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The U.S. Air Force in Korea

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# **The USAF in Korea**

## **A Chronology**

### **1950–1953**

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## PREFACE

In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Korean War, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) Historian commissioned the Research Division, Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA), Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, to compile this chronology of significant events of USAF military operations in the Korean theater. The chronology points out the relationship of these operations to the land battle, naval operations, and important political and diplomatic events. It also identifies such USAF historical "firsts" as the first all-jet air battle, the introduction of new weapons systems, and the initiation of tactics, techniques, or procedures that had a major impact on later air operations. The chronology also identifies important people, including key commanders, recipients of the Medal of Honor, and aces. Finally, it attempts to summarize those USAF events in Korea that best illustrate the air war and the application of air power in the theater.

To present the information most effectively, the chronology offers narrative monthly summaries followed by daily entries of significant events. Each daily entry uses the local date, which in the theater is one day later than the date in the United States. Two dates separated by a hyphen indicate that the entry covers events occurring from the first date through the second. Two dates separated by a slash indicate that the events occurred during nighttime hours. Each event includes an explanation of its significance or correlates to information in the monthly summary.

The entries are based on primary sources available at the AFHRA, including organizational histories, intelligence summaries, digests, and operational statements of the U.S. Far East Command, Far East Air Forces (FEAF), Fifth Air Force, FEAF Bomber Command, FEAF Combat Cargo Command (Provisional), and the 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo). Sometimes, wing and group histories provided additional information. The researchers also consulted numerous secondary sources, usually to confirm the most significant events of the air war in Korea.

AFHRA historians or archivists who researched and wrote the monthly and daily entries were Dr. Frederick J. Shaw, Jr., Ms. Judy G. Endicott, Mr. Edward T. Russell, Dr. Daniel L. Haulman, Mr. James S. Howard, and Dr. Forrest L. Marion. Jacob Neufeld, Air Force History Support Office, guided the manuscript through the editorial process. Mrs. Barbara Wittig, also of the same organization, meticulously copyedited and designed the publication. Readers at various history offices who offered constructive comments to improve the manuscript include Dr. William W. Suit, Air Force Materiel Com-

mand; Dr. Jay H. Smith, United States Air Force in Europe; Mr. Kenneth C. Kan, Air Force Reserve Command; Mr. Tommy R. Young and Ms. Katheryn Wilcoxson, Air Mobility Command; Mr. Herbert Mason, Air Force Special Operations Command; Dr. Thomas W. Crouch, Air Combat Command; and Dr. John Sullivan, Pacific Air Forces. Dr. Shaw, Chief, Research Division, and Col. William E. Mathis, Commander, AFHRA, have my deep appreciation for their support and encouragement. To all those named here, I am grateful, but responsibility for the work is mine.

A. TIMOTHY WARNOCK, Editor

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# 1950

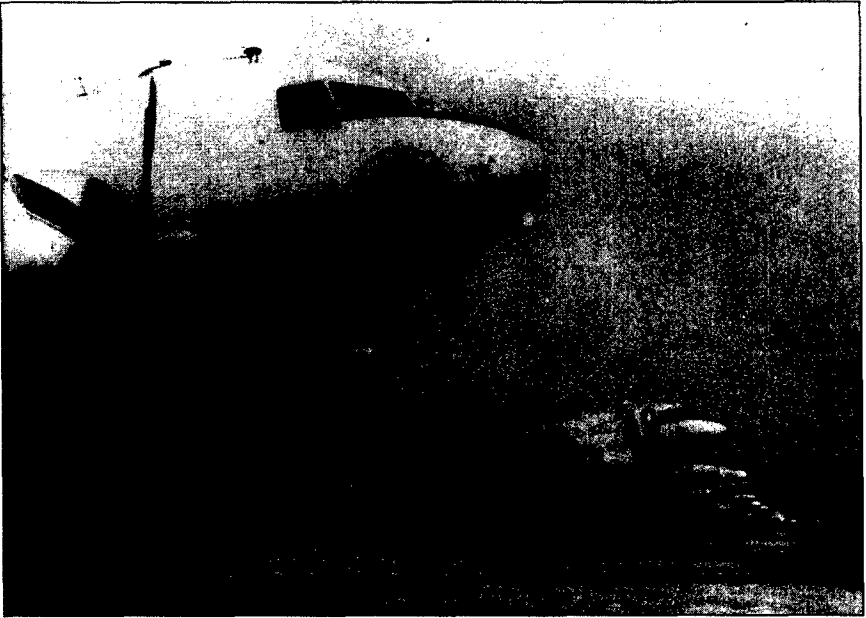
## **June 1950**

*Communist North Korea unexpectedly invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK) across the line of demarcation, the 38th parallel, using superior numbers of tanks and troops to force South Korean defenders southward. The United Nations (UN) Security Council condemned the North Korean invasion, authorized UN members to aid the ROK, and requested that the U.S. government establish a UN Command under an American officer. Despite U.S. Air Force (USAF) attacks, the invaders quickly captured South Korea's capital, Seoul, overran the port of Inchon, seized the airfield at Kimpo, and threatened the city of Suwon. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, U.S. Army (USA), Commander, U.S. Far East Command, ordered weapons and ammunition shipped to South Korea and prepared to move American ground troops from Japan to Korea. At the same time, U.S. naval units approached the peninsula to enforce a blockade of North Korea, as ordered by U.S. President Harry S Truman.*

**June 25:** Simultaneously with the invasion of South Korea, North Korean troops made an amphibious landing at Kangnung on the east coast just south of the 38th parallel. Meanwhile, North Korean fighter aircraft attacked Seoul and Kimpo Airfields, destroying one USAF C-54 on the ground at Kimpo. John J. Muccio, U.S. Ambassador to South Korea, relayed to President Truman an ROK request for U.S. air assistance and ammunition. The UN Security Council unanimously called for a cease-fire and withdrawal of the North Korean Army (NKA) to north of the 38th parallel. The resolution asked all UN members to support the withdrawal of the NKA and to render no assistance to North Korea.

Maj. Gen. Earle E. Partridge, USAF, Commander, Fifth Air Force, ordered wing commanders to prepare for air evacuation of U.S. citizens from South Korea. He also increased aerial surveillance of Tsushima Strait between Korea and Japan. The Twentieth Air Force placed two squadrons of 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing (FIW) on air defense alert in Japan.

**June 26:** The North Koreans captured Chunchon, Pochon, and Tongduchon, South Korea. The U.S. Seventh Fleet sailed north from the Philippines. The ROK requested ten F-51s from the USAF to supplement the South Korean Air Force's AT-6s and liaison-type airplanes. In continued preparation for air evacuation of U.S. citizens from Korea, Far East Air Forces (FEAF) traded C-54s for C-47s from all over the Far East, because the latter could land on smaller airfields.



***C-47s operated from smaller airfields in Korea because they could take off and land on relatively short runways.***

USAF SB-17 aircraft provided rescue cover for the initial evacuation by sea of U.S. citizens from Seoul. Beginning in the early morning, 682 people boarded the Norwegian merchant ship *Reinholte*, which finally left Inchon Harbor at 4:30 p.m., bound for Sasebo, Japan. F-82G Twin Mustang fighters of the 68th Fighter All-Weather Squadron (FAWS) provided air cover for freighters, including the *Reinholte*, sailing from Inchon, South Korea, to Japan. The Fifth Air Force also flew escort and surveillance sorties, some over the straits between Japan and Korea, and some over the Seoul area.

**June 27:** The UN Security Council called on all UN members to aid South Korea. President Truman directed U.S. air and sea forces to assist the ROK, and General MacArthur ordered FEAF to attack North Korean units south of the 38th parallel. Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, USAF, Commander, FEAF, who was in the United States when the war broke out, returned to Japan. FEAF used Kimpo Airfield near Seoul and Suwon Airfield some twenty miles south of the capital for emergency air evacuation of 748 persons to Japan on C-54s, C-47s, and C-46s. Cargo aircraft assigned to the 374th Troop Carrier Wing (TCW) and FEAF headquarters accomplished the airlift, escorted by F-82s, F-80 jet fighters, and B-26 light bombers.

Fifth Air Force embarked on a mission to establish air superiority over South Korea, partially to prevent the North Korean air force from attacking ROK forces and to protect evacuation forces. When North Korean aircraft appeared over Kimpo and Suwon Airfields, the USAF aircraft flying air cover





***Lt. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer, served as Commanding General, Far East Air Forces, from the start of the Korean War through May 21, 1951***

engaged the enemy in the first air battle of the war. Maj. James W. Little, USAF, Commander, 339th FAWS, fired the first shot. 1st Lt. William G. Hudson, 68th FAWS, flying an F-82, with Lt. Carl Fraser as his radar observer, scored the first aerial victory. In all, six pilots shot down over Kimpo seven North Korean propeller-driven fighters, the highest number of USAF aerial victories in one day for all of 1950.

Fifth Air Force B-26s, flying from Ashiya Air Base (AB), Japan, attacked enemy targets in South Korea in the evening, but bad weather made the raids ineffective. Fifth Air Force established an advance headquarters at Itazuke and moved B-26s to Ashiya and RF-80s to Itazuke AB, Japan, for missions in Korea. The 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing (FBW) organized a composite unit of USAF and South Korean airmen at Taegu Airfield, South Korea, to fly F-51D Mustangs.

**June 28:** North Koreans captured Seoul, forcing the ROK government to move to Taejon. Enemy forces also occupied nearby Kimpo Airfield and, on the east coast, Mukho Naval Base below Kangnung. North Korean Yaks strafed Suwon Airfield, destroying one B-26 and one F-82.

In the first USAF air strikes of the Korean War, more than twenty B-26s of the 3d Bombardment Group (BG) attacked Munsan railroad yards near the 38th parallel and rail and road traffic between Seoul and the North Korean border. One aircraft heavily damaged by enemy anti-aircraft fire crashed on its return to Ashiya, killing all aboard. Flying from Kadena AB, Okinawa, the 19th BG, in the first B-29 medium bomber strikes of the Korean War, attacked a railroad bridge and targets of opportunity such as tanks, trucks, and supply columns along North Korean invasion routes. Bad weather over

Japan limited Fifth Air Force sorties, but eighteen fighters flew close air support and interdiction missions. More than thirty F-80s from Itazuke escorted C-54s and B-26s flying between Japan and Suwon. 1st Lt. Bryce Poe II, in an RF-80A, flew the USAF's first jet combat reconnaissance mission, photographing the NKA advance elements and reporting clearing weather over the front in Korea. C-54s and C-47s flew out the last of 851 U.S. citizens evacuated by air from South Korea. FEAF transports airlifted 150 tons of ammunition from Tachikawa AB, Japan, to Suwon, about twenty miles south of Seoul.

**June 29:** North Korean forces captured Kapyong and massed on the north shore of the Han River. Heavy fighting raged in the Kimpo area. North Korean aircraft bombed and strafed Suwon Airfield, destroying a C-54 on the ground. The 21st Troop Carrier Squadron (TCS) moved from Clark AFB in the Philippines to Tachikawa AB, Japan.

General MacArthur directed General Stratemeyer to concentrate air attacks on the Han River bridges and North Korean troops massing north of the river. B-26s attacked the bridges, and Fifth Air Force F-80s patrolled the Han River area. F-82s from the 68th FAWS, using jettisonable fuel tanks, attacked with napalm for the first time in the war. Pilots of the 35th and 80th Fighter-Bomber Squadrons (FBS) shot down five North Korean airplanes that were attacking Suwon Airfield. Eight B-29s of the 19th BG attacked enemy-held Kimpo Airfield and the Seoul railroad station, reportedly killing a large number of enemy troops. As the medium bombers turned toward Kadena, Okinawa, enemy aircraft attacked the formation, enabling B-29 gunners to shoot down for the first time in the war one of the opponent's airplanes.

In the first USAF attack on North Korea, eighteen B-26s of the 3d BG attacked Heijo Airfield near Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, claiming up to twenty-five enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground. The 8th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (TRS) began photographic reconnaissance of North Korean airfields. Using RB-29 aircraft, the 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron (Photographic) also started operations over Korea from Yokota, Japan.

**June 30:** President Truman ordered the use of U.S. ground troops in Korea and a naval blockade of North Korea. The 77th Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Squadron arrived in Korea to support the Fifth Air Force, to which it was subsequently attached. North Korean forces reached Samchock on the east coast, and in the west they crossed the Han River, threatening Suwon Airfield. FEAF began evacuation of the airfield and authorized improvement of Kumhae Airfield, eleven miles northwest of Pusan, to compensate for the loss of Kimpo and Suwon. The first Fifth Air Force tactical air control parties (TACPs) arrived at Suwon. B-26s from the 3d BG strafed, bombed, and rocketed enemy troops and traffic in the Seoul area. One flight hit a stalled enemy column. Fifteen B-29s attacked railroad bridges, tanks, trucks, and troop concentrations on the north bank of the Han River near Seoul.



***A Soviet-made North Korean tank was immobilized by USAF tactical air power in Korea.***

### ***July 1950***

*NKA forces advanced relentlessly into South Korea despite the application of U.S. air and naval power north and south of the 38th parallel. The piecemeal introduction of inadequately prepared U.S. ground forces failed to stop them. By the end of July, the enemy had conquered the entire Korean peninsula except the area southeast of Hamch'ang and bordered by the Nakton River.*

*The USAF moved two additional B-29 groups to the Far East to join the one already there. Meantime, Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg, USAF, Chief of Staff, met in Tokyo with General MacArthur, now Commander of UN forces in the theater, to discuss the most efficient use of the B-29. MacArthur allowed General Stratemeyer to employ some Superfortresses in a campaign against strategic and deep interdiction targets, such as chemical plants, oil refineries, marshaling yards, docks, and key bridges in North Korea. The medium bombers also continued to hit enemy targets in South Korea, including Seoul's bridges over the Han River. In fact, General MacArthur insisted that the bulk of U.S. air power be employed tactically against the advancing enemy troops.*

*FEAF tasked Fifth Air Force to establish and maintain air superiority, provide UN ground forces with close air support, and interdict NKA supplies and reinforcements, thus isolating enemy forces on the front lines. The Fifth Air Force moved two fighter groups from the Philippines and Japan to South Ko-*

rea and began replacing jet-powered F-80s with more fuel-efficient propeller-driven F-51 Mustangs. Compared to the F-80s, Mustangs could loiter far longer in a target area and better endure the primitive conditions of South Korean air bases. By month's end, the World War II-era fighters were flying from Taegu and Pohang Dong, while C-47 transports used the Pusan Airfield. Fifth Air Force reserved a fourth South Korean airfield, Shachon, for emergency landings. B-26s of the 3d BG, based in Japan, often attacked bridges at night in enemy-occupied South Korea. Although the North Koreans shot down a few USAF airplanes, FEAF soon achieved air superiority over Korea.

**July 1:** North Korean forces occupied Suwon, denying FEAF the use of its airstrip. The 374th TCW began airlifting the USA 24th Infantry Division, the first U.S. troops to enter Korea since the war began, from Itazuke AB to Pusan. Fifth Air Force gained operational control of the 77th RAAF Fighter Squadron.

**July 3:** FEAF continued to airlift USA troops to Korea but substituted smaller C-46s and C-47s for C-54s, which damaged the Pusan runways. Pilots of four F-80s on the first mission with external rockets reported excessive drag that shortened their range.

**July 5:** A Joint Operations Center opened at Taejon to provide improved close air support for U.S. ground forces, which battled North Korean troops near Osan for the first time.

**July 6:** In the first strategic air attacks of the war, nine B-29s bombed the Rising Sun oil refinery at Wonsan and a chemical plant at Hungnam in North Korea. B-26s hitting advancing enemy armored columns reported six to ten tanks destroyed.

**July 7:** General Partridge resumed command of the Fifth Air Force. The UN Security Council established the UN Command, designated the United States as executive agent for prosecuting the Korean War, and requested that the U.S. President appoint a UN Commander. The 77th RAAF Fighter Squadron, representing Australia's contribution to air power in the theater, was attached to FEAF.

**July 8:** President Truman designated General MacArthur as commander of UN forces in the Korean theater. FEAF organized a provisional bomber command at Yokota, with Maj. Gen. Emmett O'Donnell, Jr., USAF, as commander. Lt. Oliver Duerksen and Lt. Frank Chermak, USAF, provided from radio-equipped jeeps the first forward air control to direct air-to-ground attacks in the Korean War.

**July 9:** Forward air controllers began using L-5G and L-17 liaison airplanes to direct F-80 air strikes in support of ground forces.

**July 10:** Carefully timing air strikes to coincide with the departure of USAF counterair patrols for refueling, four enemy Yaks bombed and strafed the USA 19th Infantry Regiment at Chongju. The Fifth Air Force began using T-6 trainer aircraft for forward air control missions, because liaison airplanes

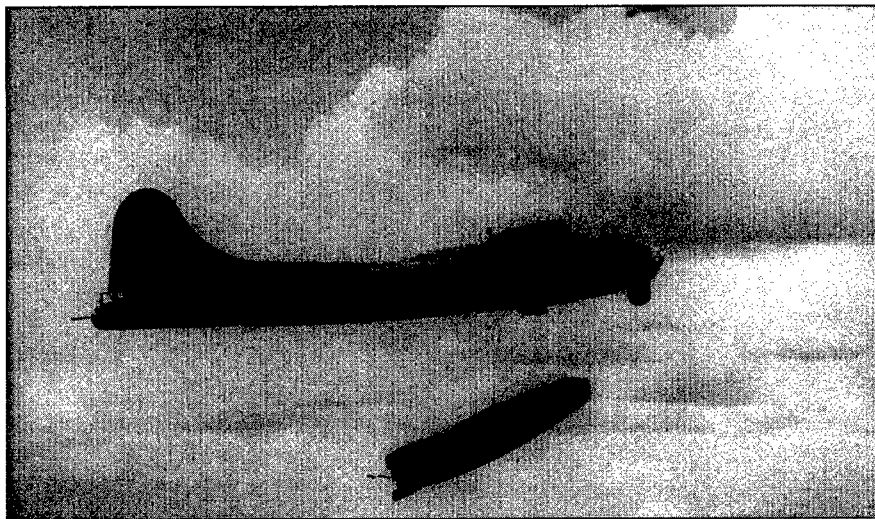
were not fast enough to elude enemy fire. F-80s caught an enemy convoy stopped at a bombed-out bridge near Pyongyang. Along with B-26s and F-82s, they attacked the convoy and claimed destruction of 117 trucks, 38 tanks, and 7 halftracks.

**July 12:** Four Military Air Transport Service airplanes arrived in Japan from the United States carrying fifty-eight large 3.5-inch rocket launchers (bazookas) and shaped charges desperately needed to destroy North Korean tanks. Enemy fighters shot down one B-29, one B-26, and one L-4, the first North Korean aerial victories. In its first mission, the 92d BG, flying from its base at Yokota, Japan, bombed the Seoul marshaling yards.

**July 13:** Forty-nine FEAF Bomber Command B-29s from the 22d and 92d BGs bombed marshaling yards and an oil refinery at Wonsan, North Korea. The 3d Air Rescue Squadron (ARS) began flying SB-17 aircraft off the Korean coast to drop rescue boats to downed B-29 crews. Advancing enemy troops forced the airborne control function to move southeastward from Taejon to Taegu. Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker, USA, Commander, Eighth Army in Korea, assumed command of all U.S. ground forces in Korea.

**July 14:** The 35th Fighter-Interceptor Group (FIG), moving from Japan to a new airfield (K-3) at Pohang, became the first USAF fighter group to be based in South Korea during the war. The 6132d Tactical Air Control Squadron, the first tactical air control unit in the war, activated at Taegu under Col. Joseph D. Lee, USAF. It provided forward, ground-based air control for aircraft providing close air support of UN forces. A Fifth Air Force-Eighth Army Joint Operations Center began to function at Taegu, and Fifth Air Force organized an advance headquarters at Itazuke AB, Japan.

**July 15:** Carrier aircraft on missions over Korea began to report to the



**A 3d Air Rescue Squadron SB-17 Flying Fortress drops a life boat.**

Joint Operations Center at Taegu. The 51st Fighter Squadron (Provisional) at Taegu flew the first F-51 Mustang combat missions in Korea. A Fifth Air Force operation order assigned "Mosquito" call signs to airborne controllers in T-6 airplanes, and the name became the identifier for the aircraft.

**July 18:** The 19th BG modified some B-29s for the use of radio-guided bombs (Razon) to enable them to bomb bridges more accurately.

**July 19:** In a dogfight near Taejon, Fifth Air Force F-80s shot down three enemy Yaks, the highest daily number of aerial victories this month. In the campaign to establish air superiority in the theater, seven F-80s of the 8th Fighter-Bomber Group (FBG), led by Lt. Col. William T. Samways, destroyed fifteen enemy airplanes on the ground near Pyongyang.

**July 20:** Despite FEAF close air support, the NKA took Taejon, forcing the remnants of the USA 24th Infantry Division to withdraw to the southeast. U.S. ground forces defending Taejon had suffered in seven days almost 30 percent casualties. Maj. Gen. Otto P. Weyland, USAF, arrived in the Far East to assume the position of FEAF Vice Commander for Operations. Fifth Air Force pilots in F-80s shot down two more enemy aircraft, the last aerial victories until November. Enemy air opposition by this time had virtually disappeared, a sign of UN air superiority.

**July 22:** The U.S. Navy (USN) aircraft carrier USS *Boxer* arrived in Japan with 145 USAF F-51s aboard. The 3d ARS deployed the first H-5 helicopter in Korea to Taegu.

**July 23:** The 6132d Tactical Air Control Group (Provisional) established a Tactical Air Control Center adjacent to the Joint Operations Center at Taegu, South Korea.

**July 24:** Fifth Air Force moved its advance headquarters from Japan to



***B-29 bombs hit twin railroad bridges near Pakchon, Korea, July 27, 1950.***

Taegu, South Korea, locating it next to the U.S. Eighth Army headquarters in Korea for ease of communication and coordination. FEAF established the advance headquarters as Fifth Air Force in Korea. The UN Command was formally established in Tokyo, Japan, commanded by General MacArthur, who assigned responsibility for ground action in Korea to General Walker, Commander, U.S. Eighth Army; naval action to Vice Adm. C. Turner Joy, Commander, Naval Forces, Far East; and air action to General Stratemeyer, Commander, FEAF.

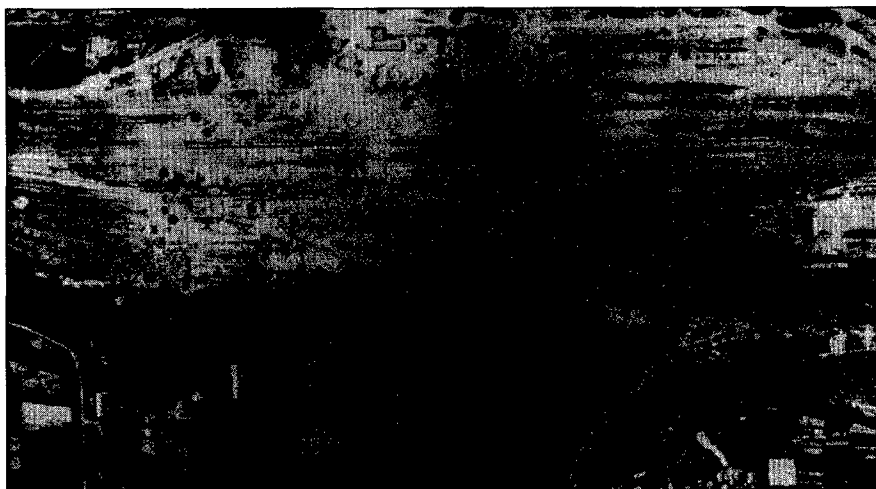
**July 28:** The first amphibious SA-16 Albatross aircraft arrived in Japan for air rescue service off the Korean coast.

**July 30:** Forty-seven B-29s bombed the Chosen Nitrogen Explosives Factory at Hungnam on the east coast of North Korea.

**July 31:** As North Korean troops continued to advance, General Walker ordered UN forces to withdraw to a new defensive line along the Naktong River.

### **August 1950**

*The North Koreans continued their offensive into South Korea, advancing on the UN's perimeter around Pusan from three directions: toward Masan from the west, toward Taegu from the northwest, and toward Pohang from the north. The communists even established bridgeheads over the Naktong River, along which UN forces held a defensive line. The United States launched its first ground offensive of the war, advancing from Masan westward toward Chinju to stabilize the southwestern end of the Pusan perimeter. The approach of enemy troops forced USAF units to evacuate Taegu and Pohang, where they had only recently arrived.*



**The Hamhung marshaling yards in North Korea lay in ruins after a B-29 strike on August 19, 1950.**



**A giant dockyard crane at Hungnam, North Korea, was demolished by a B-29 attack in 1950.**

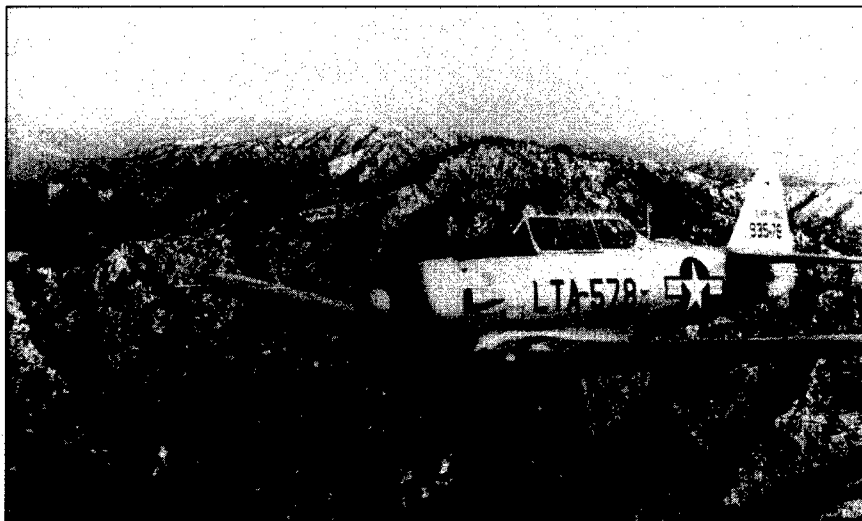
The USAF moved two additional B-29 groups from the United States to the Far East, making a total of five in the theater. During August, the Superfortresses bombed marshaling yards, industrial targets, and port facilities in North Korea; marshaling yards in Seoul; and bridges in both North and South Korea, especially those in the Seoul area. They also conducted one major carpet-bombing raid near the front.

The Fifth Air Force continued to raid enemy lines of communication, airfields, and close air support targets in South Korea. Fifth Air Force B-26s and F-82s conducted night raids south of the 38th parallel. The H-5 helicopters based at Taegu evacuated 124 casualties from the battlefields of South Korea.

During August, General MacArthur and his staff drafted plans for the invasion of Inchon, near Seoul, which would occur in September. In support of the planned UN offensive, FEAF devoted most air resources to the interdiction campaign. By midmonth, each North Korean division was receiving less than twenty-two tons of food, fuel, and ammunition, a mere trickle of what was needed to maintain enemy positions against a UN attack. To coordinate the growing airlift between Japan and Korea and to prepare for the coming invasion, FEAF organized a provisional Combat Cargo Command. General Stratemeyer failed to persuade MacArthur to give FEAF sole responsibility for all air raids over North Korea.

**August 1:** The 6147th Tactical Control Squadron, Airborne, was established at Taegu for forward air control operations with T-6 aircraft. Forty-six B-29s of the 22d and 92d BGs bombed the Chosen Nitrogen Fertilizer Factory at Hungnam, the largest chemical plant in the Far East.





**6147th Tactical Control Group T-6 Mosquito aircraft provided forward air control.**

**August 2-3:** In response to an Eighth Army request, the 374 Troop Carrier Group (TCG) airlifted 300,000 pounds of equipment and supplies from Ashiya AB, Japan, to Korea in twenty-four hours, a new airlift record for the war.

**August 3:** The 18th FBG headquarters moved from Japan to Taegu, South Korea, for expanded F-51 operations. SA-16 amphibious rescue aircraft began flying sorties along the Korean coast to retrieve U.S. pilots downed during operations.

**August 4:** B-29 attacks against key bridges north of the 38th parallel initiated FEAF's "Interdiction Campaign No. 1."

**August 5:** Maj. Louis J. Seville, USAF, Commander, 67th FBS, dived his damaged F-51 into an enemy position. For this action he posthumously received the first Medal of Honor awarded to a USAF member. In the first SA-16 rescue operation of the war, Capt. Charles E. Shroder led a crew in saving a USN pilot who had crashed into the sea off the Korean coast.

**August 6:** FEAF began nightly visual reconnaissance of enemy supply routes.

**August 7:** The 98th BG flew its first mission in the Korean War shortly after twenty of its B-29s landed at Yokota, Japan. The 822d Engineer Aviation Battalion completed the first phase of new runway construction, which allowed expanded USAF operations at Taegu.

**August 8:** The enemy threat to Taegu forced the 18th FBG to evacuate to Ashiya, Japan. The 307th BG, newly based in Okinawa, flew its first mission.

