

CHRONOLOGY

1950

25 June – The North Korean People’s Army (NKPA) crosses the 38th parallel into South Korea, starting the Korean War.

25 June – The United Nations drafts UN Security Council Resolution 82 calling for the cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of North Korean forces from the Republic of Korea (ROK). Australia endorses the resolution and offers military assistance.

27 June – UN Security Council passes Resolution 83, which allows the United Nations to act militarily to support the ROK.

29 June – Royal Australian Navy frigate HMAS *Shoalhaven*, stationed in Japan, and destroyer HMAS *Bataan*, which had been sent to replace *Shoalhaven*, are committed to UN maritime operations.

1 July – HMAS *Shoalhaven* and HMAS *Bataan* leave Japan as part of a naval escort for Korea-bound US troops.

2 July – No. 77 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, flying P-51D Mustang fighters, begin their first ground attack operations in Korea.

15 September – UN forces land at Inchon as part of operations to recapture Seoul and restore South Korea. HMAS *Warramunga* (which had replaced HMAS *Shoalhaven*) and HMAS *Bataan* are part of the naval covering force.

17 September – UN forces begin their breakout from the Pusan Perimeter and drive towards Seoul. No. 77 Squadron flies supporting operations to harass retreating NKPA forces.

28 September – The 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR), arrives at Pusan, South Korea. The battalion was attached to the British 27th Brigade, which at that point consisted of the 1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and 1st Battalion, Middlesex Regiment. The brigade was renamed 27th British Commonwealth Brigade to reflect its new antipodean element.

1 October – ROK forces pursue NKPA forces across the 38th parallel and into North Korea.

7 October – UN troops cross the 38th parallel and drive towards the North Korean capital, Pyongyang.

15 October – HMAS *Warramunga* provides gunfire support during the landing of the US X Corps at Wonsan on the north-east coast of Korea.

17 October – During the advance into North Korea, 3RAR encounter an NKPA regiment at Sariwon. In the ensuing encounter, 1,982 North Koreans are taken prisoner, the largest capture of enemy troops during the war.

19 October – Pyongyang falls to the US 1st Cavalry Division, whose commander had sidelined the 27th Brigade, enabling his division to be the first UN unit into the capital.

19 October – Units of the Chinese People's Volunteer Army (PVA) begin moving across the Yalu River and infiltrating North Korea. They are undetected by UN air observers or ground troops.

22 October – 3RAR fights its first battle (the first time a unit of the Royal Australian Regiment engaged in combat) against North Korean forces, north-west of Yongju, at a place known as the Apple Orchard. It was a decisive Australian victory.

25 October – 3RAR fights its second battle, the battle of the Broken Bridge, near Kujin on 25–26 October during the UN drive north.

25 October – ROK troops encounter Chinese forces at Onjong, North Korea, the ROK II Corps being defeated in a four-day battle. As the remnants of the corps retreat, the US 8th Cavalry Regiment flank is exposed.

29–30 October – After an advance of 80 kilometres to Chongju, 3RAR fights its third successful battle in a week. On the evening of 30 October, the battalion's commanding officer Lieutenant Colonel Charles Green is mortally wounded, dying at a nearby hospital on 1 November.

1 November – US troops encounter Chinese forces at Unsan. US forces retreat, but food and ammunition shortages force a temporary halt to the Chinese offensive, prompting UN commanders to believe that China had not committed further to the war in Korea.

5 November – Under its new CO, Lieutenant Colonel Floyd Walsh (who had commanded 3RAR in Japan before the war), 3RAR encounters the Chinese at the battle of Pakchon, marking the first instance of No. 77 Squadron flying support operations for 3RAR. 3RAR suffered 12 men killed and 64 wounded. Walsh's precipitous withdrawal temporarily cedes high ground to the Chinese and causes the bulk of casualties. After Walsh is relieved of command by Brigadier Aubrey Coad, Major Bruce Ferguson is promoted and takes command of the battalion.

November – The US Eighth Army renews its drive to the Yalu. The Chinese respond with their second-phase offensive, forcing the withdrawal of UN forces.

26 November – 13 December – Marines of the US 1st Marine Division and the British 41 Royal Marine Commando fight the battle of the Chosin Reservoir, resulting in US and British forces conducting a fighting withdrawal to the ports of Hungnam and Wonsan where UN navy vessels, including HMAS *Warramunga*, wait to take them off the Korean Peninsula.

4 December – As part of a UN destroyer group, HMAS *Bataan* and HMAS *Warramunga* sail up the Taedong River to Chinnampo, North Korea, to assist in evacuating UN soldiers and refugees.

December – By year's end, the 27th Brigade had withdrawn some 320 kilometres over nine days.

1951

1–4 January – The 27th Brigade fights a series of holding actions and fighting withdrawals at Uijonbu, allowing the US Eighth Army to withdraw and move back beyond Seoul. 3RAR is the last UN unit to cross the Han River south of Seoul before the bridge is blown up. The brigade's withdrawal ends on 4 January at Toda-Nae, 160 kilometres south of Seoul.

11 January – Terms for a ceasefire put forward by the United Nations to China and North Korea are rejected.

20–22 January – The 16th Field Regiment, Royal New Zealand Artillery, joins the 27th Brigade, providing a vital fire support element.

