

# The Korean War

1950–1953

The outbreak of the Korean War caught naval aviation in the midst of transition. The establishment of the Department of Defense in 1947 and its reorganization in 1949 required adjustments that had not been completed. Successive budgetary decreases and the prospect of further cuts had reduced the size of the service, and a reorganization of operating forces to keep within the prescribed limits had begun.

New weapons and equipment had not been fully integrated and tactical doctrine and innovative operating techniques for their employment were still under development. The introduction of jet aircraft created a composite force in which either jet or propeller-driven aircraft that differed in performance characteristics, maintenance requirements, and tactical applications equipped comparable commands.

Despite the amphibious landings at Inchon 2½ months after the North Korean invasion of South Korea, the operations of naval aviation during the Korean War diverged from the island hopping campaigns in the Pacific during World War II. The United Nations sought to confine the fighting to the Korean peninsula to avoid the specter of escalation into an atomic war, but this policy limited air operations.

The seesaw clashes on the ground during the first six months of the war demanded flexibility of force, but the air campaign developed into a predictable pattern that Commander Task Force 77 described in January 1952 as “a day-to-day routine where stamina replaces glamour and persistence is pitted against oriental perseverance.” In addition, the need to sustain carrier air power for extended periods over a landmass imposed a command and logistical burden.

Carrier aircraft flew deep support missions, attacked supply lines, roamed over enemy territory for targets of opportunity, bombed bridges, interdicted highways

and railroads, attacked refineries, railroad yards, and hydroelectric plants, and escorted land-based bombers on special missions. The variability of these raids challenged men trained to interdict enemy sea lines of communication and to ward off attacks by enemy naval forces. Helicopters assumed an increasingly significant role as they rescued downed aircrew, evacuated wounded, flew short-range supply missions to Marines and soldiers ashore, enhanced command-and-control options for Marines, spotted shore bombardment gunfire for ships, and scoured coastal areas for mines.

During the three years of war, Navy and Marine aircraft flew 276,000 combat sorties, dropped 177,000 tons of bombs, and expended 272,000 rockets. Their achievement reached within 7,000 sorties of the comparable World War II totals in all theaters, and surpassed the bomb tonnage by 74,000 tons and the number of rockets by 60,000. Naval and Marine aircraft completed action sorties that rose in number from less than 10 percent during World War II to more than 30 percent during the Korean War.

Outside the combat area, the fleet continuously maintained peaceful missions in the Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic, and trained on the same scale as before. Accelerated research and development nonetheless did not shift to emphasize projects that directly applied to the war effort, but continued on longer range programs aimed at progressively modernizing fleet forces and their equipment with more effective weapons.

Advances in guided missiles indicated their early operational status and the ships and submarines to employ them readied for action. The firing of research missiles such as Larks, Loons, and Vikings from shore installations and ships provided useful data and experience. Additional missiles including Regulus, Sidewinder, Sparrow, Talos, and Terrier types passed successive stages of development.



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A VF-191 F9F-2 rotates as the catapult bridle drops away and the Panther reaches flying speed on *Princeton* (CV 37). The squadron made two Korean War deployments flying these aircraft in 1950–1952.

The research in high-speed flight assisted by specially designed aircraft provided data that led toward advances in aircraft performance. The carrier modernization program continued and underwent revision to incorporate steam catapults and angled flight decks. Naval aviation demonstrated its continuing usefulness in war and its versatility in adapting to new combat requirements and moved forward toward new horizons.

## 1950

**10 JANUARY** • Seaplane tender *Norton Sound* (AV 11) sailed for a 19-day cruise in Alaskan waters from Port Hueneme, Calif. During the operation, the ship launched two RTV-N-8 Aerobee sounding rockets, one Lark surface-to-air guided missile, and one LTV-N-2 Loon test vehicle, evaluating an auxiliary propulsion system for the Lark under severe conditions. *Norton Sound* embarked 27 observers representing the Army, Navy, and Air Force, including eight scientists from the Aerobee upper atmosphere research program.

**13 JANUARY** • In the Navy's first successful automatic homing flight of a surface-to-air guided missile, a CTV-N-10 Lark was launched from NAMTC Point Mugu, Calif. The Lark passed within lethal range of its target F6F Hellcat drone and made a simulated interception at a range of 17,300 yards and an altitude of 7,400 feet.

**7 FEBRUARY** • In a demonstration of carrier long-range attack capabilities, pilot Cmdr. Thomas Robinson took off in a P2V-3C Neptune from *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CVB 42) off Jacksonville, Fla., and flew over Charleston, S.C., the Bahamas, the Panama Canal, up the coast of Central America, and over Mexico, landing the next day at the Municipal Airport, San Francisco, Calif. The flight covered 5,060 miles in 25 hours, 59 minutes—the longest to date made from a carrier deck.

