

# Tidbits >From A To Z

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## (A)

**Secretary of State Dean G. Acheson** was one of the most important officials of the U.S. government in prosecuting the Korean War, second only to President Harry S. Truman. Acheson served as U.S. secretary of state from 1949-1953 and spearheaded the Cold War policies of containment of communism following World War II. Acheson authorized General Douglas MacArthur to supply Korea with arms and other equipment over and above that already allocated under the military assistance program during the North Korean invasion across the 38th parallel into South Korea on June 24, 1950. Acheson's disdain for the United Nations was well known. He also believed that Asia was a secondary theatre of U.S. policy, compared to Europe. (page 1) Historical Dictionary of the Korean War (HD)

## (B)

**Bacterial Warfare** -- During the Korean War communist medical services collapsed. The climate extremes of intense cold and heat provided an environment for various strains of viruses and bacteria to thrive. The communists faked photographs and exhibits of insects and vector-launching apparatus in order to support their allegations that America was using germ warfare. (page 45) The Korean War an Encyclopedia (KW)

## (C)

**1st Cavalry** -- The first team, officially known as the 1st Cavalry Division, and consisting of the 5th, 7th, and 8th Regiments, landed in Korea on 18 July 1950. The 1st Cav at first considered that its

tour in Korea would last approximately the six weeks necessary to push the North Koreans out of South Korea; instead, the division fought for seventeen grueling months. (page 62) (KW)

## **(D)**

**Defectors --** The news that twenty-one Americans had refused to return to their homeland came as a shock to the American public. Commissions were assembled to determine why any American soldier would elect to remain in a Communist country. The discipline of the U.S. Army was called into question and a new code of Conduct was adopted by 1955 to guide future U.S. POW's in their behavior toward their captors. (page 96-97) (KW)

## **(E)**

**Eisenhower --** In December 1950, as part of the great rearmament buildup in the wake of the Korean War, President Harry S. Truman appointed General Dwight D. Eisenhower To command the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). But in June 1952, the ever-popular "Ike" resigned from the Army and returned to the U. S. to run for president as a Republican. (page 103) (KW)

## **(F)**

**Film, television, and literature of the Korean War --** The Korean War was not covered directly by television, as was the war in Vietnam. In fact, the fledgling television networks did not even try in most cases to replace the official coverage provided by the government. Of course, newsreels of events were available on a delayed basis in the movie theaters, as was the Hollywood version of the war presented in Korean War combat films. (page 111) (KW)

## **(G)**

**The Geneva Conference --** The Geneva Conference consisted of fifteen general meetings, and one restricted meeting. Discussion began after 3 P.M. and continued for several hours. On June 15th the final session of the Geneva Conference commenced. The final Declaration of the Sixteen was signed by all Allied delegations. It noted that the Communists would not accept the two basic principals

sought and continued exhibiting negative behavior that had existed since the U.N. tried to unify Korea in 1947. The allies concluded that it was better to face the fact of our disagreement than to raise false hopes and mislead the peoples of the world into believing that there is agreement where there is none. (page 122) (KW)

## (H)

**Heartbreak Ridge** --Heartbreak Ridge was the site of the last major U.N. offensive of the Korean War. The North Koreans knew Heartbreak Ridge as Height 1211 and considered it the most difficult battle of the war. By winning Heartbreak Ridge, U.N. troops secured a portion of the 38th parallel that defined the final demarcation line when the armistice was signed in 1953. (page 128) (KW)

## (I)

**Inchon Landings, 1950** -- The amphibious assault at Inchon on September 15, 1950 was General Douglas MacArthur's Korean War masterstroke. Quickly planned despite opposition from his superiors in Washington, it was a brilliant military coup that turned the tide of the war, temporarily. (page 141) (KW)

## (J)

**Joint Chief of Staff** and the Relief of General Douglas MacArthur  
On April 10, 1951, in an unprecedented move which turned the free world's attention from the Korean battlefield to the united states political area, President Harry S. Truman divested General Douglas MacArthur of his several military commands as supreme commander in chief, Far East (CINCFE); commander in chief, United Nations command (CINCUNC); and commanding general, United States Army Forces, Far East (CG AFFE). The abrupt dismissal of the widely admired MacArthur appeared to a segment of the American public as an arbitrary action that demeaned one of America's greatest living military heroes. It had far-reaching consequences and brought about a divisive and partisan inquiry into the conduct of the Korean War, even as that war continued unabated. (page 152) (KW)

## (K)

**KMAG (Korean Military Advisory Group)** -- With the departure of U.S. Army occupation forces, KMAG was activated on July 1, 1949 as the official U.S. Army organization for training the fledgling armed forces of the Republic of Korea (ROK). Such training had been in progress ever since American military forces had occupied the southern half of the Korean peninsula in September 1945. (page 166) (KW)

## (L)

**Logistics, U.S.** -- The reaction of the United States to the North Korean attack across the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950 was something like a microcosm of American involvement in World War II. At first President Harry S. Truman and his advisors hoped that logistic support for the forces of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) would be enough. That hope lasted less than two days. The next step was to order navel and air forces of the United States into action to ensure the delivery of supplies. (page 192) (KW)

## (M)

**U.S. Marine Corps** -- Victory in the Pacific found the Marine Corps at a record strength over 485,000 Marines. Following the signing of the Japanese surrender in August 1945, the Marine Corps began major initiatives to reduce personnel. By June 1950, demobilization and natural attrition had reduced the Corps to 74,279. Executive Order 9981 issued July 26, 1948, called for equal treatment and opportunity for all in the armed services without regard to race. By fall 1949, recruit platoons and enlisted clubs at Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., were racially integrated. In November, the first black women enlisted in the Marine Corps.