5 February – HMAS *Warramunga* participates in the naval blockade of Wonsan, North Korea.

18 February – 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (2PPCLI), joins the 27th Brigade, replacing the 1st Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who are rotated out of Korea.

6 April – No. 77 Squadron fly their last operations in Mustangs before withdrawing to Japan to undertake conversion training to Meteor F.8 jets.

11 April – US President Harry Truman appoints General Matthew Ridgway as head of United Nations Command, replacing General Douglas MacArthur.

23–24 April – The Battle of Kapyong takes place, with heavy involvement from 3RAR. During two days of fighting against large-scale Chinese infantry attacks, 3RAR suffers 32 killed, 59 wounded and three captured. With assistance from other units of the 27th Brigade, notably 2PPCLI, the Chinese attack is halted. The 27th Brigade leaves Korea soon after as fresh British and Canadian units begin to arrive.

26 April – 3RAR is taken on strength of the 28th British Commonwealth Brigade.

6 July – Lieutenant Colonel Frank Hassett replaces Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Ferguson as CO of 3RAR. Around this time the bulk of 3RAR are replaced with new troops and original members are rotated home.

28 July – The 1st Commonwealth Division, including British, Canadian and combined Commonwealth brigades, is formed.

29 July – No. 77 Squadron returns to the skies over Korea, flying sorties from Kimpo airfield, and marking the first clash between the squadron's Meteors and Chinese MiGs flown by veteran Russian pilots.

3–8 October – As part of Operation Commando, 3RAR, supported by New Zealand artillery and British tanks, attacks and captures the strategically important hill known as Maryang San.

5 October – HMAS *Sydney* (III) begins operations in Korean waters. Aboard *Sydney* are three squadrons of the RAN Fleet Air Arm: No. 805 and No. 808 Squadrons, flying Sea Fury fighters, and No. 817 Squadron, flying Fairey Firefly aircraft. Over four months *Sydney's* aircraft flew 2,366 sorties for the loss of 11 aircraft and three pilots killed.

25 October – Truce talks resume, taking place at Panmunjom.

4 November – A Chinese attack drives British troops from Maryang San.

12 November – The UN offensive is called off by General Matthew Ridgway. The static phase of the Korean War begins.

1 December – Fourteen Meteors of No. 77 Squadron are involved in a dogfight with 50 MiGs. Three Meteors are shot down, and one pilot is killed for the loss of one MiG. The following day, the squadron is prevented from flying fighter sweeps to the border of North Korea and China. No. 77 Squadron returns to their original ground-attack role.

1952

6 April – 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (1RAR), arrives in Korea, joining 3RAR in the 28th Brigade.

12 May – General Mark Clark takes over command of UN forces from General Matthew Ridgway.

2 July – As part of Operation Blaze, A Company, 1RAR, led by Major David Thompson, raids Chinese positions on Hill 227. The Chinese positions are largely destroyed, but the Australians are forced to withdraw under heavy Chinese artillery fire and infantry counter-attacks.

A Company suffers three men killed and 34 wounded, one of whom died the following day. Thompson is later awarded the Military Cross for his leadership and courage.

July–September – As part of a wider naval blockade action, HMAS *Murchison* undertakes Operation Han, engaging North Korean targets along the Han River near Kaesong. *Murchison's* actions during this operation were highly commended by the commander of the force.

13–14 August – B Company, 3RAR, is tasked with Operation Buffalo, raiding a Chinese position known as Hill 75. The raiding party quickly captures Chinese positions, but owing to the ferocity of the fighting is unable to secure a prisoner. The company is withdrawn in the early hours of the following morning. Australian casualties for the operation are two killed, 22 wounded and one missing.

10–11 December – 1RAR launches Operation Fauna, a raid on Chinese positions on Hill 355, in an attempt to capture a prisoner and identify the Chinese unit facing the Australians. The attack proceeds in icy weather and, after an initial surprise, the Chinese fight back, forcing 1RAR to withdraw. The Australians suffer 22 men wounded and three missing.

1953

31 January – The 1st Commonwealth Division is withdrawn from front-line operations for rest, having been involved in extensive combat operations since its inception.

16 March – No. 77 Squadron destroys more than 90 North Korean and Chinese trucks during ground-attack operations.

21 March – 1RAR is replaced by the 2nd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (2RAR).

27 March – The last air-to-air combat between No. 77 Squadron's Meteors and Chinese MiGs occurs. No losses are reported on either side.

8 April – The 1st Commonwealth Division returns to the front line.

9–10 July – The 28th Brigade is sent to the position known as 'the Hook' to replace the British 29th Brigade. 2RAR and 3RAR are made the forward battalions on the Hook.

19 July – Terms for the armistice in Korea are agreed by UN, Chinese and North Korean delegates at Panmunjom.

24–27 July – Chinese forces launch a last offensive against the Australians at the Hook and nearby US Marines in order to capture strategic high ground, suffering heavy casualties for no gain. 2RAR suffer six men killed or dead from wounds, and 24 wounded.

27 July – The armistice is signed at 10 am at Panmunjom while fighting is still going on near the Hook. The armistice takes effect at 10 pm.

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