**August 10:** The USAF called up two Reserve units, the 437th TCW and

the 452d Bombardment Wing (BW), for Korean War service. Forty-six B-29s of the 22d, 92d, and 98th BGs hit an oil refinery and the railroad shops at Wonsan, North Korea.

**August 11:** C-119 Flying Boxcars began airlifting trucks from Tachikawa AB in Japan to Taegu, South Korea.

**August 12:** USN Task Force 77 stopped close air support and interdiction strikes in South Korea and moved up Korea's west coast to attack interdiction targets in North Korea, leaving all air attacks in South Korea to FEAF. More than forty B-29s attacked the port of Rashin in northeastern Korea, near the border with the Soviet Union.

**August 13:** Endangered by the NKA advance to Pohang, two squadrons of F-51s in the 35th FIG moved from nearby Yonil AB, South Korea, to Tsuiki AB, Japan.

**August 16:** Because of the enemy threat to Taegu, the advance Fifth Air Force headquarters moved to Pusan. Ninety-eight B-29s carpet-bombed suspected enemy troop concentrations in a 27-square-mile area near Waegwan northwest of Taegu. The Superfortresses dropped more than 800 tons of 500-pound bombs in the largest employment of air power in direct support of ground forces since the Normandy invasion of World War II. Subsequent reconnaissance showed little destruction of enemy troops or equipment, because they had already left the area.

**August 19:** U.S. troops, aided by air strikes, drove North Korean forces in the Yongsan bridgehead back across the Naktong River, ending the Battle



***A C-119 Flying Boxcar unloads a truck on the ground.***



***Two F-51 Mustang fighters prepare in Japan for a mission over Korea, 1950.***

of the Naktong Bulge. Sixty-three B-29s attacked the industrial and port area of Chongjin, in northeastern Korea. Nine Superfortresses of the 19th BG dropped 54 tons of 1,000-pound bombs on the west railway bridge at Seoul. Called the "elastic bridge," it survived repeated air attacks to bring it down. Thirty-seven USN dive bombers from two aircraft carriers followed up the USAF attack. Aerial reconnaissance the next day revealed that two spans had collapsed.

**August 19-20:** General Partridge moved the Joint Operations Center from Taegu to Pusan because of enemy advances.

**August 22:** Antiaircraft gunners fired from across the Yalu River at RB-29s reconnoitering the border, the first hostile Chinese action against UN aircraft.

**August 23:** General MacArthur set September 15 as the date to invade Inchon. The 19th BG flew the first Razon mission, but with the exception of one bomb that hit the railroad bridge west of Pyongyang, the World War II-era control equipment failed to guide the bombs to the target.

**August 25:** FEAFF directed Fifth Air Force to maintain constant armed surveillance of enemy airfields to prevent an enemy buildup of air strength before the Inchon invasion.

**August 26:** Fifth Air Force organized the 47th and 48th TCSs (Provisional) at Tachikawa with C-46s from all over the Far East theater to augment FEAFF airlift resources for UN offensives planned for September. At Ashiya, Japan, FEAFF organized the 1st Troop Carrier Task Force (Provisional) as the nucleus of the new Combat Cargo Command (Provisional). Maj. Gen. William H. Tunner, USAF, architect of the "Hump" airlift of World War II and the Berlin airlift, 1948-1949, assumed command of Combat Cargo Command.

**August 27:** Two USAF Mustang pilots accidentally strayed into China and strafed an airstrip near Antung, mistaking it for a North Korean airstrip at Sinuiju. The Chinese exploited the incident to the fullest for propaganda and

diplomatic purposes. The 92th BG sent twenty-four B-29s to Kyomipo to bomb the largest iron and steel plant in Korea. FEAF experimented with delayed-action bombs to discourage enemy repairs on bridges.

**August 30:** Before dawn an experimental B-29 flare mission illuminated the Han River in the Seoul area for a B-26 strike on an elusive enemy pontoon bridge, but it could not be found. B-26s attacked the permanent bridge.

**August 31:** After a ten-day lull in the ground fighting, North Korean forces launched a coordinated offensive against the entire Pusan perimeter. Fifth Air Force provided close air support for the defending UN troops. Seventy-four B-29s bombed mining facilities, metal industries, and marshaling yards at Chinnampo in the largest strategic bombing mission of the month. Among the targets were aluminum and magnesium plants.

## **September 1950**

*September witnessed the first major turning point in the Korean War. At the beginning of the month, North Korean forces were at the threshold of total victory, but by its end they were in full retreat across the 38th parallel.*

*A final, desperate week-long communist offensive along the Pusan perimeter failed to drive UN and ROK forces out of Korea. Relentless air attacks exacted a terrible price on enemy forces, and by mid-September, with the Eighth Army prepared to go on the offensive, UN forces confronted a starving enemy who was short of ammunition and other essential supplies. At the same time, General MacArthur launched an amphibious invasion at Inchon, just west of Seoul and more than 150 miles northwest of the front lines. While USN and U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) aircraft covered the invasion area, the USAF cut enemy lines of communication and patrolled enemy-held airfields to make them inoperative. The Inchon invaders drove a wedge between the NKA in the south and its main supply routes in the north, threatening to cut it off and squeeze it against advancing Eighth Army forces from the southeast. Hoping to escape the trap, the North Koreans retreated rapidly northward. By the end of September, U.S. forces from Inchon and Pusan had linked up near Osan. UN forces captured over 125,000 prisoners of war (POWs). UN troops marched into Seoul and restored the ROK government there.*

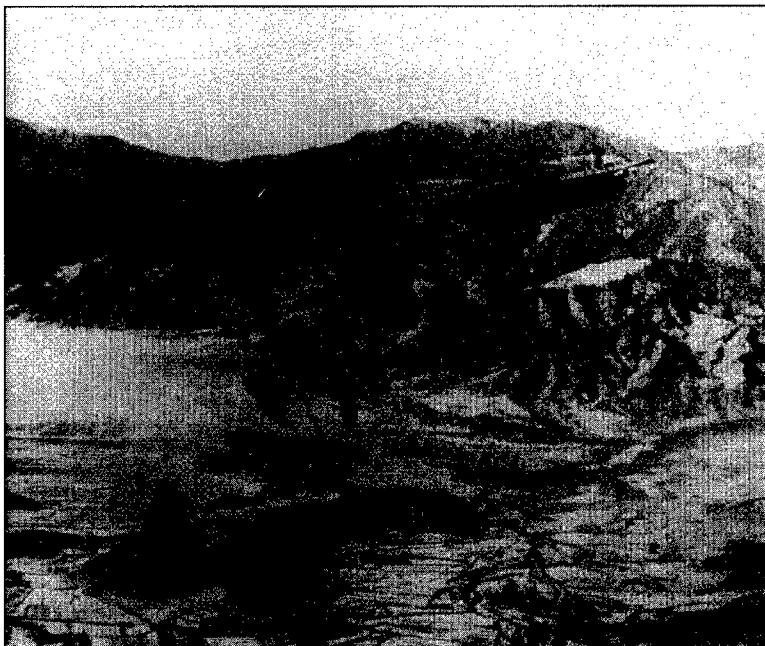
*FEAF activities in Korea rose to a crescendo during September. Bomber Command pursued a major B-29 strategic bombing campaign to its conclusion, attacking North Korean industrial facilities and troop training centers in such cities as Wonsan, Hungnam, Hamhung, Pyongyang, Songjin, and Chonjin. Superfortresses also raided marshaling yards and railroad junctions in North Korea and flew interdiction and close air support missions in South Korea for the Eighth Army offensive. Fifth Air Force moved fighter squadrons from Japan back to Korea and began basing jet fighters there. Fifth Air Force F-51s, F-80s, and B-26s destroyed large numbers of tanks and enemy troop concentrations, allowing UN and ROK forces to move northward to the 38th*

parallel. Combat Cargo Command, using newly recaptured airfields at Kimpo and Suwon, airlifted ammunition, rations, and other supplies to the fast-moving UN forces. Seventy C-119 flights airlifted a pontoon bridge from Japan to the Seoul area to span the Han River for UN troops. Flying Boxcars also dropped paratroopers and supplies at the front while C-54s, having delivered supplies to bases near Seoul, returned to Japan with casualties airlifted from the battle area by H-5 helicopters.

**September 1:** Fifth Air Force strafed and dropped napalm and bombs on NKA troops and armored columns attacking along the Naktong River front. Carrier-based aircraft from USN Task Force 77 also provided close air support to the perimeter defenders. The 21st TCS dropped rations and ammunition to U.S. troops temporarily cut off by the enemy thrusts. General MacArthur directed General Stratemeyer to use all available FEAF air power, including B-29s, to help the Eighth Army hold the "Pusan perimeter," the southeast corner of the Korean peninsula that South Korea still controlled.

**September 3:** Task Force 77 withdrew its aircraft carriers from the Pusan area for replenishment at sea and movement north to strike communications targets, leaving all close air support responsibility with FEAF.

**September 4:** In the first H-5 helicopter rescue of a downed U.S. pilot from behind enemy lines in Korea, at Hanggan-dong Lt. Paul W. Van Boven saved Capt. Robert E. Wayne. Three squadrons of C-119 Flying Boxcars ar-



**A C-119 Flying Boxcar drops cargo by parachute.**

rived at Ashiya AB in Japan for use in the Korean War.

**September 6:** As North Korean forces approached Taegu, Eighth Army headquarters withdrew to Pusan. Col. Aaron Tyler, airfield commander at Taegu, began moving the remaining aircraft, including the T-6 Mosquitoes of the 6147th Tactical Control Squadron, southward to Pusan.

**September 7:** FEAF Bomber Command attacked the ironworks at Chongjin in extreme northeastern North Korea, employing twenty-four B-29s of the 22d BG.

**September 8:** The 18th F BG, which had departed Korea a month earlier, returned from Japan, settling at Pusan East (Tongnae).

**September 9:** North Korean forces attacking southeast of Hajang reached a point only eight miles from Taegu, their farthest penetration on the western front. FEAF Bomber Command began a rail interdiction campaign north of Seoul to slow enemy reinforcements, which might counter the UN Inchon landing. In this campaign, the medium bombers combined attacks on marshaling yards with raids to cut rails at multiple points along key routes.

**September 10:** As a result of the USN Task Force 77's unexpected withdrawal from close air support of the Eighth Army on September 3, General Stratemeyer persuaded General MacArthur to direct that all close air support requests must be routed through the Fifth Air Force. If Fifth Air Force lacked resources to meet the requests, they were to be forwarded to FEAF headquarters for coordination with the Commander, Naval Forces, Far East.

**September 13:** Typhoon Kezia hit southern Japan, hampering FEAF operations and forcing some aircraft to move temporarily to Pusan and Taegu.

**September 15:** U.S. Marines invaded the island of Wolmi-do, in Inchon Harbor, at dawn, and occupied it in less than an hour. The main U.S. X Corps landings at Inchon occurred at high tide, in the afternoon, after a 45-minute naval and air bombardment. USN and USMC aircraft from carriers provided air cover during the amphibious assault. FEAF air raids in South Korea also prepared the way for the planned Eighth Army advance from the Pusan perimeter.

**September 16:** U.S. forces secured Inchon and began moving toward Seoul. From the vicinity of Taegu, the U.S. Eighth Army launched its long-awaited offensive.

**September 17:** U.S. Marines captured Kimpo Airfield near Seoul. To support the Eighth Army offensive, Fifth Air Force F-51s and F-80s flew napalm attacks, reportedly killing more than 1,200 enemy soldiers in Tabudong, Yongchon, and other strongholds near the Naktong River. FEAF began a week of dropping four million psychological warfare leaflets.

**September 18:** Forty-two B-29s of the 92d and 98th BGs carpet-bombed two 500-by-5,000-yard areas near Waegwan. The 1,600 bombs effectively destroyed enemy troop concentrations blocking the Eighth Army offensive.

**September 19:** FEAF Combat Cargo Command began an airlift to



***18th Fighter-Bomber Wing F-51 Mustangs taxi for takeoff behind napalm tanks such as those dropped against targets in Korea.***

Kimpo, located near Seoul. Nine C-54s and twenty-three C-119s transported to Kimpo 208 tons of equipment and supplies for ground troops. Supported by Fifth Air Force close air support missions, the 24th Infantry Division began crossing the Naktong River near Waegwan, and the 1st Cavalry Division broke through communist lines.

**September 20:** FEAF Combat Cargo Command expanded its airlift into Kimpo into an around-the-clock operation by using night lighting equipment transported the previous day. U.S. Marines entered the outskirts of Seoul. To destroy enemy reinforcements, B-29s attacked three separate barracks areas in and near Pyongyang, North Korea.

**September 21:** USAF forward air controllers in T-6 Mosquitoes equipped with air-to-ground radios spotted about thirty enemy tanks preparing to ambush the advancing 24th Infantry Division. They called USAF aircraft and USA ground artillery, which destroyed fourteen enemy tanks and forced the rest to flee. FEAF Combat Cargo Command C-54s began airlifting supplies, including sixty-five tons of rations and ammunition, to newly captured Suwon Airfield south of Seoul. C-119s initiated airdrops of food and ammunition to frontline UN troops.

**September 22:** North Korean resistance crumbled all along the Pusan perimeter. Lt. George W. Nelson, a USAF pilot in a Mosquito aircraft, dropped a note to 200 enemy troops northeast of Kunsan demanding their surrender. They complied, moving to a designated hill to be captured by nearby UN ground troops. B-29s dropped flares over rail lines, allowing B-26s to attack enemy trains at night.

**September 23:** HQ Fifth Air Force in Korea moved from Pusan to Taegu. In the first recorded special operations mission of the war, SB-17 aircraft of the 3d ARS made a classified flight in Korea.

**September 25:** FEAF flew flare missions over Seoul all night to allow USMC night fighters to attack North Korean troops fleeing the city. FEAF Combat Cargo Command landed a battalion of 187th Airborne Regiment paratroopers at Kimpo to guard the U.S. X Corps' northern flank as it moved out from Inchon.

**September 26:** U.S. military forces from Inchon and Pusan linked up near Osan, while ROK troops with Fifth Air Force support moved northward along the east coast toward the 38th parallel. Twenty B-29s of the 22d BG bombed a munitions factory at Haeju, destroying the power plant and five related buildings. Other B-29s belonging to the 92d BG raided the Pujon hydroelectric plant near Hungnam. These attacks marked the end of the first strategic bombing campaign against North Korea. Fifth Air Force organized the provisional 543d Tactical Support Group at Taegu to manage tactical reconnaissance squadrons in Korea.

**September 27:** U.S. Marines drove enemy forces from Seoul and took control of the capital building. More than a hundred communist troops, each carrying a "safe conduct pass" that B-29s had dropped, surrendered to U.S. forces near Seoul. The Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered General MacArthur to destroy the NKA, which involved crossing the 38th parallel into North Korea. Only ROK troops were to be allowed by the UN Command in provinces bordering China and the Soviet Union. The Joint Chiefs of Staff also canceled further strategic bombing of North Korea. FEAF Combat Cargo Command finished airlifting the 187th Airborne Regiment to Kimpo.

**September 28:** ROK troops advanced into North Korea for the first time. General MacArthur officially restored Seoul to ROK President Syngman Rhee. The first jet fighter squadron to operate from a base in Korea, the 7th FBS, moved from Itazuke to Taegu. Three RB-45 Tornados, the first jet reconnaissance aircraft in the USAF inventory, arrived in the Far East.

## **October 1950**

*By October few organized North Korean units remained in South Korea. General MacArthur prohibited further destruction of rail facilities south of the 38th parallel unless the enemy were actively using them. UN and ROK forces advanced steadily into North Korea, taking Pyongyang and Wonsan and driving toward the Yalu River, which ROK troops reached by the end of the month. During October, most Fifth Air Force subordinate combat organizations—four fighter groups and two reconnaissance squadrons—and much of the support infrastructure moved from Japan to Korea. UN forces captured North Korean airfields at Wonsan, Sinmak, Pyongyang, and Sinanju, all of which became available to FEAF and Fifth Air Force aircraft. A scarcity of strategic targets in North Korea permitted the return of the 22d and 92d BGs to return with their B-29s to the United States. The FEAF interdiction cam-*



*paign against enemy bridges south of the Yalu River concluded, and as the daily number of fighter and bomber sorties declined, daily cargo sorties increased. During the month, FEAF aircraft transported 2,840 patients within Korea and 3,025 patients from Korea to Japan. To communicate a surrender ultimatum from General MacArthur, FEAF aircraft dropped 4,440,000 leaflets over parts of North Korea not yet in UN hands. Just as a united, non-communist Korea seemed within reach, over 180,000 Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) troops slipped over the Yalu River into North Korea.*

**October 2:** In an effort to crush NKA reinforcements, twenty-two FEAF Bomber Command B-29s attacked a North Korean military training area at Nanam, destroying 75 percent of the buildings. The 8th TRS moved from Itazuke, Japan, to Taegu, Korea, to become the first USAF day reconnaissance squadron stationed in Korea.

**October 3:** In a message to the Indian ambassador, China warned that it would send troops to defend North Korea if non-Korean UN troops moved north of the 38th parallel.

**October 4:** FEAF gained operational control of all land-based aircraft in Korea, including USMC squadrons at Kimpo. Anticipating the acquisition of enemy air installations, FEAF stopped most attacks on airfields south of the 40th parallel. The 2d South African Air Force (SAAF) Fighter Squadron, the Union of South Africa's contribution to UN air power, arrived in the theater and was attached to FEAF.

**October 6:** The USAF took charge of Kimpo Airfield, which the USMC had commanded since its capture. Eighteen B-29s attacked an enemy arsenal at Kan-ni, North Korea. FEAF issued a new interdiction plan canceling attacks on bridges south of Pyongyang and Wonsan.

**October 7:** The UN General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution authorizing General MacArthur to move into North Korea. For the first time, U.S. troops crossed the 38th parallel. USAF airplanes dropped food to a group of 150 former POWs who had escaped during the North Korean retreat.

**October 8:** Two F-80s accidentally strafed a Soviet airfield near Vladivostok, USSR, on the Pacific coast northeast of the Korea border. General Stratemeyer removed the group commander, reassigning him to FEAF headquarters, and instituted a court-martial of the two pilots. Razon bomb missions resumed after more reliable radio-guided bombs arrived from the United States. The 162d TRS moved from Itazuke, Japan, to Taegu, becoming the first night reconnaissance squadron stationed in Korea.

**October 10:** For the first time while a helicopter was in flight, a 3d ARS H-5 crew administered blood plasma to a rescued pilot. The crewmembers received Silver Stars for this action.

**October 12:** FEAF Combat Cargo Command began an airlift of ROK military supplies to Wonsan, which ROK forces had captured two days earlier. It also began transporting 600 tons of bridge sections to Kimpo Airfield.

**October 14:** Two communist aircraft raided Inchon Harbor and Kimp'o Airfield. FEAF suspected they had come from Sinuiju, North Korea, on the Chinese border. CCF troops began to enter North Korea from Manchuria.

**October 15:** In a meeting with President Truman on Wake Island, General MacArthur predicted that the war would be over by Christmas and China would not intervene. CCF anti-aircraft artillery for the first time shot down an F-51 over the Yalu River near Sinuiju. Headquarters Fifth Air Force in Korea opened in Seoul.

**October 17:** Just one day after the capture of Sinmak, less than fifty miles southeast of Pyongyang, North Korea, FEAF Combat Cargo Command began airlifting fuel and rations there to sustain a UN offensive toward the North Korean capital. The command also began aeromedical evacuations from Sinmak to Kimp'o.

**October 18:** An RB-29 reconnaissance crew spotted more than seventy-five fighters at Antung's airfield in China, just across the Yalu River from North Korea, suggesting that Communist China might intervene in the war.

**October 19:** After a battle at Hukkyori, some ten miles south of the North Korean capital, UN forces entered Pyongyang. Fifth Air Force fighters provided crucial air support to U.S. 1st Cavalry Division troops during this battle.

**October 20:** FEAF Combat Cargo Command dropped the USA 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team thirty miles north of Pyongyang. Seventy-one C-119s and forty C-47s participated in the operation, dropping more than 2,800 troops and 300 tons of equipment and supplies at Sukchon and Sunchon. The command also began airlifting Eighth Army supplies to Pyongyang.

**October 21:** UN forces from Pyongyang linked up with the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in the Sukchon-Sunchon area. H-5s of the 3d ARS evacuated some thirty-five paratroopers in the first use of a helicopter in support of an airborne operation. H-5s also evacuated seven American POWs from the area. A C-47 equipped with loudspeakers persuaded some 500 enemy troops hiding in houses south of Kunmori to surrender. Combat Cargo Command began aeromedical evacuations from Pyongyang.

**October 23:** The cargo command concluded its fourth consecutive day of airlift for the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team. The Flying Boxcars had airdropped almost 4,000 troops and nearly 600 tons of materiel, including jeeps, trucks, and howitzers.

**October 24:** General MacArthur removed restrictions on how far U.S. troops could move into North Korea, giving them permission to go all the way to the Chinese border.

**October 25:** FEAF Bomber Command temporarily stopped flying combat missions for lack of B-29 targets in Korea. FEAF removed all restrictions on close air support missions near the Yalu River, allowing fighter operations as far north as the Chinese border. FEAF Combat Cargo Command set a

new daily record by airlifting 1,767 tons of equipment within Korea.

**October 26:** ROK forces reached the Yalu River along the Chinese border at Chosan in northwest Korea. Chinese forces severely savaged a ROK battalion near Onjong. ROK and UN troops captured the first CCF prisoners. FEAF Combat Cargo Command C-119s dropped supplies to friendly ground troops cut off in North Korea, delivering 28.5 tons of ammunition, fuel, and oil near Unsan, some fifty miles south of Chosan.

**October 27:** Chinese soldiers moving into Korea attacked the ROK 6th Infantry Division near the Yalu River. The 452d BG flew its first B-26 combat mission in the Korean War, less than a month after it was called to active duty in the United States.

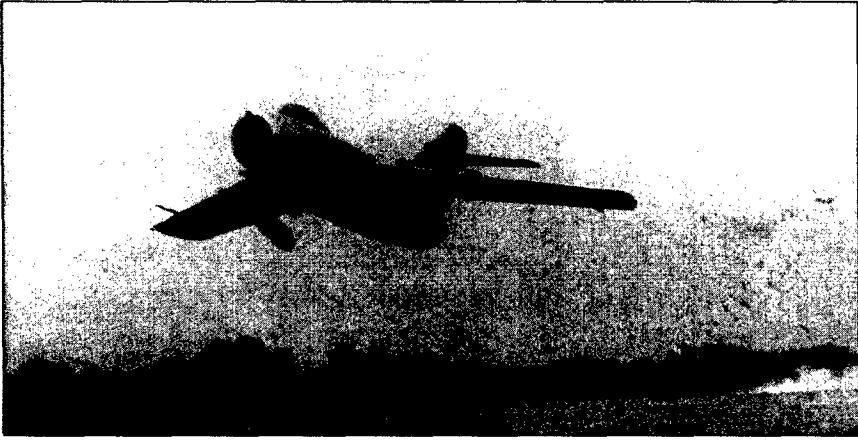
**October 29:** C-47s made aeromedical flights from newly captured Sinanju, North Korea, the northernmost Korean airfield FEAF aircraft ever used. Sinanju was located at the mouth of Chongchon River, some forty miles north of Pyongyang.

## **November 1950**

*As UN forces occupied most of North Korea, Superfortress strikes on enemy ports and bridges over the Yalu River failed to staunch the flow of Chinese forces to North Korea. Even if FEAF bombers had been able to destroy every fixed bridge over the Yalu, the Chinese could have crossed on pontoon bridges or on thick ice that covered sections of the river by the end of the month. Unable to overfly Manchuria, B-29s attacked the bridges by following the course of the river. Fighter escorts could fly only on the Korean side of the bombers. Enemy fighters and antiaircraft guns based in China threatened the Superfortresses and persuaded FEAF to restrict their flights in the area. FEAF Bomber Command B-29s dropped incendiary bombs on enemy ports and on supply and communications centers close to China. Following General MacArthur's orders, the command initiated in early November a two-week campaign of incendiary attacks on North Korean cities and towns to destroy supplies and shelter for enemy troops.*

*For the first time since July, USAF pilots shot down enemy aircraft in Korea, reflecting an intensification of the air war. Soviet-built MiG-15 sweptwing jet fighters, faster than any USAF aircraft in the theater, entered the war, flying from Chinese sanctuaries. During the month, USAF F-80s shot down a few MiGs, although some USAF fighters suffered heavy damage in these encounters. The United States transported F-84 and F-86 fighters to the Far East by sea, but by the end of the month they had not yet entered combat. At the request of General Partridge, Commander, Fifth Air Force, FEAF Combat Cargo Command diverted airlift resources from the logistical support of ground forces to move three F-51 fighter groups from South Korea to bases in North Korea.*

*The three RB-45 aircraft that finally received proper photographic equipment after being in the theater for more than a month began flying missions. But snow covered the North Korean landscape, hiding enemy installa-*



**A MiG-15 taking off**

tions, equipment, and troops.

*Eighth Army units concentrated along the southern bank of the Chongchon River in northwest North Korea to prepare for a final offensive. General MacArthur launched his attack the last week in November, but the CCF responded with an almost immediate counteroffensive that ended hopes of sending U.S. troops home by Christmas.*

**November 1:** Three Yak fighters attacked USAF airplanes, including a B-26, over northwestern North Korea. The B-26 crew claimed one Yak, and two F-51 pilots shot down the other two enemy aircraft, scoring the first aerial victories since July. F-80s attacked Sinuiju Airfield and destroyed several Yak fighters on the ground, but anti-aircraft artillery from across the Yalu shot down one FEAF jet. Later that day, six MiG-15 jets appeared for the first time in the war and fired on a T-6 and a flight of F-51 Mustangs in the Yalu River area. A regiment of the USA 1st Cavalry Division experienced a strong CCF attack in the first encounter of the war between U.S. and Chinese forces.

**November 2:** FEAF flew the first RB-45 Tornado jet reconnaissance mission in the war.

**November 3:** In the face of strong CCF attacks, General Walker ordered the bulk of the Eighth Army to withdraw to the Chongchon River for regrouping and resupply.

**November 4:** B-26s supplying close support for the Eighth Army attacked enemy troops near Chongju, killing an estimated 500 soldiers and providing hard-pressed U.S. troops some relief.

**November 5:** Bomber Command began incendiary bomb attacks on North Korean cities and towns. Twenty-one B-29s of the 19th BG dropped 170 tons of fire bombs on Kanggye, located less than twenty miles south of

the Chinese border. The attack destroyed 65 percent of the town's center.

**November 8:** In the largest incendiary raid of the Korean War, seventy Superfortresses dropped some 580 tons of fire bombs on Sinuiju on the Chinese border. Other B-29s attacked bridges over the Yalu River for the first time. When MiG-15s challenged F-80s flying in the same area, Lt. Russell J. Brown, USAF, 16th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (FIS), shot down a MiG to score the first jet-to-jet aerial victory in history.

**November 9:** A 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron gunner, Cpl. Harry J. LaVene, scored the first B-29 jet victory of the Korean War, destroying an attacking MiG-15. The damaged RB-29 limped back to Japan, but five crewmen died in the crash landing.

**November 10:** MiG-15s near the Yalu River shot down a B-29 for the first time. The crew, assigned to the 307th BG, parachuted behind enemy lines to become POWs. Less than thirty-six hours after its arrival in Japan, the 437th TCW began airlifting cargo on C-46s to Korea.

**November 13:** UN forces of X Corps, based in Hungnam, North Korea, began moving northward, with a regiment of the 1st U.S. Marine Division advancing into the Changjin Reservoir area.

**November 14:** Fifteen MiG-15s attacked eighteen B-29s bombing the bridges at Sinuiju and damaged two.

**November 18:** For the first time, a USAF fighter group moved to North Korea. The 35th FIG, which had also been the first fighter group based in South Korea, settled at Yonpo Airfield, near Hungnam.

**November 19:** In the first massed light-bomber attack of the Korean War, fifty B-26s from Japan dropped incendiary bombs on Musan, North Korea, on the Tumen River, along the border with China. The attack destroyed 75 percent of the town's barracks area.

**November 20:** FEAF Combat Cargo Command airdropped rations and gasoline at Kapsan, some twenty miles south of the Yalu River, to supply the 7th Infantry Division, the U.S. ground unit advancing the farthest north during the war.

**November 24:** To support the UN offensive beginning this day, B-29s attacked North Korean communications and supply centers and Yalu bridges, while Fifth Air Force fighters intensified close air support missions and FEAF Combat Cargo Command airdropped ammunition to frontline troops.

**November 25:** CCF launched a major offensive and, with almost double the number of MacArthur's U.S. troops, stopped the UN offensive completely. The Royal Hellenic Air Force Detachment, a C-47 transport unit representing Greece's air power contribution to the war, arrived in the Far East and was attached to FEAF.

**November 26:** USAF B-26s flew their first close air support night missions under TACP direction. The 3d BG flew sixty-seven B-26 missions along the Eighth Army's bomblines in a five-hour period. Still, the enemy drove both the Eighth Army in northwest Korea and the X Corps in northeast Korea southward.

