over included: the third battalions of the Royal Canadian Regiment and the Royal 22^e Régiment, "A" Squadron Lord Strathcona's Horse, 81st Field Regiment RCA, 59th Independent Field Squadron RCE, and service units.

On April 6, 1953, the Commonwealth Division returned to the line in positions on Hill 355 and across the Sami-chon River to the Hook. The 25th Brigade, now under the

Command of Brigadier J.V. Allard, was in the central sector. This was to be the last period of front line duty of the Korean war. Although the final months of the campaign were far from quiet, only one strong attack came against the 25th Brigade. On the night of April 19, the 3rd RCR came into line for the first time on the southern Hill 187. The position resembled a great hand with Hill 187 forming the base of the thumb from which finger-like ridges ran westward. The Commanding Officer immediately set about to improve defences and to increase patrolling in no man's land where the enemy had taken the initiative. While enemy patrolling and shelling had increased in the area, there was no real warning of the attack that was to fall in force on "C" Company positions.

On the night of May 2-3 an "A" Company patrol moved through "C" position at 8:30 p.m. intent on ambushing any enemy patrols which came into the area. Two hours later the patrol suddenly came under enemy attack. The patrol leader was killed and half of his men were either killed or wounded. The remainder were ordered to withdraw. A "C" Company platoon was dispatched to engage the enemy. A forward section of this platoon also soon found itself in a losing fight and struggled to withdraw. At midnight the enemy put down a heavy bombardment and followed it with an infantry assault. Intensive artillery fire was then called down against this attack; at half past one the enemy began to withdraw; the Canadians re-occupied their positions.

The remaining 12 weeks of the war were relatively uneventful for the Canadian infantry, although the gunners had a busy time.

Fighting in Korea finally came to an end when the Korea Armistice Agreement was signed at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953.

Air and Naval Support

*Note: There have been recent changes to the Korean alphabet. For example, Pusan now reads Busan and Kapyong reads Gapyong. In order to maintain historical relevance, the older versions of the names are used in this article.

While the account of hostilities in Korea is predominantly an account of land forces combatting the enemy on hills, swamps and rice fields in torrential rains and snow, it must be appreciated that every phase of the Korean campaign was a combined operation in which United Nations forces on the sea and in the air played a prominent and vital role. A senior Communist delegate at the armistice discussions in August 1951 stated that "Without the support of . . . your {UN} air and naval forces, your ground forces would have been driven out of the Korean peninsula by our powerful and battle-skilled ground forces." There can be no doubt that the air and naval support was vital to United Nations achievements in Korea.

Air Support

From the very early stages of the war, the United Nations forces enjoyed complete supremacy in the air over the battlefield. The North Korean air force was destroyed during the summer of 1950, and the entry of Chinese forces into the war in November of the same year did not reverse the situation. Their short-range Russian-built planes required airfields in Korea and these were successfully destroyed by US bombers. UN heavy bombers struck as far north as the Yalu River, the boundary with Manchuria, and inflicted heavy casualties and damage on airfields, bridges, railways and tunnels. The fighters hammered the enemy's forward positions and forced him to move supplies and troops at night, while air reconnaissance aided UN ground troops in their operations.

The Canadians contribution to the air effort began in the early stages of the war when No. 426 Transport Squadron, RCAF, was attached to the US Military Air Transport Service. By June 1954, when this assignment ended, this unit had flown 600 round trips over the Pacific, carrying more than 13,000 passengers and 3,000,000 kilograms of freight and mail without loss.

Twenty-two RCAF fighter pilots and a number of technical officers served with the US Fifth Air Force. The Canadians were credited with 20 enemy jet fighters destroyed or damaged, as well as the destruction of several enemy trains and trucks.

Naval Support

The fact that Korea is a peninsula offered unusual scope for naval support. In providing that support a total of eight ships of the Royal Canadian Navy joined their United Nations and Republic of Korea navy colleagues performing a great variety of tasks. They maintained a continuous blockade of the enemy coast, prevented amphibious landings by the enemy, screened carriers from the threat of submarine and aerial attack, and supported the United Nations land forces by bombardment of enemy-held coastal areas. In addition, they protected the friendly islands and brought aid and comfort to the sick and needy of South Korea's isolated fishing villages.