**20 FEBRUARY** • Joint exercise Operation Portrex began, which included the first peacetime maneuvers to employ airborne troops in an amphibious operation. This escalated into a combined amphibious and airborne assault on 8 March against Vieques Island, P.R. The Pentagon staged Portrex to

evaluate joint service doctrine for combined operations, to service test new equipment under simulated combat conditions, and to provide training for the Caribbean Command. The exercise extended through 14 March.

**10 MARCH** • Secretary of Defense Louis A. Johnson announced the development under a Bureau of Aeronautics research program begun in 1946 of a lightweight titanium alloy for use in jet aircraft engines. The announcement described the alloy as being as strong as high-strength steel and only half as heavy, highly resistant to corrosion, and capable of retaining its basic properties at high temperatures.

**22 MARCH** • Submarine *Cusk* (SS 348) launched a Loon guided missile from a position off NAMTC Point Mugu, Calif. At the midway point of the missile's 50-mile flight, *Cusk* surrendered control to a guidance station on San Nicolas Island. This station completed the first successful operation involving the transfer of guidance by crashing the Loon 360 yards from the center of the target, Begg Rock.

**1 APRIL** • The Naval Air Rocket Test Station was established at Lake Denmark, N.J. The action superseded Naval Aeronautical Rocket Laboratory for the testing and evaluation of rocket engines, components and propellants, and the training of personnel to operate and service rocket engines.

**8 APRIL** • Soviet aircraft shot down a PB4Y-2, BuNo 59645, of VP-26 Detachment A—based at NAS Port Lyautey in French Morocco, but on patrol from Wiesbaden, West Germany—over the Baltic Sea off the coast of Liepāja, Latvia. Searchers recovered pieces of wreckage, but all ten men on board the *Privateer* died.

**18 APRIL** • The experimental model of the Convair XPSY-1 passed its initial flight test at San Diego, Calif. Four Allison T-40 turboprop engines, each rated at 5,500 hp and turning 15-foot contra-rotating propellers, powered the 60-ton seaplane.

**21 APRIL** • Pilot Lt. Cmdr. Robert C. Starkey of VC-6 took off in a P2V-3C Neptune from *Coral Sea* (CVB 43) with a gross weight of 74,668-pounds—the heaviest aircraft launched from a carrier to date. In addition, pilot and VC-5 commanding officer Capt. John T. Hayward made the first heavy attack plane carrier takeoff in an AJ-1 Savage from *Coral Sea*.



A pair of AJ-1 Savages from Composite Squadron (VC) 6 cruise off the coast of Hawaii. The squadron was the second formed, in January 1950, to receive the new bombers.

**3 MAY** • Submarine *Cusk* (SS 348) launched a Loon guided missile. The boat submerged and tracked and controlled the flight of the missile to a range of 105 miles.

**11 MAY** • Seaplane tender *Norton Sound* (AV 11) launched a Viking missile from a position near Christmas Island, south of the Hawaiian Islands. The event set a new altitude record for U.S.-built single-stage rockets of 106.4 statute miles.

**15 MAY** • The Navy announced the completion of a new test chamber at the Ordnance Aerophysics Laboratory, Daingerfield, Texas. For the first time, full-scale ramjet engines up to 48-inches in diameter could be tested and at simulated altitudes of up to 100,000 feet.

**19 JUNE** • The JRM-2 *Caroline Mars*, BuNo 76824, completed a 2,609-mile flight with 144 men on board from Honolulu, Hawaii, to San Diego, Calif. The flight marked the largest passenger lift over the Pacific to date.

**25 JUNE** • Despite warnings from multiple intelligence sources, the North Koreans, achieving tactical surprise, invaded South Korea initiating the Korean War. The United States asked for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, which then adopted a resolution condemning the North Korean aggression, ordered the withdrawal of North Korean troops above the 38th parallel, and called on all members to assist the UN in the execution of the resolution. The Soviets had boycotted the council in protest of ongoing American support of the Chinese Nationalists and their absence prevented their veto of the motion.



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A VA-195 AD-4 Skyraider spreads its wings as it prepares to takeoff from *Princeton* (CV 37) during the Korean War.

**27 JUNE** • President Harry S. Truman announced that he had ordered sea and air forces in the Far East to give support and cover to the South Koreans, and directed the Seventh Fleet to take steps to prevent an invasion of Formosa (Taiwan). During a meeting later that night, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution calling upon all its members to assist the South Koreans to repel the North Korean invasion.

**30 JUNE** • President Harry S. Truman declared that in keeping with the UN Security Council request for support to the South Koreans to resist the communist invaders and to restore peace, he authorized the Air Force to bomb military targets in North Korea, the use of Army ground troops in action to support South Korean forces, and a naval blockade of the entire Korean coast.