**November 28:** FEAF Combat Cargo Command began a two-week airlift of supplies to U.S. troops, whom the Chinese had surrounded in the Changjin Reservoir area. From Yonpo, North Korea, the 35th FIG flew intense close air support missions for the encircled forces. For the first time, B-26s, using a more accurate radar than previously available, bombed within 1,000 yards of the front line. A small communist aircraft bombed U.S.-held Pyongyang Airfield and badly damaged eleven P-51 Mustangs on the ground. General MacArthur informed Washington that he faced "an entirely new war."

## **December 1950**

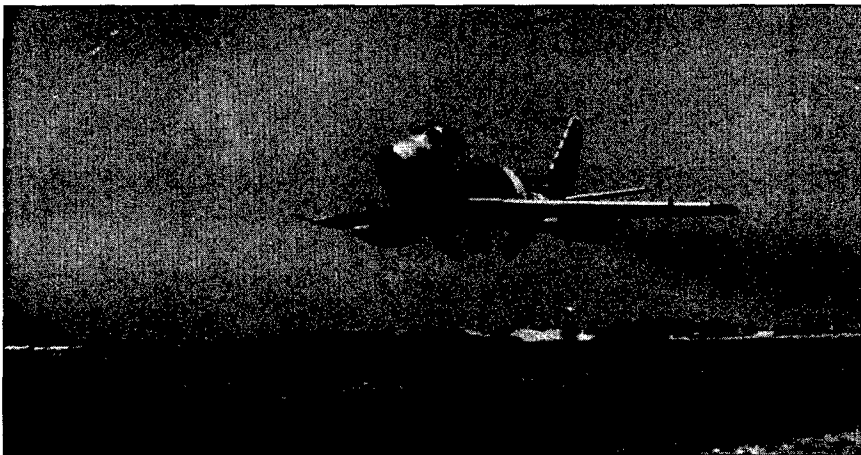
*Pressured by overwhelming numbers of CCF troops, the U.S. Eighth Army withdrew from western North Korea. FEAF aided this withdrawal by a "reverse airlift" that allowed U.S. forces to take out most of their equipment and supplies. FEAF Combat Cargo Command airlifted food and ammunition to encircled elements of the X Corps and evacuated their sick and wounded troops. The X Corps' units concentrated at Hungnam, so that the UN forces could leave eastern North Korea by sea. By the end of the month, the UN line had fallen back to near the 38th parallel, and most of North Korea was back in communist hands.*

*Three USAF fighter groups withdrew from North to South Korea, reducing Fifth Air Force's ability to provide air support for Eighth Army and X Corps simultaneously. Nevertheless, effective Fifth Air Force attacks on the CCF forced them to abandon daytime movements. FEAF Bomber Command conducted almost daily B-29 raids against North Korean cities that served as enemy supply or communications centers—Sinanju, Anju, Kanggye, Pyongyang, and Wonsan. FEAF embarked on a new interdiction plan that divided North Korea into ten zones. The zones made target destruction more systematic and allowed FEAF and USN aviation to coordinate their missions better. FEAF F-86s and F-84s entered combat in North Korea to challenge communist MiG-15s flying from Manchurian sanctuaries.*

*The newly organized Boat Section of the 6160th Air Base Group (ABG) received one 104-foot boat, one 63-foot boat, and two 24-footers, with which it conducted 51 search and rescue missions.*

**December 1:** The USS *Cape Esperance* arrived in Japan with F-86 fighters of the 4th FIW. Fifth Air Force headquarters moved from Nagoya, Japan, to Seoul, South Korea, and its newly activated 314th Air Division (AD) assumed responsibility for the air defense of Japan. In the first prolonged MiG attack of the war, six MiG-15s engaged three B-29s for six minutes, damaging them considerably despite their F-80 escorts. FEAF Combat Cargo Command evacuated about 1,500 UN casualties from the Pyongyang area.

**December 3:** U.S. troops from the Changjin Reservoir area fought their way to Hagaru-ri, while a relief column from Hungnam fought its way toward



**A USAF F-86 Sabre takes off.**

them, reaching Koto-ri about seven miles away. Communist troops prevented the two groups from linking and encircled them both, forcing them to rely on airlift for resupply.

**December 4:** MiG-15s shot down one of the three USAF Tornado reconnaissance aircraft in the theater, making the first successful jet bomber interception in air power history.

**December 5:** UN forces abandoned Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, which they had held since October 19. Greek C-47s joined the FEAF Combat Cargo Command airlift to supply UN troops surrounded in northeastern Korea. The command evacuated 3,925 patients within the theater in the biggest day of the war for aeromedical airlift. Transports flew most of these from a frozen airstrip at Hagaru-ri. The USAF suspended attacks on the Yalu River bridges, because enemy forces were crossing the frozen river on the ice.

**December 6:** The 27th Fighter-Escort Wing (FEW), a Strategic Air Command unit from Bergstrom AFB, Texas, began flying combat operations from Taegu, South Korea, introducing F-84 Thunderjet fighters to the war.

**December 7:** FEAF B-29s bombed North Korean towns in the Changjin Reservoir area to relieve enemy pressure on USMC and USA units attempting to break out from Hagaru-ri and Koto-ri. Troops in those two locations finally linked and built crude airstrips that allowed FEAF Combat Cargo Command airplanes to land food and ammunition and to evacuate casualties. Eight C-119s dropped bridge spans to the surrounded U.S. troops so that they could cross a 1,500-foot-deep gorge to break the enemy encirclement. This was the first airdropped bridge in the history of warfare.

**December 10:** A two-week FEAF Combat Cargo Command airlift for surrounded U.S. troops in northeastern Korea concluded after delivering 1,580 tons of supplies and equipment and moving nearly 5,000 sick and

wounded troops. Participating airlift units conducted 350 C-119 and C-47 flights.

**December 11:** The X Corps began loading ships in Hungnam Harbor.

**December 14:** As Chinese forces approached, FEAF Combat Cargo Command began an aerial evacuation from Yonpo Airfield near Hamhung. A FEAF airplane dropped the first Tarzon bomb to be used in Korea on a tunnel near Huichon, with limited effectiveness. The Tarzon bomb was a six-ton version of the Razon bomb, but generally it did not meet expectations.

**December 15:** The 4th FIG inaugurated F-86 Sabre operations in Korea. FEAF Bomber Command launched its first mission in a new zone-interdiction plan. ROK forces completed their withdrawal from Wonsan, North Korea, and the U.S. Eighth Army withdrew south of the 38th parallel.

**December 17:** Lt. Col. Bruce H. Hinton, USAF, 4th FIG, scored the first F-86 aerial victory over a MiG-15 on the first day Sabres encountered communist jets. FEAF Combat Cargo Command abandoned Yonpo Airfield to communist forces, having transported in four days 228 patients, 3,891 other passengers, and 2,089 tons of cargo.

**December 20:** Twelve C-54s of the 61st TCG airlifted 806 South Korean orphans from Kimpo to Cheju-do off the South Korean coast in Operation Christmas Kidlift.

**December 22:** One USN and five USAF pilots shot down six MiG-15s, the highest daily FEAF aerial victory credit total for the month and the high-



*ROK soldiers board a C-54 Skymaster for evacuation from Yonpo Airfield, in northeastern Korea, December 1950.*



est since June. A MiG-15 shot down an F-86 for the first time. Headquarters Fifth Air Force, U.S. Eighth Army in Korea headquarters, and the Joint Operations Center moved from Seoul to Taegu.

**December 23:** Three H-5 helicopter crews with fighter cover rescued eleven U.S. and twenty-four ROK soldiers from a field eight miles behind enemy lines. General Walker, Commander, U.S. Eighth Army, was killed in a vehicle accident north of Seoul.

**December 24:** X Corps completed the sea evacuation of Hungnam. More than 105,000 troops and 91,000 civilians had departed since the exodus began on December 11. USAF B-26s and USN gunfire held the enemy at bay during the night as the last ships departed. The 3d ARS flew thirty-five liberated POWs from enemy territory.

**December 25:** Chinese forces crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea.

**December 26:** Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, USA, took command of the U.S. Eighth Army in Korea, as it absorbed X Corps.

**December 29:** From Taegu, RF-51 aircraft began flying tactical reconnaissance missions in Korea for the first time. They had a longer range than their RF-80 predecessors.

**December 31:** CCF in Korea launched an offensive against UN troops south of the 38th parallel. General Ridgway ordered Eighth Army troops to a new defensive line seventy miles farther south.

# 1951

## **January 1951**

*Early in January, the powerful new offensive by CCF and North Korean forces drove UN forces from Seoul and nearby Kimpo and Suwon Airfields. The UN and communist ground forces fought a seesaw battle for the crossroads city of Wonju in north-central South Korea. By mid-January, the enemy offensive had stalled on a line between Pyontaek on the west coast and Samchok on the east, partly because the UN Command retained air superiority over the front. By the end of the month, UN forces had launched a counteroffensive, forcing the enemy northward toward Seoul.*

*With the loss of Kimpo and Suwon Airfields, the USAF moved most jet fighters to bases in Japan. From there, USAF F-86s lacked the range to reach the front easily, much less the MiG-infested skies of northwestern Korea. After almost two weeks out of combat, the Fifth Air Force returned some Sabres to Korea to test their capabilities in new missions of armed reconnaissance and close air support. These flew air-to-ground missions from Taegu, where F-80s and F-84s also continued to operate. Communist jet fighters remained at their Yalu River bases and for the first nineteen days of January only occasionally challenged U.S. aircraft over North Korea. Lacking effective range and air-to-ground weapons, the enemy jets provided no air support for communist ground troops. Despite severe winter weather that sometimes curtailed sorties during January, Fifth Air Force conducted extremely destructive close air support missions for UN forces, killing or wounding an estimated 18,750 enemy troops. C-47s embarked on new roles—flare-dropping in support of B-26 and F-82 night raids and serving as communications platforms to connect the Tactical Air Control Center, TACPs, and T-6 Mosquito aircraft.*

*FEAF Bomber Command raided enemy marshaling yards, airfields, and supply centers, dropping more than 6,700 tons of bombs in more than 720 sorties. Superfortress crews occasionally struck bridges with radio-guided bombs, but they largely avoided northwestern Korea where they might have encountered scores of MiG-15s. In an air campaign intended to burn and destroy key North Korean cities, Bomber Command B-29s raided Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, in huge formations that dropped incendiary bombs on the city. Targets of other major incendiary raids in North Korea included Hamhung, Kaesong, and Komusan. By the end of the month, FEAF Bomber Command, with a total force of about a hundred B-29s, was launching about twenty-four Superfortresses daily, rotating missions among the 19th, 98th, and 307th BGs. The command also initiated B-29 night harassment attacks against North Korean cities during January.*

*Deprived of bases in the Seoul area, FEAF Combat Cargo Command could not easily respond to increased UN demands for airlift caused by rapid unit withdrawals and heavily snow-blocked surface supply lines. Near the front lines, Eighth Army engineers bulldozed airstrips at Wonju and Chungju for the cargo landings, but Wonju fell into enemy hands, and frozen mud caused C-46 accidents at Chungju. C-119s, too large to land at these airstrips, dropped supplies to UN forces in north-central South Korea. Depending primarily on C-47 and C-119 airplanes, Combat Cargo Command delivered more than 14,000 tons of equipment and supplies; it also evacuated 10,000 combat casualties in South Korea during the initial three weeks of January. Search and rescue units flew 452 missions, evacuating 112 critically wounded patients and rescuing 16 soldiers from behind enemy lines. The Fifth Air Force's Boat Section conducted forty-two missions.*

**January 1:** As almost half a million CCF and North Korean troops launched a new ground offensive, Fifth Air Force embarked on a campaign of air raids on enemy troop columns.

**January 2:** For the first time, a C-47 dropped flares to illuminate B-26 and F-82 night attacks on enemy forces. The flares also deterred enemy night attacks on U.S. troops. Fifth Air Force withdrew forward-based F-86s assigned to the 4th FIW from enemy-threatened Kimpo Airfield near Seoul to the wing's home station at Johnson AB, Japan.

**January 3:** As massive numbers of Chinese troops crossed the frozen Han River east and west of Seoul, Eighth Army began evacuating the South Korean capital. The ROK government began moving to Pusan. In one of the largest FEAF Bomber Command air raids, more than sixty B-29s dropped 650 tons of incendiary bombs on Pyongyang. UN forces burned nearly 500,000 gallons of fuel and 23,000 gallons of napalm at Kimpo in preparation for abandoning the base to the advancing enemy. FEAF flew 958 combat sorties, a one-day record.

**January 4:** For the third time in six months, Seoul changed hands as CCF troops moved in. The last remaining USAF aircraft left Kimpo Airfield.

**January 5:** Fifty-nine B-29s dropped 672 tons of incendiary bombs on Pyongyang. The 18th FBG staged its final missions from Suwon. U.S. ground troops burned the buildings at Suwon's airfield before withdrawing.

**January 6:** FEAF Combat Cargo Command concluded a multiple-day airlift of supplies to the USA 2d Infantry Division, which was fighting to prevent a break in the UN defensive line across South Korea. Twenty-one TCS C-47s landed 115 tons of cargo at Wonju, and C-119s of the 314th TCG dropped 460 tons of supplies to the division.

**January 8:** When blizzards forced USN Task Force 77 carriers to suspend close air support missions for X Corps, Fifth Air Force took up the slack. Superfortresses cratered Kimpo Airfield to prevent its use by enemy aircraft. U.S. forces in central Korea withdrew to new positions three miles south of Wonju.

**January 10:** Continued severe winter weather forced Fifth Air Force to cancel close air support missions, and FEAF flew the lowest daily total of sorties since July 1950. Brig. Gen. James E. Briggs, USAF, replaced General O'Donnell as commander of FEAF Bomber Command. From now on, Strategic Air Command changed commanders of the Bomber Command every four months to provide wartime experience to as many officers as possible.

**January 11:** With improved weather, Fifth Air Force and FEAF Bomber Command resumed close air support missions for X Corps in north-central South Korea.

**January 12:** After Wonju fell to communist forces, 98th BG sent ten B-29s to attack the occupied city. For the first time, B-29s dropped 500-pound general-purpose bombs fused to burst in the air and shower enemy troops with thousands of steel fragments. The innovation slowed the enemy advance. To improve bombing precision, FEAF installed SHORAN (a short-range navigation system) on a B-26 for the first time.

**January 13:** FEAF flew the first effective Tarzon mission against an enemy-held bridge at Kanggye, dropping a six-ton radio-guided bomb on the center span, destroying fifty-eight feet of the structure.

**January 14:** CCF reached their furthest extent of advance into South Korea with the capture of Wonju.

**January 15:** The enemy began a limited withdrawal in some areas of South Korea.

**January 17:** A 4th FIG detachment began operating from Taegu, restoring F-86 operations in Korea. For the first time, Sabres flew in the air-to-ground role as fighter-bombers, conducting armed reconnaissance and close air support missions. FEAF temporarily suspended Tarzon bombing missions because of a shortage of the radio-guided bombs. Only three, earmarked for emergencies, remained in the theater.

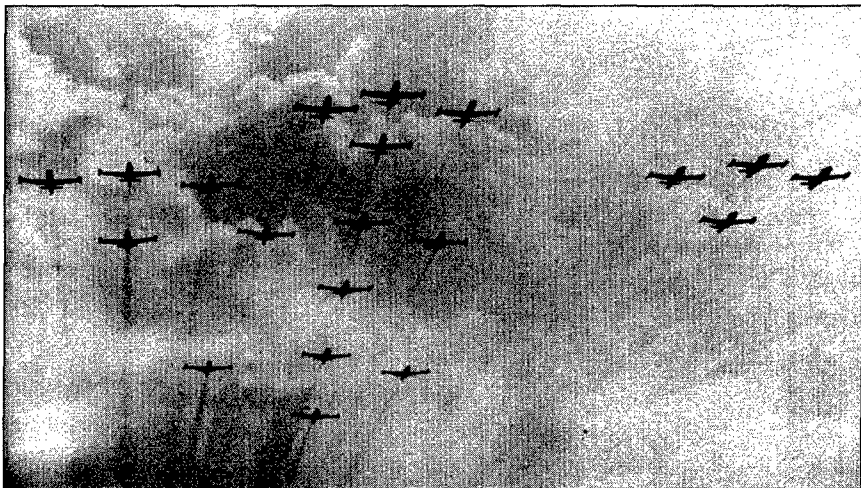
**January 17-18:** FEAF Combat Cargo Command flew an extraordinary 109 C-119 sorties to drop more than 550 tons of supplies to frontline troops in Korea.

**January 19:** FEAF launched a thirteen-day intensive air campaign by fighters, light bombers, and medium bombers to restrict to a trickle the supplies and reinforcements reaching enemy forces in the field.

**January 20:** After weeks of near absence, MiGs reappeared over Korea, resulting on this date in the first encounter between USAF F-84s and CCF MiG-15s.

**January 21:** Large numbers of MiG-15s attacked USAF jets, shooting down one F-80 and one F-84. Lt. Col. William E. Bertram of the 27th Fighter Escort Group shot down a MiG-15 to score the first USAF aerial victory by an F-84 Thunderjet.

**January 23:** No other day in January saw as much air action. Thirty-three F-84s staging from Taegu attacked Sinuiju, provoking a furious half-hour air battle with MiG-15s from across the Yalu. The Thunderjets shot



*Formations of F-84 Thunderjets head from Japan to Korea in early 1951.*

down three MiGs, the highest daily USAF aerial victory credit total for the month. While forty-six F-80s suppressed Pyongyang's antiaircraft artillery, twenty-one B-29s cratered the enemy capital's airfields.

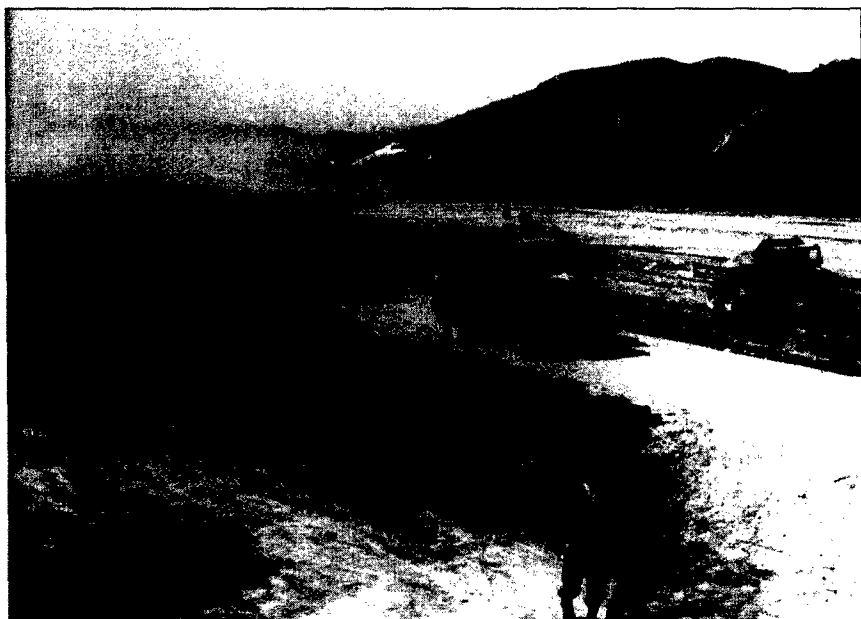
**January 25:** FEAF replaced its provisional Combat Cargo Command with the 315th AD (Combat Cargo), which reported directly to FEAF and did not depend on Fifth Air Force for administrative and logistical support. During its existence, from the beginning of the war to this date, Combat Cargo Command flew 32,632 sorties, transported 130,170 tons of supplies and 155,294 passengers, and evacuated 72,960 casualties.

**January 25–February 9:** Eighth Army executed Operation Thunderbolt, the first UN offensive of the year. The objectives were to clear the area south of the Han River and recapture the port of Inchon and the airfield at Suwon. To sustain this offensive, in five days sixty-eight C-119s dropped at Chunju 1,162 tons of supplies that included fuel, oil, sleeping bags, C-rations, and signal wire.

**January 26:** FEAF flew its first C-47 control aircraft, loaded with enough communications equipment to connect by radio all of the T-6 Mosquitoes, the TACPs, and the Tactical Air Control Center. This was the harbinger of today's warning and control aircraft.

**January 30:** The first USAF aircraft to land at the recaptured Suwon Airfield were C-54s of the 61st TCG. They delivered 270 tons of supplies for the advancing UN forces.

**January 31:** In the first such mission recorded during the Korean War, a special operations unit of the 21st TCS dropped a UN agent behind enemy lines near Yonan, on the west coast just south of the 38th parallel.



**A 315th Air Division C-54 Skymaster lands alongside a row of trucks at a Korean air base.**

## **February 1951**

UN ground forces advanced slowly and steadily northward from a Suwon-Wonju-Samchok line. They gained an average of twelve to fifteen miles, making the most progress along the eastern and western coasts. By the end of the month, U.S. troops had reached the Han River near Seoul.

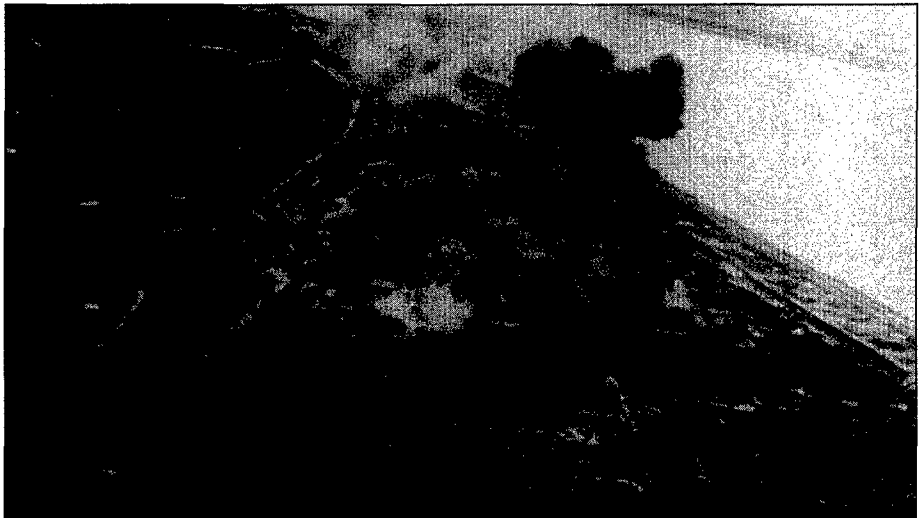
Communist forces refurbished airfields across North Korea, repairing runways and building revetments, but FEAF raids kept them largely free of enemy aircraft. A combination of bad winter weather and mountainous terrain in central Korea hindered USAF close air support operations. FEAF fighters on armed reconnaissance missions discouraged the enemy from moving in daylight by road or rail. To puncture tires on enemy-held roads, night-flying C-47s dropped tons of roofing nails. By assigning the same areas to the same units, Fifth Air Force encouraged fighter pilots to become familiar enough with the landscape to detect camouflaged enemy vehicles. Flights of B-26s flew around the clock, depending on C-47 flare drops for night raids and flying an increasing number of close air support missions by day.

Enemy aircraft activity declined sharply. RF-80s on reconnaissance missions near the Yalu River occasionally attracted MiGs, and Fifth Air Force began calling northwestern Korea "MiG Alley." Because of the MiG threat to

*B-29s, FEAF assigned Fifth Air Force to interdiction missions in the Yalu River region.*

*Superfortresses concentrated on interdiction targets outside MiG Alley, especially railroad bridges. They also bombed rail lines, airfields, and barracks in the area between Kanggye, Sinanju, and Pyongyang in western North Korea. FEAF Bomber Command continued harassment raids against cities in North Korea, including Anju, Sinanju, Sariwon, and Pyongyang, sending out two to six bombers per night after February 10. During the month, Bomber Command flew 687 sorties in Korea and dropped 6,213 tons of bombs.*

*By contrast, the 315th AD flew more than 6,000 sorties and carried more than 15,000 tons of equipment and supplies during the same month. That was more tonnage than Combat Cargo Command had flown during all of 1950. When poor field conditions at Wonju and Chungju prevented C-47 landings during the last nine days of February, C-119s and C-46s airdropped 185 tons of supplies daily directly to frontline troops. Replacing FEAF Bomber Command B-29s on psychological warfare missions, 315th AD C-47s dropped 25 million leaflets during the month and broadcast messages to enemy troops. Using newly designed equipment, C-54s began airlifting FEAF aircraft engines among bases, replacing the C-97s and C-119s that previously performed this function within the theater. During the month, search and rescue detachments flew more than 300 missions, using helicopters to rescue 72 people who had been trapped behind enemy lines and to evacuate almost 160 critically wounded patients from the battlefield. The*



**452d Bombardment Group B-26s dropped napalm bombs that exploded on communist barracks near Chongsoktu in North Korea, February 2, 1951.**

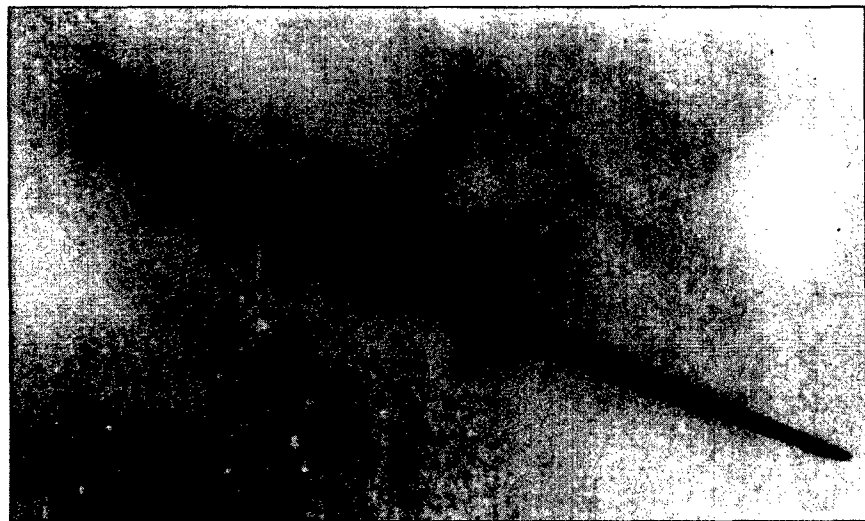
*Boat Section, 6160th ABG, conducted 58 search and rescue missions, including the rescue of 16 people from a downed USN flying boat.*

**February 4:** Fifth Air Force modified some B-26s to drop flares because the flare-dropping C-47s that had accompanied B-26 night raiders had difficulty keeping up with the speedier bombers.

**February 5:** As part of Operation Roundup, designed to disrupt enemy preparations for a new offensive, the U.S. X Corps advanced with strong air support near Hoengsong, northeast of Wonju in central Korea. Maj. Arnold Mullins, 67th FBS, in an F-51 Mustang, shot down a Yak-9 seven miles north of Pyongyang to score the only USAF aerial victory of the month. Capt. Donald Nichols was transferred from Office of Special Investigations to the intelligence section of Fifth Air Force to work directly on special and clandestine operations.

**February 6:** B-26 crews proved that the new MPQ-2 radar equipment, which provided the aircrew with better definition of targets, increased the accuracy of night bombing raids. To clear up a backlog of medical patients at Chungju, 315th AD C-47s airlifted 343 patients to Pusan. Eight C-54s airlifted a 40-ton, 310-foot treadway bridge consisting of 279 pieces from Tachikawa AB, Japan, to Taegu. In a one-time effort to demoralize CCF troops, six C-119s dropped thirty-two booby-trapped boxes, designed to blow up when opened, on an enemy troop concentration at Kwangdong-ni. The 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron performed its first night photographic mission.

**February 8:** FEAF used B-29s, B-26s, and fighters to launch an all-out



***An Ilyushin Il-10 Sturmovik falls victim to the guns of an F-51 Mustang over Korea.***



attack on rail lines in northeastern Korea between Hoeryong and Wonsan. Brig. Gen. John P. Henebry replaced General Tunner as commander of the 315th AD and airlift operations in the Korean War.

**February 9:** U.S. troops reached the Han River seven miles east-south-east of Seoul.

**February 10:** UN forces captured the port of Inchon and the important nearby airfield at Kimpo. Air raids had cratered the field so badly that it required extensive renovation before USAF aircraft could use it. On the east coast, ROK troops crossed the 38th parallel and entered Yangyang.

**February 11/12:** In central Korea, some fifty miles east of Seoul, Chinese and North Korean forces attacked the ROK 3d and 8th Divisions north and northwest of Hoengsong, and in two days captured the town, forcing UN forces toward Wonju, a few miles to the south.

**February 12:** FEAF cargo aircraft airdropped supplies to the X Corps command-post airstrip at Wonju. A leaflet-dropping C-47 aircraft, hit by enemy antiaircraft fire, crash-landed at Suwon. FEAF decided to launch subsequent C-47 leaflet drops at night. While B-26s attacked enemy positions at night behind the battleline by the light of air-dropped flares, two enemy aircraft used the same flare light to attack UN positions.

**February 13:** The 315th AD airlifted more than 800 sick and wounded U.S. troops from forward airstrips, like the one at Wonju, to Taegu and Pusan. This airlift used so many C-47s that they were not available for other airlift demands.