The destruction of the North Korea air force and her small gun-boat navy in the early stages of the war virtually eliminated the danger of enemy attacks on United Nations' ships. There remained, however, the danger of enemy mines and gun-fire from shore batteries as well as the hazards contributed by the geography and climate of the area.

On July 5, 1950, only 11 days after the outbreak of hostilities, HMC Ships *Cayuga*, *Athabaskan* and *Sioux* sailed out of Esquimalt under the command of Captain J.V. Brock. On July 30, local time, the three Canadian destroyers entered Sasebo Harbour, Japan, ready to join in the battle for the Pusan bridgehead in Korea. Before the end of the war in 1953, five other Canadian ships would also serve with the Canadian Destroyer Division, Far East, in the Korean campaign – HMC Ships *Nootka*, *Iroquois*, *Huron*, *Haida* and *Crusader*.

Since the Canadian naval force in Korea consisted of destroyers only, it was usually necessary to operate them as separate units. It was not often, therefore, that the Canadian

ships served side by side in Korean waters. They were assigned primarily to the British command on the west coast blockade, but also took their turns serving in east coast operations.

Upon arrival the Canadian destroyers were employed in escort and patrol duties – the most urgent immediate need being the rapid movement of troops to the besieged Pusan bridgehead. In August they moved to the west coast of Korea where they also took part in the bombardment of enemy positions and assisted South Korean troop landings on North Korean islands. All three ships operated together for the first time in September 1950 in support of the Inchon landings. The Canadians, assisted by a few light South Korean vessels, formed a task group assigned to protect a flank of the invasion force. These duties were carried out without encountering any enemy opposition.

Following the Inchon landings and United Nations successes in the fall of 1950, it appeared that the war would soon be over. Then, the Chinese intervened in the conflict and the situation was reversed. In December orders were given to evacuate Chinnampo, the port of Pyongyang, and to prepare for a withdrawal from Inchon.

Captain Brock's Task Element, the strongest naval force available in the area with six destroyers – the three Canadian ships, two Australian and one American – was assigned to protect the withdrawal fleet. The military situation was serious. There was danger that the enemy might attack the port. Therefore, the destroyers were ordered to enter the harbour and be prepared to supply gun-fire support.

Upon receipt of an emergency message from Chinnampo late on December 4, 1950, Captain Brock ordered the six destroyers to undertake the night passage up the Taedong River to the port situated some 32 kilometres up-river. It was a hazardous undertaking. The channel was narrow and shallow and the North Koreans had seeded it with mines. Two ships ran aground and were forced to turn back for repairs. The remaining four destroyers, under the lead of *Cayuga*, proceeded slowly and cautiously up the channel in an especially nerve-wracking journey in the dark and at low tide. After completing the dangerous operation, the force stood guard against enemy attack which fortunately did not come.

When the troops were safely evacuated the destroyers carried out a bombardment of the port to destroy railway lines, dock installations and huge stocks of strategic materials which had to be left behind. By the next day, December 6, 1950, all ships were clear of the channel and Captain Brock could report his mission successfully completed.

From November 20, 1950, to early January 1951, a period when the United Nations land forces suffered serious reverses, the Canadian ships remained on almost continuous duty on the west coast. In addition to carrier screen duty, they escorted shipping, carried out blockade patrols and provided anti-aircraft protection and general support for the forces evacuating Inchon. On December 22, HMCS *Athabaskan* was relieved for repairs and general maintenance. *Sioux* returned to Sasebo on January 2 to prepare for her return to

Canada. She was replaced by HMCS *Nootka*. *Cayuga*, after setting a Commonwealth record by completing 50 days on patrol, joined the others in Sasebo on January 8.

In mid-January 1951, the Canadian destroyers came under enemy fire for the first time in the Korean conflict when they joined in a UN bombardment of the port of Inchon then in enemy hands. As HMC Ships *Cayuga* and *Nootka* were leaving Inchon harbour on January 25, the enemy opened fire upon them. Fortunately, the enemy gunnery was inaccurate. The ships then reversed course and silenced the shore batteries with their 4-inch guns. *Cayuga* again came under fire in a return to Inchon two days later, but once again escaped injuries as she carried out the bombardment.