## (N)

**Napalm** -- Napalm, a sticky gasoline gel, was employed as a major weapon during the Korean War. In 1943, Harvard University chemistry professor Louis F. Fieser produced the petroleum gel known by an acronym derived from the aluminum naphthenic and palmitic acids it contained. American tacticians subsequently

developed techniques of napalm bombing which relied on achieving air superiority. Compared to previous incendiary weapons, napalm spread further, stuck to the target, burned longer, and was safer to its dispenser because it was dropped and detonated far below the airplane. It was also cheap to manufacture. (page 225) (KW)

## (O)

**Operations Big Switch and Little Switch** -- Operation Little Switch, 20 April-3 May 1953, was the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of the Korean War. The exchange was agreed to during the truce talks at Panmunjom on April 11. Operation Big Switch, 5 August-23 December 1953 was the final exchange of prisoners of war by both sides, and like Little Switch was marked by controversy over voluntary repatriation and, later, by allegations of brainwashing and torture of U.N. POW's by the Communists.

## (P)

**Psychological Warfare** -- In the Korean conflict, U.S. psychological warfare was a military affair, and no definitive assessment of its effect on soldiers and civilians in North Korea can be made. But a count of prisoners of war (POWs) taken by the United Nations forces revealed that about one-third claimed to have at least surrendered in part because of psychological warfare leaflets. (page 278) (KW)

## (Q)

## (R)

**U.S. Army Rangers** -- To obtain potential rangers, a request for volunteers was sent out, to those willing to accept extremely hazardous duty in the combat zone of the Far East. Volunteers came from a variety of sources, but many had previously served in the original ranger battalions, the Canadian-U.S. First Special Service Force, or in the Office of Strategic Services, during World War II. The 82nd Airborne Division was particularly responsive to the call. Some estimates report as many as 5,000 of these paratroopers volunteered for ranger training. (page 288) (KW)

## (S)

**Seoul** -- As the capital of the Republic of Korea (ROK), Seoul was occupied four times during the Korean War (1950-1953). The largest city in Korea, Seoul had served as a capital of the Korean peninsula since ancient times. Chosen by General YiSong-gye as his capital in 1392 when he moved the Yi Dynasty to the city, Seoul (which means capital) has been the main target of revolutionary groups throughout Korean history. (page 315) (KW)

## (T)

**Taejon** -- Taejon was the scene of the worst American defeat of the Korean War. Following the North Korean invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950, the U.S. 24th Infantry Division was rushed from Japan to Korea in a desperate effort to delay the North Korean advance south from Seoul. Hastily brought up to wartime strength, ill-trained, mentally and physically unprepared for combat, and lacking adequate firepower, the division's three infantry regiments were shattered by the North Korean 3rd and 4th Divisions in several engagements between Seoul and Taejon, a city of 130,000 people and an important road center in southwestern Korea, approximately 100 miles south of Seoul. (page 326) (KW)

## (U)

**UNPIK (United Nations Partisan Infantry)** -- Reaching peak strength of 22,000 in 1953, this force was largely composed of North Koreans who conducted raids behind Chinese and North Korean lines under the direction of the U.S. Army. Based on offshore islands, mainly along the west coast of North Korea, the partisans claimed some 69,000 enemy casualties from January 1951 until the conclusion of the armistice agreement in the summer of 1953. (page 341) (KW)

## (V)

**Veterans of the Korean War** -- Like all veterans of foreign wars, those returning home to the U.S. from Korea faced the unusual

problems of postwar readjustments; finding a job, getting acquainted with family and friends, and making the difficult transition from soldier to civilian. However, the 6.8 million Korean-era veterans also confronted new challenges that differentiated them from those who had been demobilized to near-unanimous acclaim after World War I and II. Concluding not with decisive victory but with inconclusive armistice that U.S. servicemen, particularly those who had been held as prisoners of war (POWs), had somehow failed to uphold the highest standards of moral and military resolve. As a result, the attitude of the American public was often skeptical, and even occasionally antagonistic, casting the returning Korean veteran as the war's unfortunate scapegoat. (page 347-7) (KW)

## (W)

**Women's Army Corps --** When the North Koreans invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950, the Women's Army Corps (WAC) had just integrated eligible members of the corps into the regular Army. Also, during the previous two years, many former WAC enlisted women with prior service and former WAC officers had entered the Organized Reserve Corps (later called the Army reserve). The WACs had proved their value to the Army during World War II but it had taken almost three years for Congress to pass the law in 1948 that gave them a permanent place in the Army by granting them regular Army and reserve status. (page 358) (KW)

## (X)

**X Corps --** X Corps was an unusual, one of a kind organization. All corps are, of course, uniquely configured for their missions and tend to break many organizational rules, but X Corps was unusual even by normal corps standards. It was hurriedly organized to plan for and conduct an amphibious assault at Inchon, which would dramatically reverse the tide of the war in Korea in September 1950. It was then shifted to the opposite coast of Korea and operated in the northeast of the peninsula as a virtually independent striking force of MacArthur's in a plan to liberate all of Korea by Christmas. Then, under massive and unexpected Chinese assaults, X Corps managed to regroup, retreat, and then withdraw from the coast in one of the

greatest amphibious evacuations in history. Despite that ordeal, corps units entered the fray in South Korea alongside the rest of the Eighth Army within weeks. (page 361) (KW)

**(Y)**

**(Z)**