**February 13-16:** Three CCF divisions surrounded UN troops, including members of the U.S. 23d Regimental Combat Team and the French Battalion, at a crucial road junction at Chipyeong-ni in central Korea. Despite heavy enemy ground fire, ninety-three transports dropped some 420 tons of food and ammunition to the encircled troops. Twenty C-119s dropped supplies at night over a zone marked by burning gasoline-soaked rags. Also, H-5 helicopters delivered medical supplies and evacuated more than forty wounded. Fifth Air Force flew close air support missions for the surrounded troops, who held out until relieved by a friendly armored column.

**February 16:** For the first time, the USA began using its own aircraft, the L-19 Bird Dog, for forward air control, artillery spotting, and other front-line duties, relieving Fifth Air Force of demands for these types of missions.

**February 17/18:** B-26s flew the first night bombing mission using SHORAN, which employed an airborne radar device and two ground-beacon stations for precision bombing.

**February 20:** FEAF activated a "Special Air Mission" detachment under the 315th AD to provide air transportation for important officials and perform psychological warfare missions such as aerial broadcasting and leaflet drops.

**February 21:** Eighth Army launched Operation Killer to destroy large numbers of enemy troops while moving the UN line northward to the Han River.

**February 23:** FEAF Bomber Command flew the first B-29 mission with the more accurate MPQ-2 radar, bombing a highway bridge seven miles northeast of Seoul.

**February 24:** Using sixty-seven C-119s and two C-47s, the 315th AD dropped a record 333 tons of cargo to frontline troops.

**February 28:** UN ground forces eliminated the last communist presence south of the Han River.

## **March 1951**

*UN ground forces continued to advance slowly and methodically, pushing the front line an average of thirty miles northward. After friendly troops crossed the Han River east and west of Seoul, communist forces abandoned the city.*

*Aerial reconnaissance revealed new revetment and runway construction at North Korean airfields, but communist aircraft rarely appeared over the front lines. The enemy emplaced extensive antiaircraft batteries around such important North Korean cities as Pyongyang and Sinuiju, cities the UN aircraft frequently raided. Introducing a new tactic, the Fifth Air Force equipped some B-26 aircraft to detect and destroy hostile radar sites. B-29s returned to northwest Korea on interdiction missions, which provoked MiG-15 attacks. To protect the Superfortresses, Fifth Air Force flew F-86 fighters from Taegu and Suwon. Air-to-air combat consequently increased, especially in the Sinuiju and Sinanju areas in northwest Korea. B-29 enlisted gunners scored three of five aerial victories during March. Continuing to rotate B-29 bombing missions among three groups, FEAF Bomber Command in nearly 800 sorties dropped 6,372 tons of bombs, mostly on interdiction targets in North Korea. Many sorties lasted nine or more hours.*

*The 315th AD flew 6,878 transport sorties, carrying an increasing number of passengers but less cargo during this month. FEAF began airlifting military cargo into a newly constructed airfield at Hoengsong, while USA engineers rehabilitated airfields at Seoul and Kimpo for transports. Air transports dropped some 2,300 tons of equipment, supplies, and psychological warfare leaflets. They also dropped thousands of U.S. troops behind enemy lines in a major airborne operation. Search and rescue helicopters evacuated 115 critically wounded patients and rescued 170 personnel caught behind enemy lines. The Boat Section, 6160th ABG, rescued six people and recovered one body. It received two new 63-foot boats.*

*For the first time, General MacArthur proposed a cease-fire. UN aircraft dropped 7,000 copies of his proposal over Korea during the last week of the month.*

**March 1:** FEAF Bomber Command B-29s launched the first mission of a new interdiction campaign. Twenty-two F-80s sent to escort eighteen B-29s over Kogunyon, North Korea, arrived ahead of the Superfortresses and returned to base because they were running low on fuel. MiGs attacked the unescorted B-29s, damaging ten, three of which had to land in South

Korea. One B-29 gunner brought down a MiG.

**March 3:** A new shipment of Tarzon bombs arrived in the Far East, allowing FEAF to resume raids, suspended since January 17, with the large guided weapons.

**March 4:** Fifty-one C-119s dropped 260 tons of supplies to the 1st Marine Division in the largest airdrop of the month.

**March 6:** 334th FIS used Suwon as a staging base from which F-86 Sabres began raiding the Yalu River area, where they had been absent for months.

**March 7:** UN forces launched a new offensive called Operation Ripper to cross the Han River in central Korea, east of Seoul, and destroy large numbers of enemy troops and break up preparations for an enemy counteroffensive. Fifth Air Force flew more close air support missions to support the operation.

**March 14:** Communist forces abandoned Seoul without a fight after General Ridgway's troops seized high ground on either side of the city north of the Han River. At night B-26s began dropping specially designed tetrahedral tacks on highways to puncture the tires of enemy vehicles. (They were more effective than the roofing nails dropped earlier.)

**March 15:** UN forces entered Seoul, the fourth time the city had changed hands since the war began.

**March 16:** FEAF flew 1,123 effective sorties, a new daily record.

**March 17:** An F-80, flown by Lt. Howard J. Landry of the 36th FBS, collided with a MiG-15. Both went down with their pilots. Fifth Air Force lost no other aircraft in aerial encounters during the month.

**March 20:** Fifteen F-94B all-weather jet fighters arrived in the Far East for eventual service as night escorts for B-29s.

**March 23:** Operation Tomahawk, the second airborne operation of the



**Fighters in Korea during the war's first year. Clockwise from top left: F-82 Twin Mustang, F-94 Starfire, F-86 Sabre, and F-80 Shooting Star.**

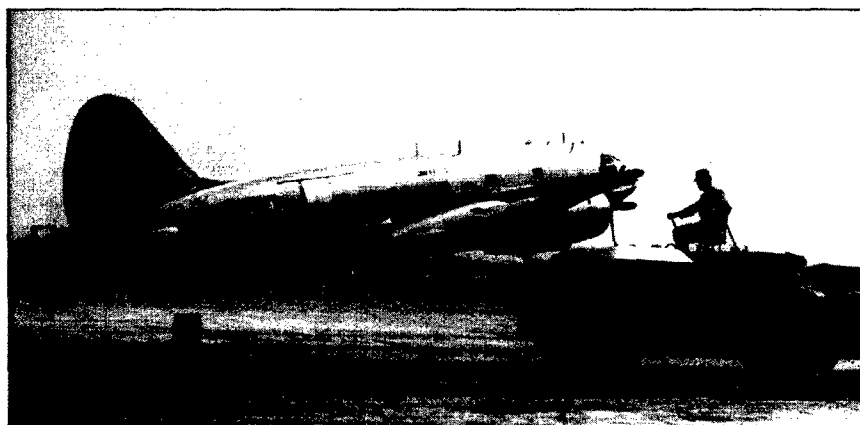
war and the largest in one day, involved 120 C-119s and C-46s, escorted by 16 F-51s. The 314th TCG and the 437th TCW air transports flew from Taegu to Munsan-ni, an area behind enemy lines some twenty miles northwest of Seoul, and dropped the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team and two Ranger companies—more than 3,400 men and 220 tons of equipment and supplies. Fifth Air Force fighters and light bombers had largely eliminated enemy opposition. UN forces advanced quickly to the Imjin River, capturing 127 communist prisoners. Some of the prisoners waved safe-conduct leaflets that FEAF aircraft had dropped during the airborne operation. Helicopters evacuated only sixty-eight injured personnel from the drop zone. One C-119, possibly hit by enemy bullets, caught fire and crashed on the return trip. On the same day, twenty-two B-29s of the 19th and 307th BGs, protected from MiGs by forty-five F-86s, destroyed two bridges in northwestern Korea.

**March 24:** For the first time, FEAF used an H-19, a service-test helicopter, in Korea for the air evacuation of wounded troops. The H-19 was considerably larger and more powerful and had greater range than the H-5s.

**March 24, 26-27:** Fifty-two C-119s and C-46s dropped an additional 264 tons of supplies to the troops at Munsan-ni because surface lines of communication were undependable.

**March 29:** With fighter escorts, B-29s returned to the Yalu River to bomb bridges, which had become important targets again as the river ice thawed. Fifth Air Force light bombers and fighters, which had handled interdiction in the area during the winter, could not destroy the larger Yalu River bridges.

**March 30:** For the first time, B-29 gunners, SSgt. Norman S. Greene and TSgt. Charles W. Summers of the 28th Bombardment Squadron (BS), shot down two MiGs in one day. The 315th AD grounded its C-119s for



*The Air Force Reserve's 437th Troop Carrier Wing used C-46 Commandoes like this one during Operation Tomahawk in March 1951.*



**Airborne troops of the 187th Regimental Combat Team on a C-119 Flying Boxcar prepare to jump in Operation Tomahawk, the largest airborne operation of the war.**

modification and reconditioning.

**March 31:** Flight Lt. J.A.O. Levesque, Royal Canadian Air Force, flying with the 334 FIS, scored the first aerial victory since 1950 of an F-86 over a MiG-15. Elements of the U.S. Eighth Army moved northward across the 38th parallel. 3d ARS used the H-19 to retrieve some eighteen UN personnel from behind enemy lines, the first use of this type helicopter in a special operations mission.

### **April 1951**

For the first three weeks of April, UN ground forces advanced everywhere along the front except in a small area near the Hwachon Reservoir in the central sector. Then the communists launched an all-out spring offensive with more than 330,000 troops using "human wave" tactics. By the end of the month the enemy had advanced to the vicinity of Seoul, but both men and supplies had reached their limits in the face of UN ground and aerial assaults.

In counterair operations, Fifth Air Force Sabre pilots destroyed fifteen MiGs without the loss of a friendly fighter. MiG pilots generally showed little aggressiveness, but on several occasions, they demonstrated considerable flight discipline and improved tactics. In North Korea, the enemy constructed new airfields and rehabilitated previously damaged ones, pointing toward the possibility of a major enemy air-ground offensive. General Stratemeyer, Commander, FEAF, consequently directed most B-29s against North Korean airfields.

B-26 light bombers attacked rail lines, bridges, airfields, and supply stor-

age areas during daylight. After the spring offensive began, Fifth Air Force increased the number of B-26 close air support sorties from approximately five to twenty-five per day. B-26 night operations emphasized armed reconnaissance and interdiction of communications routes and facilities.

Before the communist offensive began, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers flew an average of 250 armed reconnaissance and interdiction and 80 close air support sorties per day. Now, however, Fifth Air Force increased its close air support sorties to an average of 140 daily.

315th AD airdrop operations through most of April suffered from the grounding of seventy-five C-119s, which left C-46s as the primary airdrop-capable aircraft. By the end of the month, sixty C-119s were once again in commission. A clandestine C-47 outfit under the control of 315th AD and known as Unit 4/Special Air Mission flew leaflet and personnel/resupply drops and made aerial broadcasts and radio intercepts over enemy-held territory. The 6160th ABG's Boat Section saved one individual, assisted with three other saves, recovered one body, and retrieved the wreckage of an aircraft.

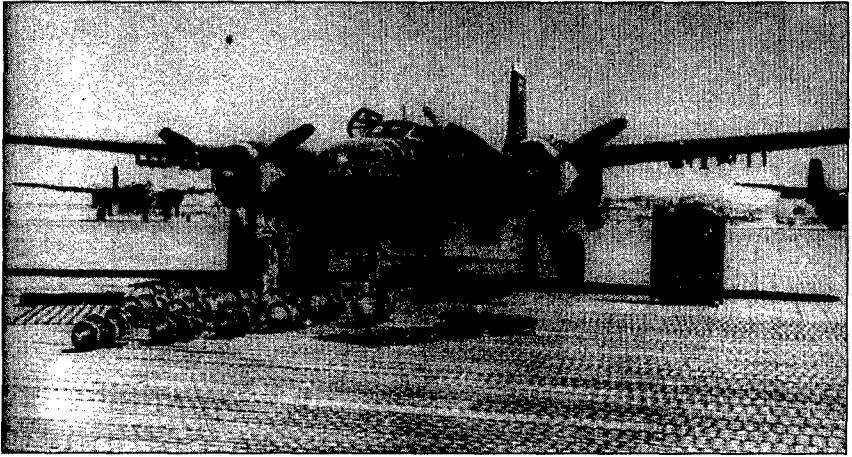
**April 3:** The service-test YH-19 helicopter with the 3d ARS picked up a downed F-51 pilot southeast of Pyongyang, receiving small arms fire during the sortie.

**April 12:** As of this date in the war, the heaviest concentration of B-29s against a single bridge encountered the largest and most determined enemy counterair effort, resulting in the largest jet air battle so far in the war. Forty-six B-29s attacking the Yalu River bridge at Sinuiju and 100 escorting fighters encountered between 100 and 125 MiGs, which shot down three bombers and damaged seven others. However, B-29 gunners destroyed seven MiGs, and F-86 pilots downed four more, by far the highest daily MiG tally thus far. The bridge, despite numerous direct hits, remained standing. President Truman fired General MacArthur, who had several times publicly criticized the administration's Korean War and foreign policies, and replaced him with Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, USA.

**April 14:** Lt. Gen. James A. Van Fleet, USA, assumed command of the U.S. Eighth Army in place of General Ridgway.

**April 16-20:** FEAF Bomber Command flew a daily average of ten B-29 sorties against Pyongyang, Kangdong, Yonpo, and other North Korean airfields.

**April 17:** President Truman signed an executive order extending U.S. military enlistments involuntarily by nine months, an indication of the manpower shortage facing the military services during the war. An intelligence operation behind enemy lines resulted in the recovery of vital components of a crashed MiG-15. In Operation MiG, a YH-19 helicopter transported a U.S. and South Korean team to the crash area south of Sinanju, North Korea. Under friendly fighter cover, the party extracted MiG components and samples and obtained photographs. On the return flight southward the helicopter



***A B-26 Invader with ordnance. This aircraft of the 90th Bombardment Squadron flew in combat between August 1950 and June 25, 1952.***

came under enemy ground fire and received one hit. The successful mission led to greater technical knowledge of the MiG.

**April 18:** H-5 helicopters from the 3d ARS evacuated twenty critically wounded U.S. soldiers from frontline aid stations to the nearest field hospital. Five of the ten sorties encountered enemy fire.

**April 19:** The first modified and reconditioned C-119 returned to service.

**April 21:** An SA-16, 3d ARS, attempted to pick up a downed enemy Yak pilot near Chinnampo for intelligence purposes. The aircrew landed and put out a raft but had to take off because of intense enemy fire, leaving the Yak pilot behind.

**April 22/23:** Enemy ground forces launched a massive spring offensive.

**April 23:** FEAF flew some 340 close air support sorties, one of the highest daily totals prior to 1953. The 336th FIS began operating from Suwon AB, South Korea, so that its F-86 aircraft could operate for longer periods in MiG Alley near the Yalu River.

**April 23-26:** FEAF daily flew more than 1,000 combat sorties, inflicting enemy casualties and destroying supplies needed to sustain the offensive.

**April 24:** On separate pickups, an H-5 helicopter from the 3d ARS rescued first the pilot, then the navigator of a downed B-26 near Chorwon, about fifteen miles north of the 38th parallel, in the central sector. The navigator, suffering a broken leg, had been captured by two enemy soldiers. But he managed to seize a gun belonging to one of the enemy, causing them to run for cover. Friendly fighters kept them pinned down, while the helicopter made the pickup.

**April 26/27:** At night, over the western sector, a B-29 close air support

strike broke up an assault planned by enemy troops as they were forming for an attack against U.S. IX Corps.

**April 30:** Fifth Air Force set a new record of 960 effective sorties. On separate sorties, each of two H-5 helicopters picked up a downed UN pilot behind enemy lines. Small-arms fire damaged one helicopter. The first indication of enemy radar-controlled antiaircraft guns came with the loss of three of four F-51s making air-to-ground attacks against a target at Sinmak.

## **May 1951**

*During the first half of the month, UN ground activity consisted mainly of patrols and preparation for another enemy offensive. By the end of the month UN ground forces had regained the initiative, advancing the front lines northward between fifteen and thirty miles across the peninsula. FEAF conducted heavy, continuous interdiction of enemy supply lines, which contributed largely to the complete failure of the communist offensive. But the enemy increased antiaircraft heavy guns and automatic weapons to approximately 1,000 located at eighteen different sites in North Korea.*

*In a slow month, Fifth Air Force Sabre pilots downed five MiGs. FEAF Bomber Command B-29s initially bombed rail and highway bridges, airfields, and supply and troop centers in North Korea. When the communists initiated their offensive, however, Bomber Command shifted nearly its entire effort to close air support.*

*Until mid-May, Fifth Air Force flew a daily average of 171 armed reconnaissance and interdiction, and 57 close air support sorties; later in the month, its aircraft averaged more than 140 close air support sorties daily. Prior to the enemy offensive, the light bomber, assisted by flare-dropping C-47s, flew night intruder sorties against enemy vehicles. With the enemy assault, Fifth Air Force shifted its B-26 effort to daytime close air support. Led by the 45th TRS, between May 19 and 25 FEAF flew 388 reconnaissance sorties, a new record. At the end of the month, Fifth Air Force and USN Task Force 77 initiated an interdiction campaign called Operation Strangle to paralyze enemy transportation between the railheads and the front. Fighter-bombers hit bridges, tunnels, rail lines, and roadbeds, trying to stop rail and highway traffic from carrying supplies to enemy troops along the front.*

*In psychological operations, B-29 and C-47 aircraft dropped millions of leaflets. Most consisted of "strategic" leaflets dropped deep behind enemy lines, while the remainder were "tactical," directed at troops near the front.*

*The 3d ARS established an element on the island of Paengnyang-do, located off Korea's west coast, where H-5 helicopters stood alert for rescue sorties. The squadron began rotating the SA-16 amphibious aircraft between Japan and Korea, with three flying from Korean bases for ten to fifteen days before being replaced with new crews and aircraft from Japan. The crash rescue Boat Section of the 6160st ABG saved three lives and evacuated 200 guerrillas from behind enemy lines to safety.*

*Although ammunition and petroleum products constituted the bulk of*





**3d Air Rescue Squadron members transfer a patient from an SA-16 amphibious Albatross to an H-5 Hoverfly helicopter for movement to a hospital.**

airlifted items, the 315th AD began daily delivery of approximately fifteen tons of fresh vegetables from Japan to U.S. Eighth Army supply points in Korea.

**May 5:** An H-5 helicopter from the 3d ARS rescued a downed F-51 pilot north of Seoul, encountering small arms fire in the area.

**May 8:** Another H-5 helicopter picked up two U.S. soldiers north of Seoul, encountering small arms fire in the area.

**May 9:** In one of the largest counterair efforts to date, Fifth Air Force and 1st Marine Air Wing fighter-bombers flew more than 300 sorties against Sinuiju Airfield in extreme northwestern Korea.

**May 15/16:** As anticipated, the communists launched the second phase of their spring offensive against ROK corps in the east, a last, vain attempt to drive UN forces from the Korean peninsula. The enemy limited its tactical assaults to night because of FEAFF's daytime aerial attacks.

**May 16-26:** In a maximum effort, 315th AD cargo aircraft flew an average in excess of 1,000 tons daily of supplies from Japan to Korea in support of UN ground forces seeking to halt the communist offensive.

**May 17-22:** Bomber Command B-29s flew ninety-four (mostly nighttime) sorties against enemy ground forces, far more close air support missions than had been previously accomplished in a similar period during the war. The B-29s flew few other types of missions as well.

**May 19:** An H-5 helicopter rescued a downed F-51 pilot southwest of Chorwon in the central sector, sustaining damage from small-arms fire during the pickup.

**May 20:** Capt. James Jabara, USAF, 334th FIS, destroyed his fifth and sixth MiGs in aerial combat, thereby becoming the world's first jet-to-jet ace.

The Eighth Army successfully blunted the communist offensive, leaving the enemy overextended and under constant aerial attack. General Stratemeyer, FEAF Commander, suffered a severe heart attack.

**May 21:** General Partridge assumed command of FEAF. Maj. Gen. Edward J. Timberlake, Jr., USAF, took his place as Fifth Air Force Commander.

**May 22:** In close air support sorties, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers inflicted some 1,700 casualties on enemy forces, one of the highest daily totals thus far.

**May 23:** Brig. Gen. Robert H. Terrill, USAF, assumed command of FEAF Bomber Command, replacing General Briggs.

**May 24:** The 136th FBW, one of two Air National Guard organizations sent to Korea, flew its first combat sorties of the war.

**May 27-28:** Unit 4/Special Air Mission C-47s flew leaflet-drop, voice-



***Maj. Gen. (later Lt. Gen.) Earle E. Partridge, Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, from the start of the Korean War through May 21, 1951 (and of Far East Air Forces from then until June 10, 1951), accepts on behalf of Fifth Air Force the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation from South Korean President Syngman Rhee.***

broadcast sorties encouraging the enemy to surrender to elements of the USA's IX Corps. Some 4,000 enemy soldiers surrendered, many carrying leaflets. The captives reported morale problems among the enemy because of UN aerial attacks.

**May 31:** Fifth Air Force began Operation Strangle, an interdiction campaign against enemy supply lines in North Korea.

## **June 1951**

*Despite enemy resistance and spring mud, UN forces regained their losses from the communist spring offensive and broke into the Pyonggang-Chorwon-Kumhwa "Iron Triangle" fortified sanctuaries, enabling them to deny the enemy access to roads that traversed the Korean peninsula just north of the 38th parallel.*

*FEAF bombardment operations concentrated on radar bombing attacks against Iron Triangle sanctuaries. FEAF Bomber Command began experimenting with B-29s using the SHORAN bombing technique. This technique used radio navigation beacons and extremely accurate maps to aim bombs, thereby avoiding the limitations of visual and radar bombardment. The problem of defending B-29s against MiG-15s and the development of SHORAN tactics ultimately led to the bombers' operating almost exclusively at night. FEAF concentrated interdiction attacks on enemy airfields in North Korea, because the enemy were trying to reconstruct them to accommodate more aircraft. In mid-June, General Weyland directed FEAF Bomber Command to keep the thirteen most important fields out of service.*

*Fifth Air Force combat units completed their movement from Japan to air bases in Korea. Much of the maintenance support remained in Japan, creating some problems with aircraft readiness, but the concentration of maintenance functions in Japan permitted the sharing of scarce skilled personnel and other resources.*

*The psychological warfare unit made 66 leaflet drops and 25 voice broadcasts, dropped 18 people behind enemy lines, and flew one resupply drop. The Boat Section, 6160th ABG, completed 63 missions, saving two lives, and used one boat in the Yellow Sea to insert South Korean guerrillas behind enemy lines and to transport Chinese POWs to South Korea.*

**June 1:** One flight of F-86s from the 336th FIS escorting B-29s engaged eighteen MiG-15s, destroying two. A flight of B-29s, 343th BS, defended itself against twenty-two MiG-15s in the vicinity of Sonchon. The MiGs destroyed one B-29 and damaged another, while the defenders destroyed two enemy jets. FEAF Special Air Mission C-47s dropped fifteen Koreans into enemy-held territory to retrieve parts from a crashed MiG-15. Unfortunately, communist forces captured all fifteen Koreans. Maj. Gen. Frank F. Everest, USAF, assumed command of Fifth Air Force, replacing General Timberlake.

**June 3:** UN antiaircraft artillery destroyed two 315th AD C-119s while



**Maj. Gen. Frank F. Everest, Commander, Fifth Air Force, June 1, 1951–May 30, 1952**

the aircraft were attempting a resupply airdrop. This fratricide incident led to the adoption of new Identification-Friend-or-Foe procedures for airdrop operations.

**June 7–10:** B-26 and B-29 aircraft undertook radar-directed area attacks against the Iron Triangle at night, raining 500-pound bombs set to explode over the heads of the enemy troops. These operations were in preparation for UN ground forces' assaults.

**June 10:** The airfield at Chunchon, some fifty miles northeast of Seoul and ten miles south of the 38th parallel, opened to cargo traffic, adding to 315th AD's ability to meet the growing demand for airdrop capability. In Tokyo, Lt. Gen. Otto P. Weyland assumed command of FEAF, replacing General Partridge.

**June 11:** An SA-16 of the 3d ARS made a pickup at dusk of a downed F-51 pilot from the Taedong River near Kyomipo, North Korea. The SA-16, although receiving fire from both sides of the river, made a landing approach without lights, avoiding low electrical transmission lines and rocks and debris on the river's surface. The pilot earned the Distinguished Service Cross for the rescue.

**June 15:** Fifth Air Force moved its headquarters from Taegu back to Seoul.

**June 23:** Jacob Malik, Soviet Ambassador to the UN, called for negotiations between representatives of UN forces and the communist forces for an armistice in Korea based upon the separation of the armies along the 38th parallel.

**June 25:** The 8th FBG moved to Kimpo AB in Seoul after completion of repairs to Kimpo's short runway. This marked the resumption of combat operations at Kimpo, although aviation engineers continued their work to restore the main runway.

## **July 1951**

*July 1951 marked the beginning of a new phase in the Korean War. Strategic military considerations of UN and communist commanders centered on armistice negotiations that began this month. Both sides began to bend their*

military efforts to effect favorable outcomes in these negotiations. Accordingly, FEAF increased the tempo of fighter and light-bomber activities in Operation Strangle, particularly against vehicular movements and targets of known troop concentrations, supplies, or installations. As the shortcomings of Operation Strangle became evident, FEAF planners looked for other ways to stem the flow of enemy resources toward the front.

The enormous buildup in the numbers of MiG-15 fighters and growing experience and competence of pilots led the enemy to seek air superiority as far south as Pyongyang. Avoiding the formidable jet fighter formations that escorted FEAF Bomber Command B-29s, the MiGs attacked vulnerable fighter-bomber and reconnaissance aircraft operating north of Pyongyang. Greatly outnumbered, the USAF F-86s now had to defend not only UN aircraft engaged in reconnaissance and interdiction operations but also the bombers operating in the north and fighting the MiG-15s head-to-head for air supremacy.

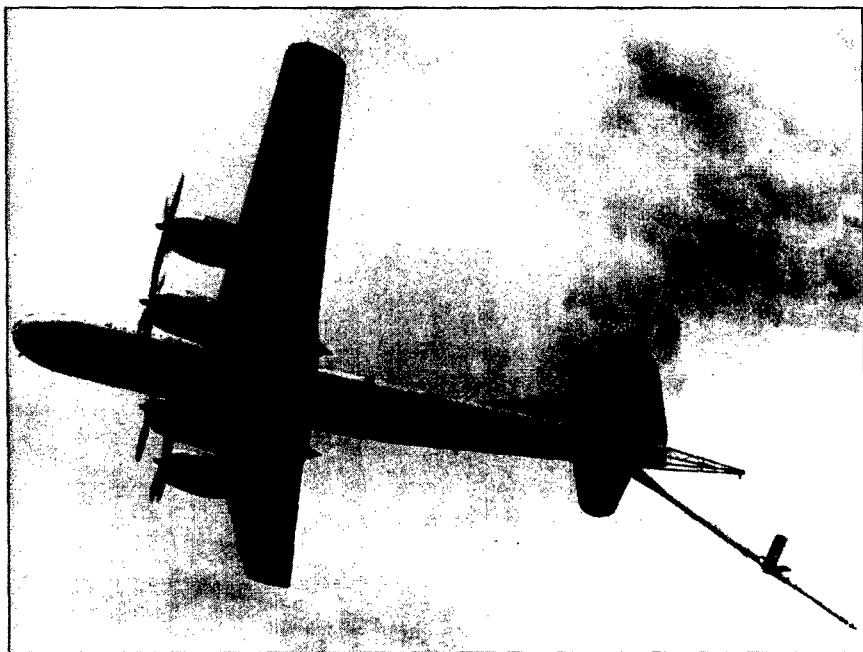
An absence of major ground activity and a decline in airlift requirements coincided with frequent periods of unfavorable weather. FEAF also faced growing shortages of aircraft because of attrition and increased numbers of aircraft out of commission. Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg, Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, notified General Weyland that FEAF could not expect further augmentation in jet fighters, since a general buildup in Europe required more aircraft. Also, other aircraft types, particularly B-26s and F-51s, which were experiencing high attrition rates, could not be replaced because they were no longer in production.

**July 1:** Kim Il Sung, Premier, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and General Paeng Te-huai, CCF Commander, responded to UN overtures and agreed to participate in truce negotiations. Pioneer in aerial reconnaissance, Col. Karl L. Polifka, USAF, Commander, 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing (TRW), flying an RF-51 near the front lines, was shot down and killed.

**July 6:** An Air Materiel Command KB-29M tanker, operated by a Strategic Air Command crew assigned to the 43d Air Refueling Squadron, conducted the first in-flight refueling over enemy territory under combat conditions. The tanker refueled four RF-80 Shooting Stars flying reconnaissance missions over North Korea.

**July 10:** Vice Adm. C. Turner Joy, USN, led the UN delegation that met the communists at Kaesong, some thirty miles northwest of Seoul and just south of the 38th parallel, in the first conference of the armistice negotiations. A flight of F-80s reported a long convoy of NKA trucks and tanks halted by a demolished bridge. Fifth Air Force diverted every available aircraft to attack with bombs, rockets, and gunfire, resulting in the destruction of more than 150 vehicles, a third of them tanks.