Except for these clashes, the first months of 1951 were relatively quiet for the Canadian ships. Much time was spent on carrier screening. This was arduous, but generally uneventful work. The destroyers were there to guard against air and submarine attacks and the crews had ever to be vigilant.

A number of changes of Canadian ships occurred during the spring and summer of 1951. In March HMCS *Cayuga* returned to Canada, replaced by HMCS *Huron*. In May HMCS *Sioux* returned to the theatre to relieve *Athabaskan*. In July and August *Nootka* and *Huron* departed for Canada and *Cayuga* and *Athabaskan* returned for a second tour of duty.

The period of land offensive and counter-offensive, from April to June 1951, was also a busy one for the Canadian ships as they began to operate more frequently on the east coast and in blockade patrols. Patrol routine usually included bombarding railways, roads, gun emplacements and numerous other targets.

On the west coast, protecting the strategically valuable islands became an important part of the duties of those task units. On the east coast, Wonsan harbour became the pivotal point of naval operations.

During the later months of 1951, while truce negotiations were intermittently carried out, the naval and air forces saw an increase in action in the face of enemy attacks on the islands. The difficulty of island defence was illustrated by the fall of Taehwa. This island, lying deep in the Yalu Gulf less than two kilometres from two small Communist-held islands, was defended by two US Army officers and a small force of Korea guerrillas. For several months the Canadian destroyers had helped supply and guard the island. Then, on the night of November 30, 1951, a flotilla of small wooden junks and rubber boats drifted across to the northern beaches. The Canadian destroyers with their sophisticated radar were not on duty in the area that night. By the time the boats were spotted it was already too late. The well-armed Communist troops quickly overran the guerrilla defences.

At the beginning of 1952 the outlook in Korea was dismal as the truce talks bogged down. Naval operations, however, continued as usual throughout the year. Canadian destroyers were engaged primarily in island defence work, carrier screening and inshore patrols. On the west coast, the Haeju area in particular, became the scene of considerable

Canadian naval activity. Extending from the eastern edge of the bay of Haeju-man to the island of Kirin, the area is a confused mass of islands and heavily indented peninsulas. For the *Nootka* (which had returned to the theatre to relieve *Sioux* in February), this area was to be the scene of a particularly busy period. Operating in the approaches to Haeju, in the latter half of July and the first days of August, *Nootka* landed intelligence parties daily, and on seven occasions came under enemy shell-fire. Fortunately no casualties resulted.

It was in October 1952 that the Royal Canadian Navy suffered its first and only battle casualties of the war. While on an east coast patrol HMCS *Iroquois* received a direct hit from a shore battery. Three men were killed and ten were wounded.

In November 1952 *Nootka* and *Iroquois* left for Canada; *Athabaskan* returned to the theatre for a third tour, and HMCS *Haida* arrived for her first. *Haida* was the eighth Canadian destroyer to operate in Korean waters.

On the east coast, where the rugged terrain forced the railroads to skirt the shore in many places, enemy trains became a favourite target for naval guns. When a "Trainbusters' Club" was formed in mid-1952, the Canadian ships willingly participated. HMCS *Crusader* distinguished herself with a record four trains to her credit. Altogether, Canadian ships accounted for eight of the 28 trains destroyed – an amount out of proportion to the number of Canadian ships and their length of service in the area.

Christmas 1952, all three Canadian ships together in harbour for the first time since the beginning of hostilities. Unfortunately, before the year was over, they were once more back on patrol enduring the hazards of enemy shore batteries, the dangers of inshore navigation and the vicious unpleasantness of winter weather on the Yellow Sea.

During the last six months of the war, it was "business as usual" for the Canadian destroyers. They were engaged in the familiar carrier screening and inshore patrols on the west coast, and in the more dangerous and exciting east coast missions.

Following the signing of the Armistice on July 27, 1953, the UN naval forces remained in the theatre to evacuate the islands to be returned to North Korea and to carry out routine operational patrols. The last Canadian destroyer left the Korean theatre in September 1955.