**July 14:** In one of the more spectacular night strikes of the war, a single B-26 of the 452d BG attacked two enemy convoys north of Sinanju in the early morning hours, claiming sixty-eight destroyed or damaged vehicles.



***The Air Force used the KB-29 tanker for combat aerial refueling for the first time during the Korean War to extend the range of its fighters and other aircraft.***

**July 21:** A detachment of the 6004th Air Intelligence Service Squadron completed a week-long effort near Cho-do Island to recover the most components ever salvaged from a MiG-15 aircraft. A combined operation, this effort involved Fifth Air Force aircraft providing high cover, British carrier aircraft flying low cover, and the USA contributing a vessel outfitted with a crane.

**July 24:** The 116th FBW, the second Air National Guard wing deployed to the Far East, arrived with its F-84 Thunderjets at Misawa and Chitose ABs in Japan.

**July 25:** Fifth Air Force directed the formal establishment of an air defense system for South Korea, utilizing the resources of the 502d Tactical Control Group and its subordinate squadrons.

**July 29:** UN jet fighter-bombers and reconnaissance aircraft operating near Pyongyang encountered MiGs much farther south than usual. Evading the attacking MiGs, the UN aircraft returned safely to base.

**July 30:** In the largest single mass attack for the month on targets in the Pyongyang area, ninety-one F-80s suppressed enemy air defenses while 354 USMC and USAF fighter-bombers attacked specified military targets. To avoid adverse world public opinion during ongoing peace negotiations, the Joint Chiefs of Staff withheld information on the strike from the news media.

## **August 1951**

Armistice negotiations resulted in less ground combat. In turn, the comparatively static ground situation reduced the demand for FEAF close air support. But negotiations at Kaesong went badly, and then broke down.

Fifth Air Force F-86s maintained air superiority over Korea by destroying four MiG-15s and holding enemy aircraft to the vicinity of the Yalu River, thus allowing UN aircraft farther south to operate without interference.

Planners reasoned that the CCF logistical system would quickly break down if the railroads could be made unusable. FEAF therefore initiated a rail interdiction campaign, carrying the same code name, Operation Strangle, as the short-lived campaign in June and July of 1951. The intent of this new campaign was to prevent an enemy buildup of supplies necessary for a sustained offensive or effective counteroffensive. Although intemperate weather adversely affected the tempo of air operations, FEAF stepped up the fighter-bomber campaign against North Korean railroads and began sending out B-29s for nightly SHORAN bombing attacks on enemy marshaling yards. Far East Command established a division of labor among the Fifth Air Force, FEAF Bomber Command, and the USN to keep North Korean railway bridges down and rail lines cut. Bomber Command knocked down key railroad bridges. Fifth Air Force and USN fighter-bombers cut the rail lines. The B-26s shifted from daytime interdiction operations to nighttime truck-hunting.

The Boat Section, 6160th ABG, saved at least eight lives in ninety-four missions. The 3d ARS rescued at least 168 people in Korea from floods.

**August 4:** Communist ground forces violated the Kaesong neutral zone, resulting in suspension of truce talks.

**August 10:** Armistice negotiations resumed at Kaesong with a North Korean promise to respect the neutral zone.

**August 17:** A typhoon at Okinawa halted B-29 operations.



**A B-29 Superfortress formation over North Korea in 1951**

**August 18:** FEAF began Operation Strangle against North Korean railroads.

**August 22:** The communist delegation trumped up evidence that a UN aircraft bombed Kaesong, resulting in suspension of the armistice negotiations once again.

**August 24/25:** B-26s claimed over 800 trucks destroyed in the new campaign of nighttime antitruck operations.

**August 25:** In FEAF Bomber Command's largest operation of the month, thirty-five B-29s, escorted by USN fighters, dropped 300 tons of bombs on marshaling yards at Rashin in far northeastern Korea. Previously excluded from target lists because it was located less than twenty miles from the Soviet border, Rashin was a major supply depot.

## **September 1951**

*In the "Punchbowl," the circular valley in eastern Korea, west of the Soyang River and rimmed by sharply rising hills, U.S. X Corps captured Bloody Ridge and Heartbreak Ridge. UN ground forces successfully defended these new positions against enemy battalion-sized attacks. The X Corps received fully two-thirds of Fifth Air Force's 2,400 close air support sorties for the month.*

*FEAF Bomber Command directed daily B-29 interdiction sorties against North Korean targets, especially airfields, rail bridges, and marshaling yards. Each night the medium bombers conducted a few close air support, leaflet-drop, and reconnaissance sorties.*

*In air-to-ground activity, Fifth Air Force continued Operation Strangle against enemy railroads, although planners did not expect to stop all rail traffic. Basic repairs—executed with earth, shovels, and thousands of unskilled laborers—were inexpensive for the enemy and often required only a few hours. While Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers made rail cuts by day, B-26 light bombers searched for trains and vehicles by night. The light bombers accounted for most of the damaged or destroyed enemy vehicles. Of the two B-26 wings in Korea, the 3d flew interdiction in the western half, and the 452d, in the eastern half. The enemy made effective use of searchlights in conjunction with flak batteries to track and shoot down UN aircraft. Fifth Air Force lost nearly forty aircraft to enemy ground fire, a reflection of the high cost of intensive interdiction efforts.*

*In air-to-air activity (compared with that of previous months), MiG pilots flew more sorties and demonstrated increased aggressiveness and improved tactics, downing five USAF aircraft in aerial combat. Although usually outnumbered by a margin of greater than two-to-one during combat encounters, Fifth Air Force pilots destroyed thirteen MiGs.*

*The 315th AD flew daily airlift sorties, transporting cargo, medical evacuees, and troops. During September, C-54s airlifted more passengers and cargo tonnage than had been carried by all other 315th aircraft combined. The 6160th ABG rescue boat unit completed 152 missions and saved at least*



*seven lives in operations off the west coast and north of the 38th parallel.*

**September 9:** Seventy MiGs attacked twenty-eight Sabres between Sinanju and Pyongyang. Despite such odds, F-86 pilots Capt. Richard S. Becker, USAF, 334th FIS, and Capt. Ralph D. Gibson, USAF, 335th FIS, each destroyed a MiG, increasing the number of jet aces from one to three.

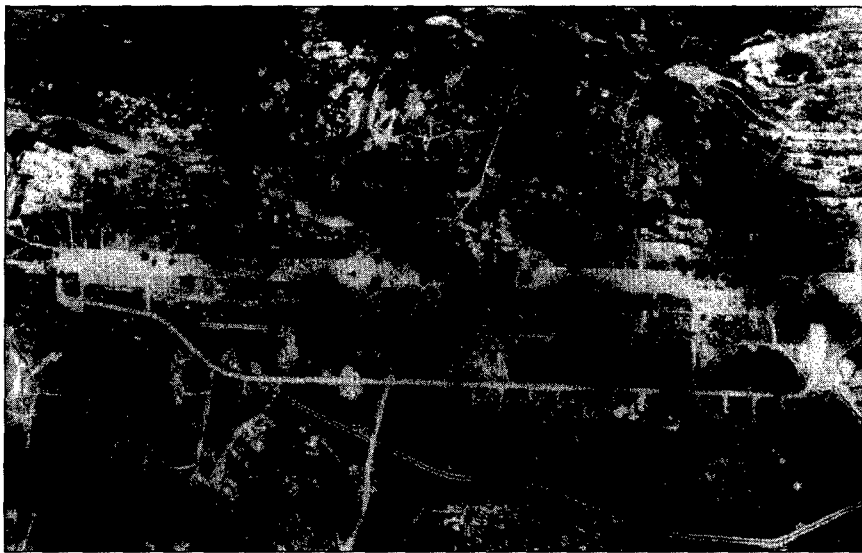
**September 10:** South of Pyongyang an H-5 helicopter from the 3d ARS, with fighter escort, rescued F-80 pilot Capt. Ward M. Millar, USAF, 7th FBS. He had suffered two broken ankles during ejection from his jet, but he escaped after two months as a prisoner of the enemy. He then evaded recapture for three weeks. The helicopter also brought out an NKA sergeant who had assisted Millar, delivering both to Seoul.

**September 14:** Capt. John S. Walmsley, USAF, 8th BS, on a night B-26 interdiction sortie, attacked an enemy train, expending his ordnance. He then used a USN searchlight experimentally mounted on his aircraft's wing to illuminate the target for another B-26. Shot down and killed by ground fire, Captain Walmsley earned the Medal of Honor for his valorous act.

**September 23:** In an excellent example of SHORAN bombing technique, eight B-29s from the 19th BG knocked out the center span of the Sunchon rail bridge despite a 9/10th cloud cover.

**September 24:** Attempts to reopen peace talks at Kaesong failed.

**September 25:** In the largest air battle in recent weeks, an estimated one hundred MiG-15s attacked thirty-six F-86s flying a fighter sweep over



**The communist airstrip at Sunan, North Korea, lies in ruins after a B-29 raid on September 8, 1951.**

the Sinanju area. Sabre pilots destroyed five MiGs in aerial combat, the daily high for the month.

**September 27:** In Operation Pelican, a service-test C-124A Globemaster flew its first payload from Japan to Korea, delivering 30,000 pounds of aircraft parts to Kimp'o Airfield.

**September 28:** On the longest flight to date for a jet aircraft using in-flight refueling, a Yokota-based RF-80 flew for fourteen hours and fifteen minutes on a Korean combat sortie, refueling multiple times from two KB-29M tankers.

**September 30:** Replacing General Terrill, Brig. Gen. Joe W. Kelly, USAF, assumed command of FEAF Bomber Command.

## **October 1951**

*In late October, following a two-month suspension, armistice talks resumed at Kaesong. UN ground forces in the western and central sectors had gained up to six miles in some places along the front. In support of this advance, Fifth Air Force increased the number of close air support sorties. Still, the rail interdiction program, Operation Strangle, took most of Fifth Air Force's 20,000 air-to-ground sorties. The enemy responded to the destruction of rail lines by increasing their use of motor vehicles to transport supplies. Assisted by flares dropped from transport aircraft, night-flying light bombers of the 3d and 452d BWs claimed damage or destruction of thousands of such vehicles. Fifth Air Force suffered the loss of thirty-one aircraft to enemy ground fire.*

*FEAF Bomber Command continued daylight B-29 strikes against airfields, rail bridges, and marshaling yards, dedicating a few night sorties to close air support, leaflet drops, and reconnaissance. The enemy refined its searchlight techniques, using a higher quality and greater numbers of lights to track UN aircraft almost instantaneously for flak or MiG attacks. Furthermore, radar-controlled anti-aircraft guns in northwestern Korea endangered B-29s even at altitudes above 20,000 feet. Then, in the last ten days of October, MiG-15s downed five medium bombers and damaged eight others, forcing FEAF to end daylight B-29 raids.*

*In aerial combat, Sabre pilots downed twenty-five MiG-15s, an F-84 pilot destroyed one, and B-29 gunners shot down nine more. These thirty-five aerial victories represented the highest monthly total thus far in the war. Fifth Air Force lost five fighter aircraft in air-to-air battles.*

*The C-124A Globemaster transported cargo to and flew medical evacuees from Korea. 315th AD transported 3,200 passengers, including more than 1,500 troops on rest-and-recreation leave. Intelligence representatives from Fifth Air Force, U.S. Eighth Army, and the USN decided to expand intelligence activities on the island of Cho-do, a prime location for infiltration-exfiltration of UN agents and the interrogation of refugees. The Boat Section, 6160th ABG, in seventy-two missions saved one life and recovered a body and the wreckage of a B-26 from the Yellow Sea.*

**October 1-3:** In Operation Snowball, 315th AD C-119s dropped napalm-filled 55-gallon drums experimentally behind enemy lines.

**October 10:** FEAF marked a significant date for the Chinese, the anniversary of the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty, by dropping special leaflets and making radio broadcasts aimed at CCF in Korea.

**October 16:** Fifth Air Force Sabre pilots destroyed nine MiG-15s in aerial combat, a record daily high.

**October 16/17:** B-29s flew thirty-one day and night sorties, the high for the month. These included attacks against rail bridges, marshaling yards, and the Samchang Airfield, and also leaflet-drop and reconnaissance sorties.

**October 19:** The USA opened a 1,000-bed hospital at Camp Drew, north of Tachikawa AB, Japan. Henceforth, C-54s flew medical evacuees from Korea to Tachikawa, then C-47s shuttled them to Camp Drew, thereby reducing transit time.

**October 21-30:** The enemy flew sorties over North Korea daily for the first time during the war. MiGs appeared in numbers exceeding a hundred, consistently outnumbering their F-86 counterparts, and downed three at a cost of five of their own lost to Sabres.

**October 22:** Two SA-16s, 3d ARS, rescued the twelve-man crew of a downed B-29, the highest number of individuals rescued by an SA-16 on any day in the war.

**October 23:** In one of the bloodiest air battles of the war, during a 307th BW raid on Namsi Airfield, MiG-15s destroyed three B-29s and one F-84, and damaged five other bombers. Fighter pilots and B-29 gunners shot down five MiGs.

**October 25:** In an unusually effective close air support strike, F-51 Mustangs inflicted approximately 200 casualties on enemy troops in the I Corps sector. Enemy small-arms fire hit a rescue helicopter picking up a downed UN pilot. The H-5 made a forced landing in enemy territory. The next day, two other H-5s hoisted all four men to safety from the mountain-side where they had hidden from communist troops during the night. At the request of the communists, peace negotiations resumed.

**October 27:** MiGs flew approximately 200 sorties, the high for the month. On the last medium bomber daylight raid of this month, B-29 gunners shot down six MiG-15s, the highest number of enemy aircraft downed on any day of the war. A 3d ARS H-5, with fighter escort, rescued a downed UN fighter pilot despite intense fire from enemy ground troops.

**October 31:** The service-test C-124A departed for the United States, having successfully completed its test in the Far East and convinced the 315th AD of the need for a Globemaster squadron.

## **November 1951**

*During November the UN Command generally limited offensive forays to brief but vigorous probing attacks and to patrolling, activities intended to keep the enemy off balance, deny him favorable terrain, retard his buildup of*

forces for a possible general offensive, and cause him maximum losses in personnel and equipment. The communist forces, however, made increasingly aggressive local attacks, which included strong armor support, particularly on the western front.

FEAF again flew a high rate of sorties. Air-to-air duels between FEAF jet fighters and MiG-15 interceptors continued to highlight the Korean air war. Although hampered frequently by poor flying weather, FEAF warplanes made around-the-clock attacks on enemy installations throughout North Korea, placing the greatest emphasis on interdiction, airfield neutralization, and close support of Eighth Army frontline units. Fifth Air Force fighters and fighter-bombers provided napalming, strafing, bombing, and rocketing attacks on enemy troop concentrations and artillery positions. Later, Allied airmen increased nighttime close support of Eighth Army ground troops.

Fifth Air Force fighters, fighter-bombers, and light bombers, together with attached SAAF, ROK, and USMC aviation units, interdicted enemy supply and communication routes incessantly to prevent or hinder the resupply of frontline communist troops. Fighter-bombers worked systematically to destroy the enemy's rail network. During daylight hours, fighter and fighter-bombers attacked railroad rolling stock; night intruder aircraft struck at vehicular traffic along highway supply routes. Fifth Air Force light bombers and FEAF Bomber Command B-29s nightly attacked key rail bridges and marshaling yards.

Medium bombers also made nighttime attacks on jet airfields at Saamcham, Taechon, and Namsi in northwest Korea to keep them unserviceable. Enemy jet fighters operated from an airbase at Uiju on the south bank of the Yalu River for a short time, but heavy B-29 attacks soon rendered it inoperable. Enemy night interceptors in northwest Korea increased their activity but failed to bring down a single B-29.

The 315th AD airlifted troops, supplies, and ammunition between Japan and Korea, flying 4,818 sorties that carried 70,664 passengers, 6,328 medical patients, and 8,406 tons of cargo. Airdrops to UN troops fighting in the mountains parachuted 120 tons of fuel, rations, and other supplies. Search and rescue units flew 324 sorties, and helicopters evacuated 242 critically wounded patients and rescued six people trapped behind enemy lines. The Boat Section, 6160th ABG, saved twenty lives. UN reconnaissance aircraft flew more than 1,000 sorties to secure intelligence information on enemy ground dispositions, air targets, vehicle movements, airfield status, and weather. FEAF medium bombers dropped approximately 28,025,000 leaflets over rear-area troops and civilians in North Korea, while C-47 cargo aircraft dropped approximately 58,814,000 over frontline areas.

**November 3:** Enemy ground fire damaged a 3d ARS SA-16 engaged in a failed rescue attempt; however, the aircrew, in spite of six- to eight-foot-high seas, successfully landed in Korea Bay, off the west coast of North Korea, and rescued another downed pilot.

**November 4:** Thirty-four F-86s encountered an estimated sixty MiG-15s in the Sinamju area. The F-86 pilots destroyed two enemy jets and damaged three others.

**November 6:** Eleven enemy piston-type, twin-engine, light bombers, probably Tu-2s, bombed Taehwa-do, a UN-controlled island. This raid was the first confirmed report of air-to-ground action by an enemy light bomber formation since the Korean War started.

**November 8:** F-86s and F-80s encountered more than a hundred MiG-15s, but only a small number chose to fight. USAF pilots destroyed one MiG and damaged another, while losing one F-86.

**November 9:** A C-47 landed on the beach of Paengnyong-do Island, off the southwest coast of North Korea, and rescued eleven crewmen of a downed B-29. The 19th BG attacked marshaling yards at Hwang-ju, Kowon, and Yangdok; the Saamcham Airfield; and a barracks area. In other night attacks, 98th BW B-29s bombed Taechon Airfield, flew one leaflet and five close support sorties, and struck Hungnam.

**November 12:** Peace negotiations moved to Panmunjom, a village less than five miles east of Kaesong, in a newly established demilitarized zone on the 38th parallel. The UN Command ceased offensive ground operations.

**November 16:** Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers made more than a hundred rail cuts between Sinanju and Sukchon and between Kunu-ri and Sunchon. They also damaged bridges, knocked out gun positions, destroyed supply buildings, fired fuel dumps, and took a toll on enemy rail cars.



*A marshaling yard at Hwang-ju, North Korea, is ruined after raids by Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers armed with bombs and rockets.*

**November 18:** F-86 aircraft strafed eight MiG fighters on the ground at Uiju; they destroyed four and damaged the rest. MiG-15s forced three flights of F-84 fighter-bombers to jettison their bombs and abort prebriefed rail-cutting missions near Sinanju.

**November 24:** In night operations, 98th BW bombed Taechon Airfield and the marshaling yard at Tongchon, and flew five close support sorties; 307th BW bombed the marshaling yard at Hambusong-ji; and 19th BG bombed Namsi Airfield, the Hoeyang highway bridge, and the marshaling yards at Munchon and Hambusong-ji.

**November 28:** Representatives of all intelligence-gathering organizations in Korea met at Far East Command, Liaison Division, to discuss how to coordinate their activities. Capt. Donald Nichols, USAF, represented Detachment 2, 6004th Air Intelligence Service Squadron. The conference resulted in the establishment of the Combined Command for Reconnaissance Activities in Korea.

**November 30:** In one of the largest aerial battles of the war, F-86 pilots of the 4th FIG engaged over the island of Taehwa-do 44 enemy aircraft flying south to bomb a UN target. The Sabre pilots destroyed 12 and damaged 3 others. Maj. George A. Davis Jr., USAF, 334th FIS, achieved Korean War ace status by downing a Tu-2 and a MiG-15. He was the first to be an ace in two wars, since he had been an ace in World War II as well. Maj. Winton W. Marshall, USAF, 335 FIS, also became an ace, destroying an La-9 and a Tu-2. Enemy forces attacked Taehwa-do, north of Cho-do, forcing friendly forces to retreat to Cho-do. Fifth Air Force aircraft dislodged the enemy, enabling friendly forces to retake the island.

## **December 1951**

*As the year ended, negotiators at Panmunjom argued over concrete arrangements for an armistice and provisions pertaining to POWs. Meanwhile, ground forces of both sides conducted small-scale patrol actions and sometimes engaged in vicious firefights. Overall, Eighth Army maintained a vigilant readiness in case of a general enemy attack.*

*The lack of ground activity did not extend to UN naval and air forces. UN warships and naval aircraft interdicted the enemy's supply network, bombarded strategic coastal targets, and maintained the blockade of the Korean peninsula.*

*FEAF reduced close support for ground troops along the static front lines, although Fifth Air Force fighters, fighter-bombers, and light bombers destroyed numerous troublesome enemy artillery sites. At night B-29s dropped air fragmentation bombs on enemy frontline positions and troop concentrations beyond friendly artillery range.*

*Hampered by poor flying weather later in December, FEAF nevertheless maintained a high sortie rate of interdiction against enemy resupply activity. Fifth Air Force attacked enemy rail and highway transportation routes, frequently bombing, rocketing, and strafing bridges, marshaling yards, and rail*

and vehicular rolling stock. During darkness, B-26 light bombers and USMC fighter-bombers, aided by flare-dropping aircraft, made interdiction assaults on enemy road traffic.

FEAF Bomber Command repeatedly attacked key railroad bypass bridges, marshaling yards, and highway bridges along the enemy supply routes, principally in west and northwest Korea. B-29s also kept enemy airfields at Namsi, Taechon, and Saamcham south of the Manchurian border inoperable by almost nightly attacks. Despite increased enemy air resistance and more intense anti-aircraft fire, no medium bombers went down this month. After the communists released locations of Allied POW camps, FEAF stopped air strikes in those areas until the camps could be pinpointed.

The 315th AD airlifted 85,713 troops, 10,379 tons of cargo, and 6,249 evacuees in 6,032 sorties during the month. Search and rescue units flew 410 sorties on search, orbit, evacuation, and rescue missions. Helicopters evacuated 175 critically wounded patients and rescued five people from behind enemy lines. The 3d ARS helicopters also flew from enemy territory thirty-seven POWs who had escaped. UN reconnaissance aircraft secured intelligence information on enemy ground dispositions, air targets, vehicle movements, airfield status, and weather.

During December the enemy increased the challenge to UN air supremacy. Communist pilots flew more MiG-15 sorties from Manchuria, moved more aircraft near the Yalu River border, bombed and strafed UN ground installations and frontline positions, and increased night interceptor attacks against UN aircraft.

**December 3:** Enemy jets made their first air-ground attack of the war, bombing and strafing UN ground positions near Chorwon, almost sixty miles northeast of Seoul.

**December 13:** Twenty-nine F-86s encountered seventy-five MiG-15s over Sinanju, and in a wild melee the F-86 pilots shot down nine MiGs, giving USAF pilots a total of fourteen aerial victories for the day.

**December 14:** In the night, 19th BG B-29s inflicted severe damage on marshaling yards at Maengjung-dong.

**December 19:** 307th BW sent ten B-29s to bomb marshaling yards at Chongju.

**December 21:** Fifth Air Force units flew 530 sorties, making thirty cuts in the main rail line between Sinanju and Sukchon and attacking a supply complex near Kunu-ri.

**December 24:** In a typical nighttime mission, B-29s from the 98th BW cratered the runway at Taechon Airfield and bombed the railroad bridge at Sinanju.

**December 27:** FEAF aircraft flew 900 sorties, the largest number of the month, damaging or destroying locomotives, rail cars, buildings, vehicles, and gun positions.

# 1952

## January 1952

The static, defensive-type ground warfare continued into January 1952. Meanwhile, UN warships and naval aircraft cooperated with FEAF in the interdiction of the enemy's supply network. The enemy countered UN air attacks with active air opposition and increasingly heavy antiaircraft fire. At Panmunjom, UN negotiators attempted to achieve an armistice; however communist intransigence, evasiveness, and procrastination thwarted their efforts.

Fifth Air Force tactical units directed most flights against railheads, communication lines, and highways over which the communists moved supplies and equipment to frontline positions. The fighter-bombers concentrated on rail-cutting missions but, when required, flew bombing, napalm, and rocket strikes in close support of Eighth Army ground forces. B-26 night intruders, aided by flare-dropping aircraft, directed attacks against enemy trucks, complementing the daylight interdiction efforts of FEAF fighter-bombers. Other light bombers struck at enemy airfields, storage areas, rail junctions, and railroad rolling stock.

FEAF Bomber Command B-29s placed the highest priority on North Korean airfields, which remained for the most part unusable. They also bombed marshaling yards, railroad bypass bridges, and supply storage areas. The medium bomber aircrews used extreme caution to avoid bombing in the vicinity of reported POW camps. In addition, they flew nightly close air support missions, dropping 500-pound air-fragmentation bombs over enemy troop concentrations.

FEAF flew numerous cargo, search and rescue, reconnaissance, and leaflet operations. The 315th AD airlifted 84,234 troops, 6,805 tons of cargo, and 2,041 medical evacuees. Search and rescue units flew 516 sorties. Helicopters evacuated 293 critically wounded patients from forward areas and rescued one pilot from behind enemy lines. C-47 and B-29 aircraft dropped psychological warfare leaflets to civilians and communist soldiers in enemy territory.

UN fighter sweeps provided protective aerial cover for fighter-bombers and inflicted costly losses on hostile MiG-15s, which made only sporadic attempts to interfere. During the month, UN pilots shot down thirty-two MiGs and damaged twenty-eight others. Although FEAF lost only five jets in aerial combat, it saw enemy ground fire destroy forty-four other aircraft. These had been engaged in low-level bombing runs and strafing sweeps.



**January 12:** F-84s caught three supply trains at Sunchon, racing for the shelter of a tunnel. They blasted the tunnel mouth shut, trapping the trains in the open, and then destroyed the boxcars and at least two locomotives.

**January 12/13:** Ten Okinawa-based Superfortresses dropped 396 high-explosive 500-pound bombs on the railroad bridge that crossed the Chongchong River east of Sinanju, rendering it unserviceable.

**January 25:** A helicopter rescued a downed airman, near the coastline of the Yellow Sea, while F-84s strafed enemy troops in the area. Escorting F-86s destroyed three MiG-15s during the pickup. In other air-to-air combat, UN jets destroyed six and damaged four communist aircraft.

**January 26:** A rescue helicopter, behind enemy lines near the coastline of the Yellow Sea, received small arms fire while rescuing an F-84 pilot, Capt. A. T. Thawley.

### **February 1952**

*UN and communist forces maintained defensive positions, and the front lines remained unchanged, running generally from Hungwang-ni northeast to Chungdong-ni, eastward to Schui-ri, and northeast to the vicinity of Kosong on the east coast. UN forces initiated small-unit reconnaissance patrols and raids into hostile positions, particularly along the western sector of the front.*



***Napalm bombs explode at a North Korean zinc mine during a B-26 raid.***

*These operations generally encountered determined enemy defenses and prompt counteraction.*

*Daytime counterair sweeps, day and night interdiction of the main communist supply routes, and airlift of high-priority supplies accounted for most FEAF sorties. FEAF reconnaissance aircraft secured intelligence information on enemy ground dispositions, air targets, vehicle movements, airfield status, and weather. Cargo planes and medium bombers also dropped psychological warfare leaflets over North Korea. Inclement weather reduced the number of sorties flown during the month.*

*MiG-15s made only sporadic attempts to engage UN fighters, although communist air power based north of the Yalu River still threatened UN Command air, ground, and naval operations in Korea. USAF pilots destroyed thirteen MiGs, damaged thirty-eight, and probably destroyed five more. The MiGs shot down two friendly jet fighters, while seventeen other UN warplanes of various types fell to enemy ground fire.*

*Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers, under the protective cover of jet fighters, penetrated daily deep into enemy territory. The fighter-bombers also supplied limited support for Eighth Army frontline troops, permitting them freedom of movement not enjoyed by the enemy and destroying lucrative enemy targets near the battle area. At night, B-26 intruders and USMC fighters attacked rail transport systems and highways, hindering the movement of supplies and equipment. An intensified rail interdiction campaign, Operation Saturate, became a race between U.S. airmen trying to destroy rail lines and North Korean laborers repairing them. During a given night as many as forty B-29s might hit a bridge, and fighter bombers would drop some 500 bombs on a single length of track, only to see the bridge or track repaired within a day or two.*

*FEAF Bomber Command B-29s placed their primary efforts on railroad crossings, key railroad bridges, and marshaling yards, since most North Korean airfields remained unserviceable. To force the enemy to spread his antiaircraft defenses, they shifted from attacks on heavily defended bridges to less dangerous targets. In addition, they dropped air-fragmentation bombs nightly over enemy troop concentrations near the front line.*

*The 315th AD airlifted 81,555 troops, 2,068 medical evacuees, and 1,431 tons of supplies. Search and rescue aircraft flew 586 sorties, and helicopters evacuated 126 medical patients and rescued nine airmen from enemy territory.*

**February 9:** In a typical mission, ten medium bombers used radar aiming methods to drop 100 tons of 500-pound bombs to render the north-by-pass Chongju rail bridge unserviceable.

**February 10:** Leading a flight of three F-86s on a patrol near the Manchurian border, Maj. George A. Davis, Jr., USAF, engaged twelve MiG-15s in aerial combat. Major Davis shot down two enemy aircraft and completely disrupted the enemy formation, but the MiGs destroyed his aircraft as well.