The Royal Canadian Navy's contribution to the United Nations effort in Korea was considerable. With a total of only nine destroyers, the RCN had maintained a force of three destroyers in the theatre throughout the campaign. By the time the Armistice was signed, 3,621 officers of the RCN had served in Korea.

Epilogue

On July 27, 1953, the Korea Armistice Agreement was signed at Panmunjom, ending three years of fighting. The truce which followed was an uneasy truce and Korea remained a divided country. Yet the United Nations intervention in Korea was a move of incalculable significance. For the first time in history an international organization had intervened effectively with a multinational force to stem aggression. The United Nations emerged from the crisis with enhanced prestige.

Both sides had reached their peak strengths just prior to the end of hostilities. On the Communist side the total manpower has been estimated at 1,155,000, of whom 858,000 were Chinese. In addition there were perhaps some 10,000 Soviet troops in various non-battlefield roles. The United Nations Command consisted of 272,000 South Koreans and 266,000 from the 16 nations represented in the formation. In addition there were thousands more employed along the lines of communication and in quasi-military roles.

Altogether 26,791 Canadians served in the Korean conflict, and another 7,000 served in the theatre between the cease-fire and the end of 1955. United Nations' (including South Korean) fatal and non-fatal battle casualties numbered about 490,000. Of these 1,558 were Canadian. The names of 516 Canadian war dead are inscribed in the Korea Book of Remembrance.

Although the Canadian contribution was but a small portion of the total UN effort, it was nevertheless considerable. Canada made a larger contribution in proportion to her population than most of the nations which provided troops for the international force. It also marked a new stage in Canada's development as a nation. Canadian action in Korea was followed by other peacekeeping operations which have seen Canadian troops deployed around the world in new efforts to promote international freedom and maintain world peace.

United Nations Memorial Cemetery

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In January 1951, various battlefield cemeteries that had been set up behind the lines were concentrated at Tang-gok, a suburb of Pusan. The land for the cemetery was granted to the United Nations by the Republic of Korea as a tribute to all those who had laid down their lives in combatting aggression and in upholding peace and freedom. There are national sections marked by flags, and the graves have permanent headstones, each with a bronze plaque giving the name and unit of the deceased.

There are 2,267 servicemen buried in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery. Of these 1,588 were Commonwealth soldiers, including 378 Canadians.

A stone memorial with bronze panels was erected to commemorate Commonwealth soldiers who died and whose burial places are unknown. Sixteen Canadians are listed on the bronze plaques of the memorial on which the following inscription appears:

On this memorial are inscribed the names of men from Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa who died in the Korean War and have no known grave. They died with men of other countries fighting to uphold the ideals of the United Nations.

Canadian Forces Participation in the United Nations Operations, Korea, 1950-1953

Royal Canadian Navy (RCN)

- HMCS *Athabaskan*
- HMCS *Cayuga*
- HMCS *Sioux*
- HMCS *Nootka*
- HMCS *Huron*
- HMCS *Iroquois*
- HMCS *Crusader*
- HMCS *Haida*

Canadian Army

- Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians)
- 2nd Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (RCHA)
- 1st Regiment, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery (RCHA)
- 81st Field Regiment, Royal Canadian Artillery (RCA)
- The Corps of Royal Canadian Engineers (RCE)
- The Royal Canadian Corps of Signals
- The Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR)
 - 2nd Battalion
 - 1st Battalion
 - 3rd Battalion
- Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI)

- 2nd Battalion
 - 1st Battalion
 - 3rd Battalion
- *Royal 22^e Régiment (R22^eR)*
 - 2nd Battalion
 - 1st Battalion
 - 3rd Battalion
- The Royal Canadian Army Service Corps (RCASC)
- The Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps (RCAMC)
- The Royal Canadian Dental Corps
- Royal Canadian Ordnance Corps
- The Corps of Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RCEME)
- Royal Canadian Army Pay Corps
- The Royal Canadian Postal Corps
- The Royal Canadian Army Chaplain Corps
- The Canadian Provost Corps
- Canadian Intelligence Corps

Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF)

- No. 426 (Thunderbird Squadron)
- (in addition, 22 RCAF pilots flew with the U.S. Fifth Air Force)