Because he executed his attack against superior numbers and successfully protected the fighter-bombers that his flight had been escorting, Major Davis posthumously received the Medal of Honor for his valor.

**February 16–22:** MiG–15 pilots flew nearly 1,400 sorties this week.

**February 17:** Fifth Air Force flew an impressive 695 sorties, cratering rail tracks in more than fifty locations, damaging a locomotive and fifteen rail cars north of Huichon, strafing a convoy of trucks near Sinanju, and destroying supply buildings and dumps between Kumsong and Sibyon-ni.

**February 19:** The communists flew approximately 389 MiG–15 sorties, the largest aerial effort to date. In aerial combat, USAF pilots destroyed three enemy aircraft.

**February 23:** By shooting down a MiG–15, his fifth score, Maj. William T. Whisner, Jr., 25th FIS, achieved ace status.

**February 26:** Ten Superfortresses, using radar aiming methods, dropped 100 tons of bombs on the Sinhung-dong railroad bridge near Huichon in north-central Korea, knocking out two spans. Col. Cecil H. Childre replaced General Henebry as Commander, 315th AD (Combat Cargo).

## **March 1952**

*The UN Command conducted patrols and raids against determined enemy opposition and fended off widely scattered, small-scale enemy exploratory attacks. The front lines remained essentially the same, with U.S. Eighth Army units—U.S. I Corps, U.S. IX Corps, U.S. X Corps, and ROK I Corps—deployed from west to east across the peninsula.*

*FEAF aircraft, in one of the busiest months of the Korean air war, mounted more than 1,000 sorties nearly every day. FEAF maintained air superiority over the battlefield, enabling UN ground forces to operate with complete freedom from communist air attacks. Meanwhile, FEAF's tactical air activities, other than its primary missions of interdiction, close support, and counterair, included routine aerial reconnaissance, airlift, search and rescue, and flare and leaflet-drop missions.*

*Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers, B–26 light bombers, and other tactical warplanes concentrated mainly on interdiction missions against enemy rail and highway facilities to choke the movement of enemy supplies and equipment to frontline areas. Other targets included marshaling yards, bridges, and traffic choke points.*

*FEAF Bomber Command B–29s, using radar to aim its bombs, struck nightly at key communist targets, including enemy troop and supply concentrations along the battlefield.*

*The 315th AD maintained a steady stream of troops, supplies, and ammunition between Japan and Korea, airlifting 17,603 tons of cargo, 90,021 troops, and 7,840 medical evacuees. Search and rescue units flew 442 sorties, and helicopters evacuated 140 critically wounded patients from forward areas and rescued two airmen from behind enemy lines.*

**March 5:** While jet fighters stilled enemy anti-aircraft fire, a USAF helicopter lowered a hoist sling and rescued a downed USN pilot in the vicinity of Yongyon.

**March 11:** Fighter-bombers dropped 150 tons of bombs and approximately 33,000 gallons of napalm on a 4-square-mile supply storage and troop training area near Sinmak. Fifth Air Force operations officers reported this to be the most intensive napalm attack on a single area in the war.

**March 11/12:** Ten B-29s struck the Sinchang-ni choke point, ten miles east of Sunchon, with ninety-one tons of high explosives, rendering the point impassable.

**March 15:** Brig. Gen. Wiley D. Ganey, USAF, replaced General Kelly as Commander, FEAF Bomber Command (Provisional).

**March 20:** In the Sui-ho Reservoir area, MiG-15s attacked a USAF patrol. The F-86 pilots destroyed five MiGs and damaged approximately thirteen others.

**March 25:** Fifth Air Force flew 959 sorties, concentrating on interdiction of the rail line from Sinanju to Chongju and making approximately 142 cuts in the track. Some aircraft struck the Sunchon-Pyongyang highway, scoring twenty-seven hits.

**March 27:** A helicopter crew, learning that Chinese troops had captured a downed U.S. pilot near Pyoksong, made several low passes, enabling their compatriot to escape. While one helicopter crewmember fired at the Chinese soldiers with a rifle, others lowered a hoist and rescued the pilot.



**A Fifth Air Force munitions specialist pumps the three millionth gallon of napalm, into a firebomb shell destined for a North Korean target.**

## **April 1952**

*In two major ground engagements, communist forces attacked positions held by the 1st Marine Division south of Panmunjom and later assaulted the 1st Commonwealth Division north of Korangpo-ri. Friendly units held during both night attacks, and ground activity was light through the remainder of April.*

*In the rail interdiction campaign, FEAF units concentrated on two main railroads from Manchuria—the Namsi-dong–Sinanju and the Huichon–Kunu-ri lines. FEAF rendered the Sinuiju–Sinanju line unserviceable for most of April. In response to rail interdiction efforts, the enemy erected formidable anti-aircraft defenses, especially along the Sinanju–Pyongyang line.*

*Bomber Command B–29s flew mostly against North Korean road and railroad bridges and marshaling yards; a few sorties were dedicated to close air support and leaflet drops. RB–29s from the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron flew reconnaissance of selected North Korean targets, and WB–29s from the 2143d Air Weather Wing flew weather reconnaissance sorties. Fifth Air Force F–51, F–80, F–84, and B–26 aircraft generally flew daylight armed reconnaissance and interdiction sorties against enemy railroads, vehicles, bunkers, and troop concentrations. They also flew a smaller number of close support sorties. At night, B–26s of the 3d and 452d BWs hit enemy railroads and vehicles. Other fighters under Fifth Air Force's operational control included ROK Air Force and SAAF F–51s; RAAF MK–8s; and USMC F4Us, F7Fs, F9Fs, and AD–2s. These concentrated on armed reconnaissance and interdiction but also flew search and rescue and close air support, assisted by T–6 spotter aircraft. Fifth Air Force lost seventeen aircraft to enemy ground fire.*

*Sabres flew daytime counterair and escort missions, whereas F–94s flew a few night counterair sorties. Sabre pilots, five of whom attained ace status during the month, destroyed thirty-seven MiGs in aerial combat. Fifth Air Force lost four F–86s and one F–80 in air-to-air engagements. The 6167th Operations Squadron flew its unarmed C–46, C–47, and B–26 aircraft on 188 leaflet, 10 broadcast, and 66 clandestine sorties, receiving, on occasion, enemy ground fire, which damaged three C–47s and killed one enlisted man. The 6160th ABG rescue boat detachment performed 128 missions; one 85-foot boat operating in waters north of the 38th parallel sustained battle damage when a North Korean junk fired on it.*

**March 31/April 1:** FEAF Bomber Command B–29s flew twenty-nine sorties, approximately twice the normal rate, mostly against the Sinhung-dong rail bridge and the Kwaksan railroad track.

**April 1:** Fifth Air Force Sabre pilots destroyed ten MiGs while losing one F–86. Col. Francis S. Gabreski, USAF, Commander, 51th FIW, destroyed a MiG to become the eighth jet ace of the war.

**April 3:** In aerial combat, Capt. Robert H. Moore, USAF, 336th FIS, destroyed his fifth MiG to become an ace.

**April 6:** In air-to-air operations, Capt. Iven C. Kincheloe, Jr., USAF, 25th FIS, destroyed a MiG, becoming the war's tenth ace.

**April 10:** Brig. Gen. (later, Maj. Gen.) Chester E. McCarty, USAF, assumed command of the 315th AD (Combat Cargo) for the remainder of the war.

**April 14:** The first Air Force Reserve wing ordered to active duty service, the 403d TCW (Medium), arrived at Ashiya AB, Japan. An SA-16 of the 3d ARS, while under enemy small-arms fire from the shoreline, rescued a U.S. naval aviator from the water.

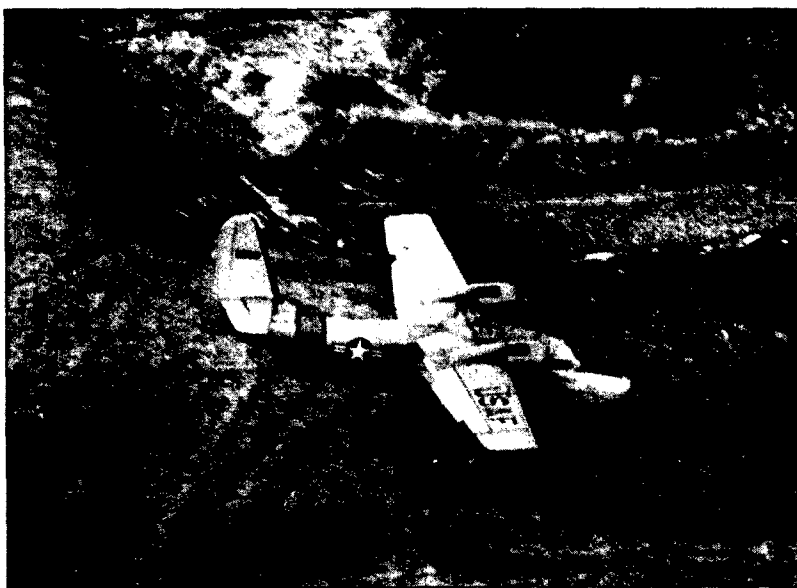
**April 21:** In aerial combat, Capt. Robert J. Love, USAF, 335th FIS, destroyed two MiGs to become an ace.

**April 22:** Because of shortages of fighter-bombers, Fifth Air Force assigned Sabres of the 4th and 51st FIWs a new commitment—the armed reconnaissance of enemy lines of communication.

**April 26:** In air-to-air operations, Maj. William H. Wescott, USAF, 51st FIG, destroyed his fifth MiG in four weeks to become the war's twelfth ace.

**April 28:** An H-19 helicopter of the 3d ARS picked up a downed Hawker Seafury exchange pilot for the second time. Exactly three weeks earlier the same pilot had been rescued by a 3d ARS helicopter.

**April 29-30:** Unrelated crashes of a C-47, a C-119, and a C-46 claimed the lives of sixteen people, the greatest loss for the 315th AD in the first half of 1952.



***A 3d Air Rescue Squadron SA-16 Grumman Albatross flies along the Korean coast.***

## **May 1952**

*The UN Commander accepted the FEAF Commander's recommendation to attack North Korea's hydroelectric power facilities as the least costly means of impressing on enemy leadership the increasingly high costs of communist recalcitrance in armistice negotiations. FEAF aircraft flew 30,000 sorties, the highest monthly total thus far. Fifth Air Force and attached units lost twenty-two aircraft to enemy ground fire. Fifth Air Force resumed use of the F-86 in air-to-ground missions for the first time since February 1951. The F-86 aircraft in the fighter-bomber role showed decided advantages in comparison with the F-80 and F-84. The F-86 could maintain a higher dive angle without exceeding its critical mach number, and its accuracy in bombing and rocketry was greater. Moreover, the Sabre could penetrate and withdraw from defended areas better than the other jets, and it required no separate air cover. In aerial combat, Sabre pilots, four of whom attained ace status during the month, destroyed thirty-two MiGs and two other enemy aircraft. Well-trained MiG pilots, operating with ground-controlled radar, increased friendly aircraft losses. Fifth Air Force lost five F-86s and five other fighters. Reconnaissance units in Korea maintained a higher sortie rate than ever before: the 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Group flew 2,400 reconnaissance sorties.*

**May 3:** Sabre pilots destroyed five MiG-15s, with Maj. Donald E. Adams, USAF, 16th FIS, destroying two and Capt. Robert T. Latshaw, Jr., USAF, 335th FIS, downing another to increase the number of aces to fourteen.

**May 4:** Twenty-five F-86s strafed and destroyed five of twenty-four Yak-9s parked in revetments at Sinuiju Airfield in extreme northwestern Korea.

**May 8:** In the first of four major interdiction strikes, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers flew approximately 465 sorties against the enemy supply depot at Suan, located about forty miles southeast of Pyongyang, in the largest single-day attack since the war began. Over a thirteen-hour period, the UN pilots damaged or destroyed over 200 supply buildings, personnel shelters, revetments, vehicles, and gun positions. Enemy anti-aircraft fire downed an F-86 on a dive-bombing strike against the Kunu-ri marshaling yards, the first loss of a Sabre on a fighter-bomber sortie.

**May 12:** Gen. Mark W. Clark, USA, replaced General Ridgway as Commander, UN Command.

**May 13:** Fifth Air Force Sabres destroyed five MiG-15s in aerial combat. In the morning twelve F-86s attacked targets in Sinuiju, Sinuiju Airfield, and Uiju Airfield in extreme northwestern Korea. In the early afternoon, Sabres struck the marshaling yards at Kunu-ri and, in the late afternoon, bombed Sinuiju with 1,000-pound bombs. Unfortunately, Col. Walker M. Mahurin, USAF, Commander, 4th FIG, who had led all three missions, was shot down and captured.

**May 15:** Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers flew 265 sorties against a vehi-

cle repair factory at Tang-dong, north of Pyongyang, destroying at least thirty-nine buildings and a power plant. 1st Lt. James H. Kasler, USAF, 335th FIS, destroyed two MiGs to become an ace.

**May 16-17:** In an outstanding example of emergency unit movement by air, C-119, C-54, and C-46 aircraft from the 315th AD transported 2,361 members of the 187th Regimental Combat Team plus combat equipment, vehicles, and supplies from Japan to Pusan, Korea. The team quelled rioting POWs at Koje-do, where UN Command had established a large POW compound.

**May 18:** An SA-16 amphibious aircraft from the 3d ARS, while under fire from the enemy shoreline, rescued a downed F-84 pilot.

**May 20:** Col. Harrison R. Thyng, USAF, Commander, 4th FIW, destroyed his fifth MiG to become the sixteenth jet ace of the war.

**May 22:** Fifth Air Force flew 472 fighter-bomber sorties against the Kijang-ni industrial area southwest of Pyongyang to destroy more than 90 percent of the complex, which produced hand grenades, small arms, and ammunition.

**May 23:** In the last of four major interdiction strikes, Fifth Air Force flew 275 fighter-bomber sorties against a steel factory complex in the Kijang-ni area, destroying 80 percent of the target. Because of poor weather, an H-19 helicopter from the 3d ARS flew most of a sortie "on instruments" and picked up a downed USMC AD-2 pilot—one of the first instances of a "primarily-instruments" helicopter rescue.

**May 23/24:** B-26s seeded the Kijang-ni area with delayed-action bombs to hamper repair efforts.

**May 26:** The 315th AD received its first Globemaster as two squadrons began the conversion from C-54 to C-124 aircraft.



*The Korean War saw the introduction of the C-124 Globemaster as a strategic airlifter.*



**May 26/27:** Ten B-29s from the 19th BG attacked the Sinhung-dong rail bridge, destroying one locomotive, sixteen boxcars, 350 linear feet of the bridge, and nearly 400 feet of track on the approaches.

**May 30:** Lt. Gen. Glenn O. Barcus, USAF, replaced General Everest as Commander, Fifth Air Force.

## **June 1952**

Ground action remained light although elements of the USA 45th Infantry Division in the central sector near Chorwon launched two successful attacks to gain high ground and repulsed determined enemy counterattacks.

Aircraft from Fifth Air Force, FEF Bomber Command, and Naval Forces Far East flew more than 1,200 sorties against North Korean hydroelectric power facilities, rendering eleven of thirteen power plants unserviceable and destroying more than 90 percent of North Korea's and 25 percent of Manchuria's electric power potential. Previously, the Joint Chiefs of Staff had forbidden attacks on the Sui-ho, Changjin, Pujon, and Kyosen complexes. Despite the destructiveness of the raids, the communists failed to move toward an armistice. Moreover, British Labor Party opposition and U.S. con-



**FEF leaders on the second anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, June 1952, from left to right: Gen. James A. Van Fleet, Commander, UN Forces in Korea at the time; Lt. Gen. Otto P. Weyland, Commander, Far East Air Forces, June 10, 1951, until war's end; Col. Marshall R. Gray, Commander, 3d Bombardment Wing, March 4, 1952–August 14, 1952; and Lt. Gen. Glen O. Barcus, Commander, Fifth Air Force, May 30, 1952–May 31, 1953.**

gressional inquiries diminished the political effectiveness of the strikes, a signal that the United States was conducting a limited war.

The hydroelectric power plant strikes represented the major exception to the daily FEAF sortie pattern of the previous two months' operations. Also, Fifth Air Force and attached units flew 2,859 close air support sorties to thwart enemy preparations for another offensive and to maintain pilot proficiency in such operations. Fifth Air Force lost fourteen aircraft to enemy ground fire.

In air-to-air combat, F-86s destroyed twenty-one enemy aircraft, eighteen of them MiGs, while losing two Sabres. The enemy flew fewer than 300 daytime sorties, but MiG pilots were more aggressive than had been previously noted.

The 315th AD had only twenty-eight of its seventy-one C-119 transport aircraft operational during June. To remedy the problem, Air Materiel Command prodded C-119 manufacturers for speedy delivery of spare parts to Japan. Tactical Air Command sent newer-model Flying Boxcars to the Far East, and the 403d TCW transferred maintenance-plagued C-119s to the United States. FEAF flew 170 leaflet, 19 voice-broadcast, and 129 flare-dropping sorties in addition to search and rescue missions. The boat detachment sent a 63-foot boat into tricky shoal waters near Kunsan off the west coast of South Korea to rescue five people and recover one body.

**June 4:** An H-19 helicopter of the 3d ARS picked up a downed British pilot, encountering automatic weapons fire during the rescue.

**June 6:** Fifth Air Force Sabres destroyed eight MiGs in aerial combat, the highest daily tally for the month.



**Three types of transport aircraft used by the USAF in Korea: C-47 Skytrains, on the near runway; C-119 Flying Boxcars in the center of the photograph; and C-54 Skymasters sitting on the distant runway.**

**June 7:** In initiation of an air refueling test, codenamed Operation High-tide, thirty-five F-84 Thunderjets took off from Japan, refueled from KB-29M aircraft over Korea, and attacked targets in the north.

**June 9:** An H-19 helicopter of the 3d ARS picked up a downed UN pilot, encountering moderate small-arms fire en route.

**June 10/11:** Eight B-29s from the 19th BG attacked the rail bridge at Kwaksan, North Korea. Enemy MiGs, operating in conjunction with radar-controlled searchlights and flak, destroyed two B-29s and badly damaged a third. This new development in the enemy's air defense system prompted FEAF to improve electronic countermeasures (ECM) to jam and confuse enemy radar.

**June 14:** Following reconnaissance flights that indicated repairs at the Pyongyang Airfield, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers cratered the runways, rendering them unserviceable in approximately 150 sorties while suffering no losses.

**June 15:** In aerial combat, 2d Lt. James F. Low, USAF, 335th FIS, destroyed his fifth MiG, becoming an ace just six months after completing flight training.

**June 19/20:** B-29s flew thirty-five sorties against North Korean targets, nearly three times the nightly average for the month. Twenty-seven medium bombers attacked the Huichon rail bridge.

**June 23:** Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers, with F-86 cover, flew approximately 250 sorties against North Korean hydroelectric power plants. The Suiho complex sustained 70 percent structural damage, rendering it nonoperational.

**June 24:** FEAF flew 1,043 sorties, the highest daily total for the month. Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers flew more than 250 sorties against North Korean hydroelectric power plants, four of them having been targets the previous day.

**June 24/25:** Twenty-six B-29s flew close air support sorties, one of the largest such medium bomber missions since the early days of the war. Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers rendered temporarily unserviceable the Samdongni rail complex, the choke point of the east-west and north-south rail lines in North Korea. Night-flying B-26s seeded the area with delayed-action bombs to hamper repair efforts.

**June 30:** The first two aircrews of the 374th TCW completed their proficiency checks in the C-124 Globemaster.

## **July 1952**

*On the ground, the heaviest fighting occurred in the eastern sector near the coast and near Old Baldy (Hill 266) in the USA 2d Infantry Division sector, as an enemy battalion attempted to seize it. It changed hands several times but remained under friendly control at the end of the month, with U.S. troops inflicting heavy casualties upon the enemy.*

*FEAF experienced eleven days of "standdown" weather, days in which*

no flying could occur, and marginal conditions on nine days. These conditions severely limited FEAF photographic reconnaissance capability, which affected target selection.

Bomber Command directed its B-29s against such targets as communications centers, manufacturing facilities, and supply depots. The B-29s were to attack sixty to eighty diversified targets per month, but lacking other suitable air targets, planners directed many B-29s against North Korean rail marshaling yards, achieving little in return.

To free sorties for other targets, Fifth Air Force B-26s and fighter-bombers abandoned most daily attacks on railroads, instead hitting them just often enough to keep them unserviceable. The 502d Tactical Control Group set a new monthly record for the war when it controlled the dropping of 2,388 tons of bombs on frontline targets.

In a month of relatively low air-to-air combat, Fifth Air Force pilots destroyed sixteen MiGs at a cost of four Sabres. Fifth Air Force lost nine aircraft to ground fire, the lowest figure so far in 1952, in part because of the decrease in rail interdiction and a greater than usual number of standdown days.

B Flight, 6167th Operations Squadron, flew 142 leaflet and 13 broadcast sorties as well as 79 flare-dropping and 69 clandestine sorties. The 3d ARS transported more than 700 flood victims to safety. The newly activated 22d Crash Rescue Boat Squadron performed nine rescue missions, saving two lives.

**July 3:** General McCarty, 315th AD commander, flew the 374th TCW's first operational C-124 Globemaster from Japan to Korea. In thirteen sorties over enemy territory, C-47s dropped more than 22,000,000 leaflets, over one-sixth of all that were dropped during the month.

**July 4:** Approximately fifty-three MiGs, some piloted by Soviets, attacked some fifty F-86s and seventy F-84s during a raid on the North Korean Military Academy at Sakchu near the Yalu. Fifth Air Force pilots downed thirteen MiG-15s at a cost of two Sabres. Although four MiGs succeeded in passing through the protective fighter screen, they failed to destroy any fighter-bombers. Bombing results were poor, however.

**July 10:** Beginning this date, over the next three weeks the 315th AD airlifted the 474th FBW from Misawa AB, Japan, to Kunsan AB, South Korea, the largest unit movement by air to date.

**July 11:** FEAF flew 1,329 sorties, the highest daily total for the month. In the first raid of Operation Pressure Pump, nearly every operational air unit in the Far East attacked thirty targets in Pyongyang in the largest single strike so far of the war. Attacking aircraft destroyed three targets that included the North Korean Ministry of Industry. Most other targets sustained heavy damage.

**July 11/12:** As part of Operation Pressure Pump, B-29s flew seventy-one effective sorties, more than fifty against the Pyongyang supply area.

**July 13:** FEAF initiated a new general-warning leaflet-drop program over enemy territory. The new leaflet identified specific towns and targets to be destroyed by air attacks.

**July 15:** Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers flew approximately 175 sorties against the Sungho-ri cement plant and a nearby locomotive repair facility.

**July 20:** Fifty-eight F-84Gs of the 31st FEW arrived in Japan, the first large-scale Pacific crossing of jet fighters using in-flight refueling.

**July 30:** Following extended heavy rains, helicopters of the 3d ARS carried approximately 650 flood-stranded U.S. military members and Koreans to safety. Flying more than 100 sorties, five large H-19s transported some 600 evacuees, while two H-5s carried the rest. In the I Corps sector, two H-5s flew more than thirty sorties to rescue sixty flood-stranded Koreans and U.S. soldiers.

**July 30/31:** In one of the largest medium bomber raids against a single target, sixty B-29s destroyed a noteworthy 90 percent of the Oriental Light Metals Company facility, only four miles from the Yalu River. The B-29s achieved the unusually extensive destruction of the target in spite of encountering the largest nighttime counterair effort to date by the enemy. The attacking bombers suffered no losses.

## **August 1952**

*Toward midmonth the enemy in reinforced-battalion strength attacked UN positions in several sectors. Hills in the 1st Marine Division and in the ROK II Corps sectors changed hands several times, but UN forces retained control while inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.*

*FEAF continued B-29 and fighter-bomber attacks against communist supply and production areas, although FEAF intelligence concluded that North Korea had no remaining strategic or economic targets suitable for strategic attack. Medium bombers struck Pyongyang on five nights in some of the most massive attacks of the war. B-26s flew more daytime interdiction than in previous months, mainly against enemy supply areas and airfields.*

*Fifth Air Force increased the number of voice-broadcast sorties flown to thirty-seven to encourage defections among enemy troops and civilians. It also flew 182 leaflet sorties with emphasis on warning civilians of impending attacks and impressing the North Koreans of their government's inability to prevent the bombings.*

*After the loss of three B-26s in four nights, General Barcus ordered an operational standdown for the 3d BW. He concluded that light-bomber crews were not adept enough at low-altitude night operations and directed that B-26s generally should not operate below 4,000 feet. Ten days later, following a change of command, introduction of new tactics, and intense training, the 3d BW returned to operational status and did not lose another aircraft to enemy action until December. The new tactics used fighter-bombers at last light to bomb highway intersections; then, at first darkness, B-26s dropped butterfly and delayed-action bombs on adjacent roads, and throughout the*

night, individual light bombers searched the roads for stranded vehicles to attack. As a result, the B-26s destroyed greater numbers of enemy vehicles.

The tempo of the air-to-air war increased as MiGs entered North Korean skies more frequently during daylight hours. Sabre pilots destroyed thirty-two MiG-15s while losing one F-86 in aerial combat. However, other causes resulted in the loss of five more F-86s and one F-84. Fifth Air Force lost fourteen additional aircraft to enemy ground fire.

**August 6:** Fifth Air Force pilots observed an estimated 250 MiGs, the largest daily total since April 1. In the major air-to-air battle of the month, 34 F-86s destroyed 6 of 52 MiG-15s. FEAF organized Detachment 3, 6004th Air Intelligence Service Squadron, to increase the effectiveness of evasion and escape techniques by downed airmen. The detachment continued ongoing experiments, such as "snatching" downed personnel by specially equipped C-47s. It also emphasized aircrew training in emergency procedures, the use of radios and survival equipment, and helicopter rescue procedures.

**August 7-8:** Capt. Clifford D. Jolley, USAF, 335th FIS, destroyed three additional MiGs in two days to become the eighteenth ace of the war.

**August 8:** Fifth Air Force fighters flew 285 close air support sorties, the highest daily total for the month. Indicative of FEAF's increased use of propaganda, at night B-26s flew three voice-broadcast sorties totaling almost four hours over enemy-held positions near the east coast.

**August 15:** The 315th AD transported 300 medical evacuees, the highest daily total for the month.

**August 19/20:** FEAF aircraft dropped general-warning leaflets over Pyongyang concerning the next night's attacks.

**August 20/21:** Thirty-eight B-29s bombed supply areas of the enemy's capital, the highest number of medium bomber sorties against a single target this month.

**August 22-23:** On successive nights, three C-47s flew sixty-minute voice-broadcast sorties near the front lines, indicating a greater emphasis by UN Command on psychological war.

**August 29:** At the request of the U.S. Department of State, FEAF conducted against Pyongyang the largest air attack to date to serve as a dramatic military action during the visit of China's premier, Chou En-lai, to the Soviet Union. The State Department hoped that the attack might lead the Soviets to urge the Chinese to accept an armistice rather than expend further communist resources in the war. FEAF aircraft, protected by USAF Sabres and RAAF Meteors, flew approximately 1,400 air-to-ground sorties. Thirty-one targets sustained moderate to severe damage, but Fifth Air Force lost three aircraft to ground fire.

**August 31:** The 31st FEW, stationed at Misawa AB, Japan, completed the last phase of the USAF air refueling test program, Operation Hightide, begun in June.

## **September 1952**

*The heaviest ground activity centered in the ROK II Corps sector with intense seesaw fighting but little change in the front lines. The enemy suffered high casualties; for example, in a single four-day period it lost an estimated 1,100 soldiers.*

FEAF directed most air attacks against enemy industrial remnants and troop concentration areas throughout North Korea. Many targets were in North Korea's border areas, virtually untouched by previous FEAF attacks. For the first time, FEAF Bomber Command employed a few B-29s solely in an ECM role. The command flew its usual small number of close air support sorties at night. Light bombers continued day and night attacks primarily against enemy supply targets and vehicles. Fifth Air Force flew ninety-six flare-drop missions in the interdiction campaign.

In air-to-air combat, F-86s destroyed fifty-eight MiGs, the highest monthly total so far. Two Sabre pilots attained ace status, but Fifth Air Force lost nine Sabres and at least five F-84s. The 22d Crash Rescue Boat Squadron performed eight rescue missions, saving one life and recovering three bodies.

**September 3/4:** B-29s flew fifty-two effective sorties, the monthly high, of which fifty were against the Changjin hydroelectric power plant complex.

**September 4:** Seventy-five fighter-bombers flew well north of the Chongchon River to attack targets, flushing out an estimated eighty-nine MiGs from their Manchurian bases. The thirty-nine Sabres screening the F-84s engaged the MiGs, destroying thirteen, to equal the one-day record set two months earlier, on July 4. Four F-86s fell to MiG pilots. Maj. Frederick C. Blesse, USAF, 334th FIS, destroyed his fifth enemy aircraft to become an ace. An H-19 from the 3d ARS rescued a downed fighter pilot and two crewmen of a USN helicopter, which had lost power and crashed in the water while attempting to pick up the pilot.

**September 5:** In two daylight strikes, FEAF flew more than 200 sorties against an ore and processing plant located northeast of Sinanju, damaging or destroying approximately seventy buildings and repair shops.

**September 9:** Protected by F-86s, forty-five F-84s attacked the North Korean Military Academy at Sakchu. Of approximately sixty-four MiGs in the area, some penetrated the Sabre screen, shot down three Thunderjets, and forced several flights to jettison their bombs. The F-86s suffered no losses during the aerial combat and destroyed five MiGs.

**September 12/13:** Twenty-five B-29s attacked the generator building at the giant Sui-ho power plant. Prior to and during the attack, USAF B-26s and USN aircraft dropped low-level fragmentation bombs to suppress enemy searchlights, rendering eight of approximately thirty unserviceable. At the same time, four B-29s orbiting to the east jammed enemy radar. Enemy fighters shot down one medium bomber and flak damaged several others, but the B-29s dropped their bombs on-target, again rendering the plant unserviceable. FEAF concluded that searchlight suppression and ECM probably

had saved the B-29s from greater losses.

**September 15:** To improve air-ground coordination and mutual understanding between the USAF and the USA, General Barcus began sending groups of fifteen pilots at a time on three-day tours to the front lines.

**September 16:** Fifth Air Force flew 110 B-26 sorties, the high figure for the month; most were night armed reconnaissance and interdiction missions. Using the recently developed roadblock tactics, the light bombers damaged or destroyed in excess of a hundred enemy vehicles.

**September 19:** In the first daylight medium bomber raid in eleven months, thirty-two B-29s with F-86 escorts attacked an enemy barracks and two supply areas southwest of Hamhung. An RB-45 preceded the B-29 formation, and an RB-29 orbited in the assembly area, providing weather information.

**September 21:** Sabre pilot Capt. Robinson Risner, USAF, 336th FIS, destroyed two MiG-15s to become an ace when the enemy responded to an attack on the Pukchong munitions plant by forty-one F-84s.

**September 27:** At night, three B-26s flew in the central sector making loudspeaker sorties that totaled 3.5 hours, an unusually high amount of broadcast time.

**September 29:** Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers flew against enemy bunkers and gun positions in 207 close air support sorties, the highest figure this month and well above the daily average.

## **October 1952**

*Between October 6 and 15, Chinese ground forces attacked mainly in the western IX Corps area northwest of Chorwon in a vain attempt to improve their position before the onset of winter. In midmonth, Eighth Army launched Operation Showdown to seize critical high ground in eastern IX Corps northeast of Kumhwa, but it became a seesaw contest to retain dominating terrain. In conjunction with Operation Showdown, Naval Forces Far East conducted in the Kojo area of northeast Korea a live amphibious demonstration intended to lure enemy forces onto roads where they could be attacked. Also, Fifth Air Force and Bomber Command intensified air attacks against troop concentrations, key communication centers, vehicles, and rail lines south and east of Pyongyang, while 315th and 403d TCWs concentrated C-46 and C-119 aircraft at Taegu AB for a paradrop exercise. Disappointingly, intelligence noted little enemy response; either the hoax did not deceive the enemy or he could not respond to the threat.*

*Fighter-interceptors flew combat patrols over northwest Korea daily as weather permitted. Fighter-bombers struck enemy supply points and other lucrative targets such as bridges, gun positions, vehicles, repair shops, and troop concentrations. Fifth Air Force concentrated on targets south of a line from Pyongyang to Wonsan and on close support to assist UN ground forces, especially in the IX Corps area. F-84 fighter-bombers, usually escorted by F-86s, initiated first-light reconnaissance of the rail line between Huichon*



and Kanggye to catch locomotives before they could be hidden in tunnels. The fighter-bombers also attacked enemy rail bridges and rolling stock. Enemy fighter opposition during October was meager and nonaggressive.

FEAF Bomber Command B-29 medium bombers hit targets in North Korea, frequently returning to the same supply complexes. They bombed storage areas near Sopo-ri, Naewonson-ni, Haechong, Ponchongol, Yonpo, and Chinnampo and a headquarters and training area on the Haeju peninsula. The B-29s also flew close support missions under ground radar control.

Fifth Air Force B-26 light bombers gave particular attention to the enemy supply routes on Korea's east coast, where reconnaissance missions and reports from intelligence agents showed an increase of traffic. Working under ground radar control when weather prevented visual bombing, they also provided close support for UN ground forces.

Photo interpreters detected the utilization of prefabricated spans on two bridges. The enemy used them at night, and removed and concealed them during the day. Reconnaissance could not determine if the Sui-ho hydroelectric plant was still operational, but it did find more anti-aircraft guns in the vicinity. Reconnaissance units gave particular attention to locating POW camps. The 67th TRW received the first of four B-26 aircraft modified with ECM equipment.

The 502d Tactical Control Group opened an air-direction center on Chodo off North Korea's western coast. This facility gave UN fighter-interceptors ground-controlled interception vectors like those enjoyed by the enemy for several months.

**September 30/October 1:** Including five ECM flak-suppression aircraft, forty-eight B-29s from all three units—the 19th BG and the 98th and 307th BWs—destroyed the last strategic-type target in Korea, the Namsan-ni Chemical Plant located 1,300 feet from the Yalu River and near the Sui-ho Dam. During the bombing, seven B-26s swept in at low altitudes to suppress eight of some forty searchlights.

**October 4:** Brig. Gen. William P. Fisher, USAF, succeeded General Ganey, USAF, as Commander, FEAF Bomber Command (Provisional).

**October 5:** Fifth Air Force made combined attacks with USN aircraft against barracks and supplies of the Chinese 67th Army at Loeyang.

**October 7:** Fifth Air Force fighter pilots and USN airmen attacked the CCF 26th Army at Yongpyongni.

**October 8:** In support of the amphibious hoax, ten B-29s of the 98th BW conducted a rare daylight visual bombing mission on the supply area at Kowon in eastern Korea in coordination with USN fighter-bomber attacks. Truce talks at Panmunjom recessed over the issue of forced repatriation of POWs. The UN delegates proposed to allow enemy POWs to choose repatriation or not; the communist delegates insisted on the repatriation of all POWs at the end of the war.

**October 9:** Fighter-bombers attacked widely scattered communist com-

munications centers from Huichon in North Korea south to the bomblines. Fifth Air Force aircraft inflicted heavy casualties on a communist regiment, delaying its commitment to the enemy attack underway.

**October 12:** An SA-16 pilot, 3d ARS, participated in two rescues within thirty minutes and more than a hundred miles apart. After directing a helicopter pickup of a downed Sabre pilot, the SA-16 pilot landed in the Haeju Harbor and, while overhead fighters suppressed ground fire from the shore, picked up from a dinghy a 69th FBS pilot who had parachuted from his burning F-84.

**October 12-14:** The 315th AD conducted paradrop exercises with the USA 187th Regimental Combat Team as part of the Kojo deception.

**October 12/13:** Twenty-six B-29s from all three medium bombardment units struck nine separate troop concentrations on the Haeju peninsula.

**October 13:** In preparation for the Kojo amphibious demonstration, FEAF and USN aircraft hit enemy positions around Kojo, and USN surface craft shelled the beach area. After a respite of nearly a year, the enemy, using small fabric-covered biplanes, hassled Cho-do and the Seoul area with "Bed-check Charlie" raids.

**October 15:** For the amphibious Kojo hoax, assault troops climbed down to assault landing craft, which made a pass at the shore and then returned to the ship. In addition, thirty-two C-119s, 403d TCW, flew to Chorwon, let down to paradrop altitude of 800 feet, then returned to Taegu AB.

**October 16:** North Korea sent a strongly worded protest to Far East Command concerning the recess in armistice negotiations but continued to insist on total repatriation of Chinese and North Korean POWs.

**October 24:** Fifth Air Force and Eighth Army completed a successful thirty-day test in IX Corps area of a new flak-suppression technique that allowed friendly artillery to continue firing while close support strikes were in progress.

**October 25:** Fifth Air Force B-26s and fighter-bombers attacked the Kungang Political School, starting fires that very nearly destroyed the installation.

**October 27:** Fifth Air Force aviation engineers completed a heavy-duty runway for combat cargo operations at the Seoul Municipal Airport.

**October 31:** North Korea presented a new POW camp list.

## **November 1952**

*After mid-November the scale of ground action declined as the enemy replenished supplies and reinforced troops. Fifth Air Force increased close support in IX Corps sector where enemy ground forces pressed attacks on ROK outposts.*

*On the one hand, reconnaissance revealed little activity on North Korean airfields; on the other, FEAF intelligence found that the Chinese had stationed 100 of the latest-model Soviet-built Il-28 light jet bombers in*

Manchuria, thus increasing the possibility of aerial attacks upon UN front lines, air bases in Korea, and installations in Japan.

Fifth Air Force units continued operational pressure on enemy rail systems, troop concentrations, supply areas, and headquarter areas. Destruction of two small hydroelectric facilities at Kongosan left virtually no hydroelectric facilities functioning in North Korea. Fifth Air Force rail interdiction sorties dropped some 200 tons of bombs on the Sinuiju-Sinanju line, with two heavy attacks on the Yongmi-dong bridge. Yet the line remained serviceable to through traffic throughout November, with the exception of three days. B-26 night intruder missions covered all main routes south from Pyongyang to Wonsan. The light bombers also made periodic patrols on the northern lines to catch nighttime enemy traffic. Occasionally, escorted by RAAF Meteors, the light bombers conducted daylight raids on supply targets and bridges. To counter the buildup of radar-guided enemy antiaircraft guns, the 3d and 17th BWs relied on the tactical air-direction post to direct daytime as well as nighttime and bad weather attacks.

Hampered by bad weather, Fifth Air Force, following an interdiction plan called "Choke," nevertheless obtained good results against enemy supply routes. At last light, fighter-bombers attacked selected road bridges, and shortly after dark, B-26s hit similar objectives. During the night, other B-26s reconnoitered and bombed vehicles stalled behind the blown-out bridges.

Late in the month, Fifth Air Force began scheduling F-80 and F-84 fighter-bombers on night, armed reconnaissance missions, patrolling the highway and rail line from Sinanju through Pyongyang to Sariwan. Fifth Air Force also placed F-86 flights south of MiG Alley for ground-controlled interceptions of MiG-15s that had evaded the main Sabre screen and attempted to attack Sabre patrols returning south and low on fuel.

Bomber Command B-29 attacks focused on troop concentrations and communications and supply centers. Bomber Command normally hit two targets nightly, sending six B-29s to each. Bomb damage assessment photos indicated a 100-percent increase in B-29 bombing effectiveness over October's rate, resulting from improvements in SHORAN target location by the 1st SHORAN Beacon Squadron, a Tactical Air Command unit attached to FEAF. But increased numbers of enemy radar-directed antiaircraft guns cost FEAF Bomber Command one B-29 in November that led the command to compress bomber streams to reduce the time each B-29 was exposed to enemy air defenses and to increase ECM effectiveness. In addition, to counter growing numbers of enemy night interceptors, the 319th FIS began to use F-94B Starfighters to escort B-29s on bombing missions and to maintain screens between the Yalu and Chongchon rivers. USN and later USMC F3D Skyknights supplemented the Starfighters in protecting the medium bombers.

The 315th AD replaced its C-54s with C-124s for scheduled flights between Japan and Korea, limiting cargo and personnel transport to airfields suitable for C-124 traffic.

**November 1:** Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers attacked three railroad bridges at Yongmi-dong. The 61st TCG began phasing out from the airlift its C-54s in preparation for its return to the United States.

**November 4:** Dwight D. Eisenhower, having campaigned on a promise to seek an end to the Korean War, was elected President of the United States. FEAF photographic surveillance showed the three railroad bridges at Yongmi-dong again in serviceable condition and two bypass bridges nearing completion.

**November 5:** Typhoon conditions on Okinawa forced cancellation of all scheduled B-29 missions.

**November 6:** On a return attack against the Yongmi-dong railroad bridges, 100 fighter-bombers found that the enemy had moved in antiaircraft artillery and had begun to build a fifth bypass bridge.

**November 10:** The 315th AD air-evacuated the 250,000th patient from Korea to Japan.

**November 12/13:** Six B-29s of the 98th BW knocked out four spans of Pyongyang's restored railway bridges.

**November 13/14:** Five B-29s from the 307th BW in an experimental attack used incendiary clusters against the Sopo supply area, but with poor results.

**November 15:** In the first fatal accident of 315th AD's airlift of rest-and-recreation passengers, a 403d TCW C-119, returning forty travelers to Korea, crashed in Japan, killing all on-board.

**November 16:** USMC aircraft attached to Fifth Air Force attacked hydroelectric facilities at Kongosan.

**November 17:** USAF fighter-bombers attacked hydroelectric facilities at Kongosan. Col. Royal N. Baker, USAF, Commander, 4th FIG, flying in MiG Alley with the 335 FIS, scored his fifth MiG kill.

**November 18:** When USN Task Force 77 attacked the North Korean border town of Hoeryong in the far northeast, unmarked but obviously Russian MiG-15s flying from Vladivostok attempted to attack the fleet. Carrier-based F9F aircraft engaged several MiGs and downed one. In MiG Alley, 334th FIS pilot Capt. Leonard W. Lilley scored his fifth MiG kill.

**November 18/19:** Six B-29s from the 98th BW attacked the Sonchon supply center, thirty-five miles from the Manchurian border. On this night, weather in the target area was clear, and enemy interceptors used new tactics to shoot down one B-29. The enemy dropped flares so that searchlights could lock on the bomber, and four fighter passes riddled it, forcing its crew to abandon ship over Cho-do.

**November 19:** The 49th and 58th FBWs, in two separate strikes totaling 179 aircraft, attacked a troop and supply concentration at Kanggye. An Eighth Army-Fifth Air Force indoctrination team completed a tour begun in late October to brief key Eighth Army officers on the nature and functioning of the air-ground system.

**November 22:** The 8th FBW lost two F-80s to ground fire during close

support missions in IX Corps. One of the pilots, Maj. Charles J. Loring, Jr., USAF, leading a flight of four F-80s, was hit near Sniper Ridge by enemy ground fire. He deliberately crashed his aircraft into the midst of enemy gun emplacements, destroying them completely. Major Loring was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. In MiG Alley, 16th FIS pilot 1st Lt. Cecil G. Foster, USAF, scored his fifth MiG kill to add his name to the list of aces.

**November 28/29:** At 45-minute intervals, all three medium bomber units hit Sinuiju and Uiju targets that were defended by approximately 116 heavy guns, ninety-four of which were radar-controlled, and forty searchlights, plus enemy interceptors. Preceding the attacks, five B-26s flew flak-suppression missions. Fourteen B-29s bombed Sinuiju Airfield, six struck the Sinuiju locomotive repair facilities, ten hit the Uiju Airfield, and four attacked the Uiju communications center. In spite of clear weather, using ECM equipment and chaff, the B-29s escaped losses in a generally successful mission.

## **December 1952**

*Ground fighting slowed to a near halt during December. UN Command implemented across the entire Eighth Army front the new flak-suppression technique tested in October. It allowed friendly artillery to continue flak suppression while fighter-bombers prosecuted their frontline attacks, thus reducing Fifth Air Force losses to enemy anti-aircraft fire. In Geneva, the League of Red Cross Societies recommended that the combatants exchange sick and wounded POWs in Korea before a cease-fire.*

*Although finding lucrative targets was a major problem, Bomber Command attacked forty-eight. Some were repeat attacks on bridges and marshaling yards, but most were against supply areas and communications centers. To counter increasingly effective searchlight illumination, Bomber Command camouflaged all B-29s with black gloss lacquer on their undersides; however, aircraft contrails tended to nullify any advantage of the black paint.*

*Since the Chinese were augmenting their ground forces and increasing supply traffic in North Korea, communist troop concentrations, supplies, and equipment became the main objectives of UN air attacks. Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers focused on known military headquarters, troop concentrations, and supply areas. B-26 light bombers, usually escorted by RAAF Meteors, attacked many of the same targets. The fighter-bombers struck rail lines in northwest North Korea leading from Manchuria and the Pyongyang-Sariwon line. They made roadblocks at Inchon, Chaeryong, and below Pyongyang. In combined attacks, fighter-bombers made road cuts at dusk, light bombers attacked vehicle concentrations during the night, and fighter-bomber sweeps at dawn sought out vehicles not under cover. Fifth Air Force claimed destruction of 2,321 vehicles during December, although it devoted about half of its effort to close support of the UN ground forces. In early December, Eighth Army shortened the distance between UN outposts and the bomblines to allow expeditious aerial attacks without a TACP and with no en-*

dangerment of UN ground forces.

RB-26s of the 12th TRS and B-26s from the two light bomber wings began to cooperate against enemy rail traffic in a project called Spotlight. The RB-26 located trains, called in the light bomber, and then illuminated the target with flares while the B-26 aircraft attacked. The RB-26s also provided successful bomb damage assessment film, which led the 3d BW to modify several B-26s to carry cameras to assess nighttime low-level attacks. During the month, the wing lost three B-26s to hostile flak; thereafter the tactical air direction post vectored the B-26s onto their bomb runs at the minimum distance possible from the bomb release point.

The 315th AD airlifted the 18th FBW headquarters from Chinhae to Osan-ni AB and its attached SAAF 2d Squadron from Hoengsong Airfield to Osan-ni, the largest airlift of a USAF unit up to this time. Early in the month the newer C-124 Globemasters assigned to the 22d TCS developed leaks in their gasoline tanks; by the end of the month, all were grounded.

The 67th TRW received its fourth scheduled ECM-modified B-26. Only one of the four was operational, and it flew ECM missions along with six aircraft of the wing's attached USMC squadron and revealed an improved enemy electronic capability.

Eighteen months following activation in the United States and six months after its movement to the Philippines, the 581st Air Resupply and Communications Wing (ARCW), the first USAF organization at this echelon with a special operations mission, began operations in Korea. The wing's mission included waging propaganda warfare by making leaflet drops and radio broadcasts, conveying personnel and equipment behind enemy lines, supplying resistance movements, and evacuating special operations personnel. Its responsibilities included complete support (equipping, training, transporting, and housing) of guerrilla personnel. Its first recorded operation involved a flight of four H-19 helicopters that belonged to the 581st ARCW and deployed to South Korea. This helicopter detachment flew covert and clandestine intelligence missions from Seoul, including the insertion of South Korean agents behind enemy lines.

**December 2-5:** President-elect Eisenhower toured the front in Korea and met with ROK President Syngman Rhee.

**December 2-7:** Bomber Command increased from one to three the number of B-29s allocated for radar-directed bombing in front of IX Corps during the battle for Sniper Ridge north of Kumhwa.

**December 3:** F-86 pilots engaged enemy sweptwing jets in strength in the Pyongyang area for the first time since August 9.

**December 5:** Shortly after 9:00 p.m., enemy aircraft dropped three bombs on Cho-do, causing no damage in the fifth reported attack on this installation.

**December 6:** A new flak-suppression technique across the Eighth Army front became effective for close support sorties.

**December 11:** A fully loaded B-26 of the 3d BW caught fire at Kunsan Airfield and exploded. The accident soon destroyed three other B-26s and caused major damage to six F-84s of the collocated 474th FBW.

**December 17:** Two F-86 Sabre pilots claimed the first sighting of the enemy's Il-28 twin-jet bombers, one having crossed the Yalu River a few miles south of the Sui-ho Reservoir, escorted by two MiG-15s, while the other remained over Manchuria.

**December 19:** Photoreconnaissance of the Pyongyang main airfield revealed the presence of three aircraft, the first observed there since October 1951.

**December 21:** The 366th Engineering Aviation Battalion completed a new landing strip at Pusan-East.

**December 22:** An SA-16 crew landed in an inlet near Haeju, a North Korean port just north of the 38th parallel on the Yellow Sea, and rescued a downed HMS *Glory* Seafury pilot in his dinghy. The only fatal aeromedical evacuation accident of the war occurred when a Royal Hellenic Air Force C-47 transporting patients collided with an F-80 jet fighter-bomber at Suwon AB, South Korea.

**December 27-31:** The 581st ARCW flight of four H-19 helicopters at Seoul flew several experimental agent insertion sorties into enemy territory for covert and clandestine intelligence activities.

**December 28:** An SA-16 crew of the 3d ARS picked up a downed pilot in the Yellow Sea north of Cho-do. He was in the water less than three minutes.

**December 29/30:** Eleven B-29s of the 307th BW attacked the Teagam-ni headquarters area destroying 146 buildings.

**December 30:** As a part of Project Spotlight, an RB-26 located five locomotives in one marshaling yard, and two B-26 light bombers destroyed four and damaged the fifth.

**December 30/31:** The 19th BG bombed the Choak-tong ore processing plant near the Yalu. Aided by a full moon and a signaling aircraft, enemy interceptors downed one B-29 and damaged two others so badly that they were forced to land at Suwon AB.

# 1953

## January 1953

*Other than a few patrol clashes, little ground fighting occurred during the month. Eighth Army and Fifth Air Force experimented with joint air-ground support tactics, and 8th FBW got good results using a pathfinder aircraft to lead its 24-aircraft close support strikes. The wing recommended the use of pathfinders in all large close-air support strikes.*

*Fifth Air Force interdiction continued the second week of the month with six days of intense activity against the Sinanju area. Fighter-bombers flew 1,166 sorties, 453 against bridge targets and 713 in flak suppression. Fifth Air Force aircraft also struck bridges, rail lines, highways, repair installations, and gun positions in the Sinanju-Yongmi-dong vicinity to deny the enemy the use of this important transportation hub. Light bombers and fighters flew nightly to prevent repair of facilities knocked out by the daylight raids. Fighter-bombers also attacked supply dumps in the Sariwon and Sinmak areas and*

*struck troop concentrations in the central sector of Korea. Fifth Air Force gave special attention to the railroad line between Pyongyang and Sariwon and the branch lines from Sariwon to Chongyon and Haeju. B-26 light bombers made some daylight attacks on supply targets and troop billeting areas but mostly focused on night strikes against*



**A pair of bombed-out railroad bridges just outside Pyongyang in North Korea, after air attacks.**



rail and highway bridges, particularly in the Haeju-Sariwon area and on the lines north of Wonsan. They also hit vehicles between Pyongyang and Wonsan and on routes south to the bomblines. Locomotive hunters claimed thirty-three locomotives destroyed by Project Spotlight tactics. C-46s and C-47s flare aircraft assigned to the 6167th ABG frequently found and "lit" targets for the light bombers. Thus, Fifth Air Force took advantage of an increase in vehicular traffic, claiming 2,582 enemy vehicles destroyed in January. In spite of the magnitude of the flak-suppression effort, enemy ground defenses shot down seven fighter-bombers and inflicted major damage on twelve others. Fighter-interceptor pilots sighted 2,621 MiG-15s over North Korea, a record number for the last year of the war. Of those sighted, they engaged 333 and destroyed 32.

Darkness no longer afforded B-29s protection to attack targets in North Korea; enemy night interceptors shot down four B-29s in January. The enemy used ground radar to guide interceptors to the medium bombers; moonlight, contrails, searchlights, and flares to identify them visually; and controller aircraft to coordinate the fighter passes. In response, the B-29s flew a compressed bomber stream and used chaff and electronic jamming to break off radar-controlled searchlights. Also, Bomber Command asked the escorting fighter-interceptors to fly overhead cover for the B-29s in the target area. The 581st ARCW detached four B-29s and aircrews to the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron to drop leaflets over North Korea.

**January 4:** Fifth Air Force mounted a 124-plane strike against the Hui-chon supply center.

**January 4/5:** Twelve B-29s of the 307th BW bombed the Huichon supply areas and railroad bridge.

**January 9/10:** Seventeen B-29s kicked off an air campaign against the Sinanju communications complex by bombing rail bridges at Yongmi-dong, antiaircraft gun positions near Sinanju, and two marshaling yards at Yongmi-dong and Maejung-dong.

**January 10:** Fighter-bombers followed up the B-29 night attacks with a daylight 158-aircraft raid against bridges, rail lines, and gun positions.

**January 10/11:** 307th BW B-29s bombed Sonchon and Anju marshaling yards. Enemy searchlights illuminated a B-29 apparently betrayed by its contrails, and fighters shot it down.

**January 11:** Battle damage assessment indicated that all rail lines in the Yongmi-dong area were unserviceable.

**January 12-15:** After missing a day because of weather, fighter-bombers continued around-the-clock attacks in the Sinanju area.

**January 13:** Some twelve enemy fighters shot down a B-29 on a psychological warfare leaflet-drop mission over North Korea. The crew included Col. John K. Arnold, Jr., USAF, Commander, 581st ARCW.

**January 13/14:** 307th BW and 19th BG attacked Sinanju and Kunu-ri marshaling yards.

**January 14:** Following up on the B-29 attacks the night before, fighter-bombers struck gun positions, railroads, and bridges in the Sinanju area.

**January 15:** Aerial photographs revealed a new camouflaged yard at the Sui-ho hydroelectric dam and two of the four generators working.

**January 17/18:** The 98th BW attacked the Pyongyang radio installation, which was 42 feet underground and only 1,000 feet from a possible POW camp. The eleven B-29s scored eight to ten hits with 2,000-pound general-purpose bombs, but these did not penetrate deeply enough to destroy the radio station.

**January 22:** The 18th FBW withdrew its remaining F-51 Mustangs from combat and prepared to transition to Sabres, thus ending the use of USAF single engine, propeller-driven aircraft in offensive combat in the Korean War. Peking radio announced the capture of Colonel Arnold and his surviving crewmembers, three having perished when the B-29 went down on January 13. The communists did not release Colonel Arnold until 1956.

**January 24:** Two pilots of the 51st FIW, Capts. Dolphin D. Overton III, USAF, 16th FIS, and Harold E. Fischer, Jr., USAF, 39th FIS, achieved ace status. In addition, Captain Overton set a record for becoming a jet ace in the shortest time of four days.

**January 25:** Beginning this day, UN Command limited immunity for only one communist convoy each way per week between Pyongyang and the Panmunjom area. The enemy could no longer use the armistice negotiations as a pretense for sending supplies and reinforcements unthreatened by UN air power to the front lines.

**January 28:** In a break from interdiction of enemy transportation targets, fighter-bombers attacked a troop concentration near Pyongyang.

**January 28/29:** A 19th BG B-29 exploded over the target southwest of Sariwon. Enemy fighters apparently silhouetted the B-29 against a full moon and shot it down. This was the fourth B-29 loss since December, but the last of the war. USMC Skyknight aircraft escorting B-29s used new tactics to down an enemy night interceptor, the first enemy jet destroyed at night by a radar-equipped jet fighter.

**January 29:** Fighter-bombers followed up the previous day's attack near Pyongyang.

**January 29/30:** Enemy fighters badly damaged another B-29 in the same circumstance as the previous night. Skyknights once again shot down an enemy night fighter. A 319th FIS F-94 used radar to track and destroy an La-9 aircraft late on the night of the 30th. This marked the first Starfire kill in Korea.

**January 30:** A 4th FIW F-86 pilot intercepted and shot down a Russian-built Tu-2 twin-engine bomber over the Yellow Sea, northeast of Pyongyang, the first reported destruction of this type of aircraft since November 30, 1951.

**January 30/31:** Approximately ten enemy fighters damaged a 307th BW B-29 so badly that it barely made an emergency landing in South Korea.

## **February 1953**

Ground activity along the front continued at a slow pace, characterized by patrol engagements and minor enemy probes. Intelligence revealed the enemy had built twelve new bypass rail bridges. Fifth Air Force reconnaissance in the area immediately behind the enemy's front lines to some twenty miles to the rear gave very little evidence that the enemy was preparing to attack, but it did spot an influx of vehicles to replace those destroyed during weeks of FEAF attacks. Enemy antiaircraft weapons decreased to the lowest total since the end of 1951, but radar-controlled guns constituted a greater portion of the total than ever before.

MiGs frequently penetrated south of the Chongchon River and then immediately withdrew when interceptors rose to meet them. They were possibly probing UN radar defenses and testing the scramble time of the Sabres. At a cost of two F-86s lost in air combat, the Sabre wings destroyed twenty-five MiG-15s.

Fifth Air Force and FEAF Bomber Command kept most North Korean airfields out of service. Most fighter-bomber interdiction strikes went against the enemy's transportation network, and Fifth Air Force claimed 2,850 vehicles destroyed in February. When transportation interdiction work was light, Fifth Air Force aircraft attacked hostile concentrations of troops and supplies.

Light bomber attacks against locomotives traveling at night continued in Operation Spotlight, which maintained locomotive kills at the same high level as in January. Likewise, similar roadblock tactics continued with flare support provided by the 6167th ABG during the dark phases of the moon.

Bomber Command scheduled B-29 attacks as irregularly as possible and planned missions against heavily defended targets during the dark of the moon. The B-29 aircrews varied altitudes, avoided contrail-forming altitudes, and employed ECM with great success against hostile gun-laying and search-light-directed radar. The compressed bomber stream provided mutual protection for the bombers by a much greater concentration of chaff and electronic jamming power in the critical target area.

FEAF gave top priority to C-124 fuel-cell modifications, and the 22d TCS Globemasters, which had been grounded since the end of December, returned to duty. The 19th and 307th BWs provided personnel for a detachment at Itazuke AB, Japan, which would provide an emergency facility for B-29s unable to return to their home base at Yokota, Japan, or Kadena, Okinawa, after a combat mission.

**February 2:** Ninety-six Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers struck a troop billeting area located six miles south of Kyomipo, destroying 107 buildings.

**February 9:** At Kyomipo, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers and light bombers devastated the former steel mill being used as a munitions factory and locomotive repair shop.

**February 15:** In the strike of the month, twenty-two F-84 Thunderjets of the 474th FBW struck the Sui-ho hydroelectric power plant. With no loss-

es, eighty-two escorting F-86 Sabres drew off thirty MiGs while the Thunderjets dropped their 1,000-pound bombs. The attack halted power production at Sui-ho for several months.

**February 15/16:** Radio Pyongyang went off the air when B-29s attacked the nearby Pingjang-ni communications center, damaging power lines.

**February 16:** 1st Lt. Joseph C. McConnell, Jr., USAF, 39th FIS, achieved ace status. The 1st Marine Air Wing led a 178-aircraft formation including Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers in an attack against troop billeting and supply storage in the Haeju-Sariwon region of western North Korea. The 45th TRS transferred all its remaining RF-51s to Japan, leaving it an all-jet RF-80 unit.

**February 18:** In one of the highlights of the air-to-air war, four F-86s attacked a formation of forty-eight MiG-15s just south of the Sui-ho Reservoir, shooting down two enemy aircraft. Two other MiGs, attempting to follow an F-86 through evasive maneuvers, went into uncontrollable spins and crashed. In this battle, Capt. Manuel J. Fernandez, Jr., USAF, 334th FIS, achieved ace status, downing his fifth and sixth MiGs.

**February 18-19:** In one of the largest all-jet fighter-bomber strikes of the war, 511 aircraft placed high-explosive bombs on a tank and infantry school at Kangso, southwest of Pyongyang, destroying 243 buildings.

**February 22:** In a letter to Kim Il Sung, Premier, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and General Paeng Te-huai, CCF commander in Korea, the UN Command stated its readiness to repatriate immediately those seriously ill and wounded POWs who were fit to travel and asked whether the North Korean and Chinese leaders were prepared to do the same.

**February 26:** Fifth Air Force instituted routine armed daylight reconnaissance over northwestern Korea in response to the enemy's vehicle movements.

**February 28:** 3d ARG received two new and larger H-19 helicopters. Military Air Transport Service C-124s had flown the dismantled helicopters directly from the factory in the United States to Japan, where they were assembled and test-flown before being ferried to Korea.

## **March 1953**

*Korea's frozen diplomatic front began to thaw in late March when communist negotiators expressed a willingness to exchange sick and wounded POWs and to discuss placing POWs who did not wish repatriation in the temporary custody of a neutral nation.*

*The stalemated ground situation continued through March, although during the first half of the month the enemy attacked in company-sized strength in several areas, particularly along the central front in the Kumhwa and Kumsong regions. Later, the communists sometimes attacked in regimental strength in the central and western sectors. Intelligence found growing enemy military strength with from one to three Chinese divisions en route or en-*

tering the peninsula. The buildup indicated a possible enemy offensive to seize as much territory as possible before an armistice.

Accordingly, UN air strategy aimed at destroying targets to curtail the flow of enemy supplies to frontline units and also to apply pressure to end the hostilities. FEAF devised Operation Spring Thaw, a brief, intense interdiction campaign to cut off frontline infantry from distant depots and force enemy consumption of stockpiled supplies. For maximum effectiveness, FEAF targeted medium bombers against bridges to create choke points and fighter-bombers against roads leading to the bridges to destroy backed-up traffic. Bad weather reduced the effectiveness of Spring Thaw, but the campaign did slow the arrival of supplies by forcing enemy vehicular traffic onto boggy secondary roads and makeshift bridges.

While supporting Spring Thaw, B-29s also penetrated deep into North Korea. Bomber Command meant to conduct raids in MiG Alley for the duration of the war in spite of improved enemy air capabilities, including more jet light bombers, more early-warning and ground-controlled interception units, and a new ground-controlled approach system.

By March Fifth Air Force had equipped four squadrons with new F-86F interceptors. With higher-thrust engines and solid leading-edge wings, the F-86F differed from earlier versions and now matched the MiG-15 in performance. Confident in F-86F capabilities and highly trained pilots, Fifth Air Force aggressively sought to engage and destroy enemy fighters, reasoning that heavy losses of the expensive MiG would encourage the enemy to end the war.

The communist pilots, for their part, cooperated by spending more time in Korean airspace. During March, UN pilots sighted 2,032 MiGs in the air, an increase of 29 percent over February. Late in March, the MiG pilots aggressively sought aerial combat, but being far less proficient than their opponents, they suffered heavy losses. UN pilots downed thirty-four MiGs while losing two in aerial melees, maintaining the very high kill-ratio of 16.6:1 that had prevailed since January.

**March 5:** Good weather permitted Fifth Air Force to complete 700 sorties. In northeastern Korea sixteen F-84 Thunderjets attacked an industrial area at Chongjin, just sixty-three miles from the Siberian border, destroying buildings and two rail and two road bridges, damaging seven rail cars, and inflicting several rail and road cuts. Fighter-bombers flying ground-support missions reported damage or destruction to fifty-six bunkers and gun positions, fourteen personnel shelters, and ten supply stacks.

**March 5/6:** Seventeen 98th BG B-29s attacked a supply area deep in North Korea at Onjong. Two 19th BG medium bombers flew close support missions opposite the U.S. IX and X Corps. Two other B-29s employed SHORAN to attack the Naewan-ni marshaling yard on the east coast.

**March 9:** Responding to press reports that U.S. pilots routinely pursued communist jets across the Manchurian border, the Commander in Chief Far

East asserted that UN pilots broke off engagements at the Yalu River boundary, enabling many damaged MiGs to escape, although some border violations might have occurred in the heat of combat. Informing the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff that air operations in Korea were conducted strictly within limitations established by appropriate authority, he also directed FEAF to comply with directives concerning violation of the Manchurian border.

**March 13/14:** On a deep penetration raid, twelve 307th BW B-29s struck a cantonment area near the Choak-tong ore-processing plant in the vicinity of the Yalu River.

**March 14:** To provoke aerial engagements with communist fighters, Fifth Air Force combat crews dropped leaflets asking "Where is the Communist Air Force?" over each ground concentration they attacked.

**March 17/18:** Serving notice that medium bombers would continue striking in MiG Alley, the 307th BW and 19th BG raided the Punghwa-dong troop concentration area just three miles south of the communist fighter base at Sinuiju. The bombers sustained very minor flak damage.

**March 21:** North Korean truce negotiators expressed their willingness to observe the provisions of the Geneva Convention and exchange sick and wounded POWs. At the same time they hinted that the exchange might lead to a resolution of other issues hindering an armistice.

**March 21/22:** Operation Spring Thaw began when eighteen 19th BG medium bombers knocked out the spans of two principal bridges at Yongmi-dong and rendered a third unserviceable.

**March 22/23:** Eight 19th BG B-29s continued the attack on Yongmi-dong bridges. The raiders observed that the enemy had repaired one of the bridges damaged the previous night. Despite reports of backed-up traffic on the approaches to the bridges, FEAF Bomber Command suspended further raids, suspecting that bombers returning for a third time might sustain heavy losses.

**March 26:** UN pilots sighted 289 MiGs, the highest number observed since April 1, 1952.

**March 27:** MiG-15s equipped with external fuel tanks jumped two RF-80s and two RAAF Meteors between Sariwon and Sinmak, only thirty-eight miles north of the front lines. This was one of several MiG forays close to frontline positions, seemingly in response to UN leaflet drops goading the enemy air forces to come out and fight. Assigned to the 18th FBW, Maj. James P. Hagerstrom destroyed his fifth MiG to become the twenty-eighth Korean War jet air ace.

**March 28:** Col. James K. Johnson, 4th FIW, downed his fifth MiG to achieve ace status.

**March 29:** Lt. Col. George L. Jones, 4th FIW, became the thirtieth jet ace.

**March 30:** Chou En-lai, the foreign minister of the People's Republic of China, suggested that POWs not desiring repatriation might be placed in the temporary custody of a neutral nation until negotiations determined their fi-

nal status. Before his proposal, the communists had insisted on repatriating all POWs. Their new flexibility on this issue provided an opportunity to resume truce negotiations.

### **April 1953**

*In Panmunjon, communist and UN representatives negotiated details of POW repatriation. In Operation Little Switch the adversaries exchanged seriously wounded and ill prisoners—6,670 Chinese and North Koreans for 471 South Koreans, 149 Americans, and 64 other UN personnel.*

As spring arrived, ground activity tapered off to small-scale probes and raids. Bomber Command B-29s and Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers coordinated attacks on railroad complexes to disrupt the flow of supplies from Manchuria to enemy forward areas. Later in April troop concentrations and supply areas became primary targets. MiG-15 activity remained sporadic, and UN pilots sighted only 1,622 MiGs. On the other hand, the enemy deployed between 400 and 500 fighters, an abnormally large number, to two Chinese airfields near the Yalu River, within easy sight of UN counterair patrols. FEAF intelligence officers interpreted their presence as an intentional display of defensive strength. FEAF initiated Project Moola in an attempt to acquire the latest communist jet aircraft. Anyone who delivered a MiG or other jet aircraft to UN forces in Korea would receive political asylum, resettlement in a noncommunist country, anonymity, and \$50,000. An additional \$50,000 would go to the first person to take advantage of the offer. In September 1953, after the cease-fire, a North Korean MiG-15 pilot defected, flying his aircraft safely to Kimpo AB, South Korea.

**April 1:** One 307th BW B-29, unable to attack its primary target, visually bombed a truck convoy, reporting excellent results in an attack believed to be the first of its type since Bomber Command began operations in North Korea.

**April 6/7, 7/8, 11/12:** At night Bomber Command B-29s raided the three serviceable railroad bridges spanning the Chongchon River at Sinanju. The following mornings fighter-bombers struck traffic backed-up on the approaches to the damaged bridges.

**April 12:** An H-19 helicopter assigned to the 581st ARCW hoisted Capt. Joseph C. McConnell, Jr., an F-86 pilot with eight victory credits to date, from the Yellow Sea, after he had ejected from his battle-damaged aircraft.

**April 13:** An 8th FBW pilot flew an F-86F model Sabre on its first air-to-ground combat mission.

**April 15:** The communists completed approximately seventy-five miles of railroad linking Kusong with Kunu-ri and Sinpyong-ni. Built in less than seventy days, the new line bypassed numerous bottlenecks created by USAF bombing of the Chongju, Sinanju, and Sunchon railroad complexes.

**April 20–May 3:** During Operation Little Switch, communist and UN

forces exchanged sick and injured prisoners.

**April 26:** Suspended for six months, armistice negotiations between communist and UN forces reconvened.

**April 26/27:** A B-29 medium bomber dropped leaflets over North Korea to kick off Project Moola, the FEAF effort to obtain an operational MiG-15.

## **May 1953**

*The front lines remained relatively quiet until the last week in May. Then the enemy launched a major ground offensive against UN positions on ridges dominating the U.S. I Corps sector, approximately ten miles northeast of Panmunjom.*

*On the diplomatic front, armistice negotiations faltered over disagreements regarding the repatriation of POWs. The communists wanted North and South Korean prisoners unwilling to return to their homelands detained indefinitely, in effect, punishing them for their decision. The UN Command wanted to release all prisoners to civilian status on the day the armistice became effective.*

*The stalled truce negotiations had a direct effect on the air war. Faced with the prospects of a protracted war, General Clark decided to attack previously untouched sensitive targets, including dams critical to North Korea's rice production. From a diplomatic perspective, the raids would demonstrate that continuance of the war would incur additional political and economic costs. The attacks on the irrigation dams, previously spared from destruction for political and humanitarian reasons, also had a psychological impact, since Asian populations associated the "empty rice bowl" with starvation. Militarily, destruction of the irrigation dams would disrupt communist preparations for a ground offensive by flooding rail and road networks.*

*FEAF Bomber Command struck mostly supply storage and troop concentrations. The most important target was the Kuwonga Dam, which B-29s hit twice. Fifth Air Force light bombers switched from night armed reconnaissance to close support missions as enemy ground activity increased. Fighter-bombers launched heavy attacks on supply and troop concentration areas. The single-engine jets also made deep penetrations to keep North Korean airfields unserviceable and to strike reservoirs and hydroelectric dams.*

*In the most intense air-to-air combat since September 1952, UN pilots sighted 1,507 MiGs, engaged 537, destroyed 55, and damaged 24. Enemy pilots seemed even less experienced than previously. When engaged by UN aircraft, they sometimes bailed out before their aircraft sustained hits. On other occasions their inept maneuvers destroyed their own aircraft. Also during May, H-19 helicopter pilots flying search and rescue missions rescued ten airmen, with six between May 16 and 18.*

**May 1:** To spoil the North Koreans' celebration of May Day, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers struck Radio Pyongyang. Screened by the 4th and



51st FIWs, the 8th and 18th FBWs briefly headed toward the Yalu River then abruptly swooped down on North Korea's capital to bomb the broadcasting facility and its power supply. Monitoring the battle from the air, General Barcus promised that his aircraft would return every time the communists broadcast "filthy lies" about Fifth Air Force.

**May 10:** Flying through intense flak, Col. Victor E. Warford, USAF, Commander, 58th FBW, led eight Thunderjets to attack the hydroelectric generating facilities at Sui-ho near the Yalu River.

**May 10/11:** Thirty-nine Superfortresses raided the 375-acre Yangsi troop concentration area twelve miles southeast of Sinuiju City, achieving 63-percent destruction of one of the last large lucrative targets remaining in North Korea.

**May 13:** Thunderjets of the 58th FBW in the first attack against previously excluded irrigation dams, bombed the Toksan Dam holding the Potong River's water twenty miles north of Pyongyang. Floodwaters swirling from the breached dam washed out six miles of embankment and five bridges, destroyed two miles of the major north-south highway, rendered Sunan Airfield inoperable, and ruined five square miles of prime rice crop.

**May 14:** Communist and UN truce negotiators recessed indefinitely over differences concerning POWs who refused repatriation.

**May 16:** Ninety 58th FBW sorties breached the Chasan irrigation dam. Surging waters washed away three railroad bridges and destroyed rice ripening in surrounding fields.

**May 18:** An H-19 helicopter used tactics presaging those of later conflicts to rescue two members of a B-26 crew twenty miles inside enemy territory. The helicopter scrambled from its base and flew to a small island off the Haeju peninsula to await fighters to clear the path to the downed airmen. Penetrating enemy territory at 5,000 feet, the helicopter followed the fighter pilots' directions until it located the survivors who were signaling with a mirror. After the survivors set off a flare to indicate wind direction, the helicopter landed and rescued them, staying on the ground for about thirty seconds.

Lt. Col. George I. Ruddell, Commander, 39th Fighter Squadron, became the thirty-first jet ace. Another squadron member, Captain McConnell, downed three more MiG-15s to become the first triple jet ace and, with sixteen victories, the highest-scoring ace of the Korean War.

**May 18/19:** Eighteen Superfortresses returned to complete the destruction of the Yangsi troop concentration area.

**May 19/20:** A formation of 19th BG B-29s attacked a large supply complex at Unsan-dong, destroying 140 buildings. Located eight miles west of Sinanju, the complex probably sheltered coast defense forces and was a bivouac area for troops moving south.

**May 21/22:** Using SHORAN to aim the bombs, B-29s scored seven direct hits on the Kuwonga Dam but failed to burst it, because the North Koreans had lowered the water level by twelve feet, significantly reducing the pressure on the dam.



**Capt. Joseph C. McConnell, Jr., 39th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, became the top Korean War ace with sixteen aerial victory credits. McConnell remains the leading jet ace in the world.**

**May 25:** The UN Armistice delegation vainly attempted a compromise with the communists, proposing that nonrepatriated POWs remain in neutral custody for up to 120 days after the armistice, until their governments could confirm their attitude toward repatriation.

**May 27:** Aerial reconnaissance discovered communist preparations for a major ground offensive.

**May 28:** The communists launched a series of company- to regiment-sized attacks that lasted into early June. Gen. Duk Shin Choi, the senior ROK Army delegate to the UN Armistice delegation, informed negotiators that his government considered the May 25 proposals by the UN Command unacceptable and announced that he was boycotting future negotiations on the instructions of his government.

**May 28/29:** The B-29s returned to the Kuwonga Dam, scoring five direct hits with 2,000-pound bombs. Although the dam did not burst, the North Koreans had to finish draining the reservoir to accomplish repairs, thus exhausting the supply of water available for irrigation.

**May 29:** General Clark warned the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the South Korean government might release POWs unilaterally.

**May 31:** Lt. Gen. Samuel E. Anderson, USAF, assumed command of Fifth Air Force, replacing General Barcus.

## **June 1953**

*Although UN forces fiercely contested the enemy's continued assaults, they eventually yielded the Nevada complex, a series of outposts in the low hills of central Korea, possession of which would facilitate the communist offensive and provide leverage in the final stages of the armistice negotiations. The*

communist onslaught fell upon ROK and U.S. forces in the eastern and central sectors of the front rather than upon those in weaker positions in western Korea. To minimize its own losses, the UN Command elected not to counter attack, and the communists soon captured high ground despite heavy losses. The UN Command employed heavy artillery barrages and close air strikes that prevented the enemy from exploiting his gains, while the communists shifted their offensive to the ROK II Corps and U.S. X Corps forces holding the central sector. By midmonth the enemy had gained an average of approximately two miles along an eight-mile front. After a six-day pause, the communist offensive resumed, targeting ROK forces almost exclusively, perhaps hoping to convince the South Korean government that continued fighting would be extremely costly. The final communist offensive coincided with the final stages of the armistice negotiations.

By mid-June both sides had agreed to establish a Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee. The South Korean government, which was boycotting the truce conference over the repatriation issue, released 27,000 POWs, disingenuously describing the event as a "mass escape." This action severely undermined the UN Command's negotiating ability. With communist delegates skeptical that South Korea would respect any armistice, truce negotiations stalled once again.

During most of June the UN Command directed its air power against communist forces attempting to penetrate the UN main line of resistance and against North Korean airfields near the Manchurian border. To quell the communist ground offensives, the UN employed medium bombers, light bombers, and fighter-bombers in close air support missions. Raids on enemy airfields sought to close them to reinforcements of modern jet aircraft that the



**Lt. Gen. Samuel E. Anderson, Commander, Fifth Air Force, served from May 31, 1953, through the end of the war.**

*Chinese Communists might fly into North Korea in the days, or even hours, preceding the signing of an armistice. FEAF employed both B-29s and fighter-bombers to bomb the airfields, even striking nearby dams in an effort to flood the runways or otherwise render them unserviceable. USAF fighters continued their winning streak in MiG Alley. For unknown reasons the MiGs sought combat at altitudes below 40,000 feet, the Sabres' most effective combat environment. As a consequence, the USAF pilots broke all previous records, sighting 1,268 MiGs, engaging 501, and destroying 77 without suffering a single loss in air-to-air combat.*

**June 2-3:** Bomber Command B-29 bombers began night, close support missions, mostly against targets where the communists were training and building up troops and supplies in the western sector of the U.S. IX Corps area.

**June 5:** Maj. Vermont Garrison, 335th FIS, became the Korean War's thirty-second jet ace.

**June 10:** Fifth Air Force and Bomber Command made coordinated strikes against North Korean serviceable and nearly serviceable airfields. Sixteen B-29s from the 98th BW struck Sinuiju and Uiju, encountering flak and fighters, with no losses. In the heaviest Fifth Air Force raid of the airfield campaign, thirty-one F-84s struck Kanggye Airfield.

**June 11:** Fighter-bombers made their deepest penetration of the war when thirteen F-84s attacked Chunggang-jin Airfield located midway on the North Korean-Manchurian border. Pilots reported that the raid had rendered the runway unserviceable.

**June 13-18:** To flood airfields at Namsi and Taechon, F-84s, B-29s, and USMC F4U Corsair fighter-bombers struck irrigation dams at Toksan and Kusong. The raids failed to breach the dams, because the communists had lowered water levels to decrease water pressure on the dams.

**June 15:** Brig. Gen. Richard H. Carmichael, USAF, replaced General Fisher as Commander, FEAF Bomber Command (Provisional).

**June 16:** Setting a single-day record, Fifth Air Force flew 1,834 sorties. More than half were close support missions against enemy troops in the Pukhan valley area.

**June 17/18:** The South Korean government unilaterally released 27,000 anticommunist POWs.

**June 18:** Flying for the 335th FIS, Capt. Lonnie R. Moore and Ralph S. Parr, Jr., became the Korean War's thirty-third and thirty-fourth jet aces, respectively.

**June 22:** Assigned to the 25th FIS, Col. Robert P. Baldwin became a jet ace.

**June 22-23:** The 315th AD employed twenty-seven C-46s and sixty-one C-119s in 284 sorties to transport the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team—3,252 paratroopers and 1,771 tons of cargo—to Korea to reinforce Eighth Army reserves.

**June 23:** With all North Korean airfields except one inoperable, General Weyland advised his air forces to limit attacks to follow-on raids to damage the airfields sufficiently that another series of air raids could destroy them completely in four or five days.

**June 28–July 2:** C-46, C-54, and C-119 transports of the 315 AD airlifted the 19th and 34th Regimental Combat Teams—3,937 soldiers and 1,227 tons of cargo—from Japan to Korea.

**June 30:** Sabres set a record by destroying sixteen MiGs in a single day. Flying with the 25th FIS, 1st Lt. Henry Buttelmann became the Korean War's thirty-sixth jet ace.

## **July 1953**

*After pounding ROK positions at Arrowhead (Hill 281) and driving Americans from positions on Porkchop Hill in early July, communist forces in mid-month struck hard at ROK units along the central sector of the front, making significant penetrations. To halt the advance, U.S. units, including the recently airlifted 187th Airborne Regimental Combat team, relieved ROK units or took up blocking positions behind them. An ROK counterattack regained some territory, but in late July the communists were left with considerable gains. Their final effort had driven UN forces back six miles along the central front, eliminating the Kumsong salient and straightening out defensive lines.*

*During July, truce negotiations reopened but initially accomplished little. Apparently, the communists were marking time, awaiting the completion of their final offensive. They began to negotiate seriously later in the month, as their forces assimilated recently conquered gains. At that point, technical specialists determined the line of demarcation and the demilitarized zone, the place of delivery for POWs, the inception of activities for the armistice-implementing committees, and the physical arrangements for the actual signing of the cease-fire.*

*During this month, poor weather hampered air operations, reducing sorties. Most went to support UN ground forces, interdict communist supply lines, and neutralize North Korean airfields. Forty-three percent of FEAF sorties directly supported UN ground forces. FEAF Bomber Command raided enemy airfields in North Korea, rendering them incapable of receiving aircraft prior to an armistice. As the communist offensive drew to a halt, Fifth Air Force aircraft shifted from ground support to airfield neutralization. During the month, FEAF Sabres flying air superiority missions destroyed 32 of 200 MiGs encountered. The median altitude at which engagements occurred was 20,000 feet, where Sabres were most effective. The Korean War ended with the signing of the armistice on July 27, 1953.*

**July 4/5:** Twenty-four B-29s attacked airfields at Taechon, Namsi, and Ponggyang Main.

**July 7/8:** Sixteen medium bombers raided a supply area and marshaling yard at Namsi.

**July 10:** Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers began raiding rail bridges at Sinanju and Yongmi-dong to hinder the buildup for the final communist assault.

**July 10/11:** 98th BW B-29s attacked the Sinanju bridges; 307th BW B-29s bombed rail bridges at Yongmi-dong.

**July 11:** ROK President Syngman Rhee agreed to accept a cease-fire agreement in return for promises of a mutual security pact with the United States. Maj. John F. Bolt, USMC, flying with the 39th FIS, shot down his fifth and sixth MiGs to become the Marine Corps' only Korean War ace.

**July 12:** RF-80 reconnaissance aircraft photographed heavy concentrations of anti-aircraft artillery opposite those sectors of the front held by the U.S. IX Corps and the ROK II Corps, providing warning of an enemy offensive.

**July 12-20:** Close air support sorties by FEAF aircraft contributed significantly to staunching the communist onslaught against ROK II Corps.

**July 13-19:** B-29 medium bombers flew nearly 100 ground-support missions, dropping 4,000-pound air-burst and delayed-action antipersonnel bombs to blunt the communist offensive.

**July 15:** Maj. James Jabara, 334 FIS, scored his fifteenth aerial victory to become the world's second triple jet ace.

**July 16-20:** Fighter-bombers completed a series of attacks on the Chongchon bridges rendering them unusable.

**July 19:** Capt. Clyde A. Curtin, USAF, 335th FIS, shot down two MiGs to become the Korean War's thirty-ninth ace. The final session of armistice negotiations at Panmunjom convened. After meeting for one day, the top negotiators agreed to adjourn while technical experts worked out the cease-fire details.

**July 20:** Maj. Stephen L. Bettinger, USAF, 336th FIS, became the fortieth ace of the Korean War with his fifth MiG-15 kill.

**July 21/22:** Eighteen B-29s close out the war for FEAF Bomber Command, striking Uiju Airfield.

**July 22:** Combat between USAF Sabres and communist MiGs ended with an air battle between three 51st FIW and four communist jets. During this engagement, Lt. Sam P. Young, 25th FIS, scored the last MiG kill of the Korean War.

**July 27:** At 10:00 a.m. Lt. Gen. William K. Harrison, Jr., USA, senior delegate for the UN Command, and Gen. Nam Il, senior delegate for the Korean Peoples Army and the Chinese Peoples Volunteers, signed the armistice agreement to produce a cease-fire in the Korean War. Capt. Ralph S. Parr, Jr., became a double ace with the last air-to-air victory of the war by shooting down an Il-12 transport. In the final hours before the cease-fire, Fifth Air Force fighter-bombers hammered North Korean airfields. Poststrike photography from 67th TRW aircraft confirmed that every airfield in North Korea was unserviceable for jet aircraft landings, indicating the successful conclusion of the airfield neutralization program. Flying a 91st Strategic Reconnaissance

sance Squadron RB-29, Lt. Denver S. Cook piloted the last FEAF Bomber Command sortie, dropping leaflets over North Korea. An 8th BS B-26 dropped the last bombs of the Korean War in a night, radar-directed close support mission. (Aircraft from the same squadron had flown the first combat strike into North Korea.) An RB-26 of the 67th TRW made the last combat sortie of the war over North Korea. As the Korean War formally ended, by 10:01 p.m. all FEAF's aircraft were located either south of the front line or more than three miles from North Korea's coast. In accordance with the armistice agreement, in August POWs were exchanged in Operation Big Switch—77,000 communists for 12,700 UN men, of whom 3,597 were Americans.

## GLOSSARY

AB	Air Base
ABG	Air Base Group
AD	Air Division
AFB	Air Force Base
Albatross	SA-16; amphibious rescue aircraft
ARCW	Air Resupply and Communications Wing
ARS	Air Rescue Squadron
BG	Bombardment Group
BS	Bombardment Squadron
BW	Bombardment Wing
CCF	Chinese Communist Forces
ECM	electronic countermeasures
FAWS	Fighter All-Weather Squadron
FBG	Fighter-Bomber Group
FBS	Fighter-Bomber Squadron
FBW	Fighter-Bomber Wing
FEAF	Far East Air Forces
FIG	Fighter-Interceptor Group
FIS	Fighter-Interceptor Squadron
FIW	Fighter-Interceptor Wing
Flying Boxcar	C-119; twin-engine transport aircraft
Globemaster	C-124; four-engine strategic transport aircraft introduced in USAF service during the Korean War
Meteor	British twin-jet fighter aircraft used by the RAAF during the Korean War, primarily for air-to-ground interdiction and close air support missions



MiG	MiG-15; an enemy jet-propelled, single-engine fighter-interceptor aircraft
Mosquito	T-6; single-engine aircraft used for forward air control missions
Mustang	F-51; a single-engine, propeller-driven aircraft, used mostly for fighter-bomber missions
NKA	North Korean Army
POW	prisoner of war
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
Razon	a 1,000-pound, radio-guided bomb
ROK	Republic of Korea
SAAF	South African Air Force
Sabre	F-86; jet-powered fighter interceptor aircraft
SHORAN	a short-range navigation system employing an airborne transmission device and two ground beacon stations for precision positioning and bombing
Skyknight	F3D; a USN and USMC jet fighter designed with powerful radar systems to search, find, and target enemy aircraft in darkness
sortie	a single flight by an aircraft
Superfortress	B-29; medium (four-engine) bomber
TACP	tactical air control party
Tarzon	a six-ton version of the radio-guided Razon bomb
TCG	Troop Carrier Group
TCS	Troop Carrier Squadron
TCW	Troop Carrier Wing
Thunderjet	F-84; jet-powered fighter and fighter-bomber aircraft
Tornado	RB-45, the first jet reconnaissance aircraft in the USAF
TRS	Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron
TRW	Tactical Reconnaissance Wing
UN	United Nations
USA	U.S. Army

USAF

U.S. Air Force

USMC

U.S. Marine Corps

USN

U.S. Navy