**3 JULY** • Carrier aircraft went into action during the Korean War. *Valley Forge* (CV 45)—the only operational U.S. carrier in the western Pacific when the war began—with CVG-5 embarked and British carrier *Triumph* (R 16) operating in the Yellow Sea with Fairy Firefly FR.1s and Supermarine

Seafire FR.47s of Nos. 827 and 800 Squadrons, respectively, launched strikes on North Korean airfields, supply lines, and transportation facilities in the area of Pyöngyang. These raids marked the baptism of fire for F9F-3 Panthers and AD Skyraiders. Navy pilots also recorded their initial kills in aerial combat during the Korean War and the first by Navy jets. Lt. j.g. Leonard H. Plog and Ens. Elton W. Brown Jr. of VF-51 piloted two F9F-3s and shot down two enemy Yakovlev Yak-9P Franks over Pyöngyang.

**8 JULY** • Commander in Chief Far East approved and adopted as policy an agreement of Commander Naval Forces, Far East, and Commanding General Far East Air Forces to obtain the maximum effectiveness in the employment of all air resources in the Far East Command and to ensure coordination of efforts. Under the terms of the accord, the Navy controlled the operations of its carrier aircraft whenever they flew on missions assigned to Commander, Naval Forces, Far East, and of its shore-based aircraft during naval missions. On all other sorties, the operations of carrier and shore-based naval aircraft fell under the purview of the Air Force.



The North Korean oil refinery at Wönsan burns following a carrier strike.

Shore-based Marine aircraft operated under direct control while Navy aircraft were indirectly controlled. The selection of targets and their priority by General Headquarters Joint Service Target Analysis Group ensured coordination of the overall objectives of the air campaign.

**12 JULY** • Naval Air, Japan, was formed in Tōkyō to provide an interim staff to administer the expanding aviation forces in the Far East. On 9 August, the command was established as Fleet Air, Japan, Rear Adm. George R. Henderson commanding.

**16 JULY** • The headquarters of Fleet Air Wing 1 shifted from Guam to Naha, Okinawa, to direct patrol squadron operations over the Formosa (Taiwan) Strait.

**18 JULY** • After a brief respite, *Valley Forge* (CV 45) and British carrier *Triumph* (R 16) returned to action with strikes on North Korean airfields, railroads, and factories at Hamhŭng, Hungnam, Numpyong, and Wönsan. Their aircraft heavily damaged the oil refinery at Wönsan. For the remainder of the month, carrier aircraft flew interdiction strikes deep behind enemy lines and close support missions



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Sailors ready a heavily armed Marine Corps F4U-4B Corsair for a pre-dawn launch from *Sicily* (CVE 118) in late summer or early fall 1950.

as required, while the ships shifted entirely around the peninsula from the Sea of Japan to the Yellow Sea in operations intended to relieve the pressure on UN troops retreating toward Pusan (Busan), South Korea.

**19 JULY** • Ens. Donald E. Stevens of VA-55 was shot down in an AD-4 Skyraider during a strafing run in Kangmyong-ni, North Korea. He was the first naval aviator lost in action during the Korean War.

**20 JULY** • Fourteen squadrons of the Organized Reserve including eight carrier fighter, two carrier attack, one antisubmarine, one fleet aircraft service, and two patrol squadrons were activated for duty as a result of the Korean War.

**22 JULY** • *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116), with elements of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing embarked, arrived at Yokosuka, Japan. Four days later, *Sicily* (CVE 118) arrived at that port with a load of ammunition, and on 1 August, *Philippine*

*Sea* (CV 47) reported to Commander Seventh Fleet at Buckner Bay, Okinawa. These arrivals marked the first carrier reinforcements to *Valley Forge* (CV 45) in Far Eastern waters and the beginning of carrier deployments to the Korean War that by the war's end totaled 11 attack, one light, and five escort carriers sent into action. Some of these carriers fought through two or three tours.

**23 JULY** • *Boxer* (CV 21), with a load of 145 USAF North American P-51 Mustangs and six L-5 Sentinels, 19 Navy aircraft, 1,012 passengers, and 2,000 tons of additional cargo arrived in Yokosuka, Japan. This delivery of urgently needed reinforcements for the fighting in Korea was made by breaking all existing records for a Pacific crossing in 8 days, 16 hours from NAS Alameda, Calif., to Yokosuka.

**27 JULY** • To meet the requirements of supporting combat forces in the Korean War, Fleet Logistic Air Wing, Pacific, was established as a unit of the Pacific Fleet and independently from the existing Fleet Logistic Air Wing.



A wounded man is carried from the HO3S-1 of VMO-6, which evacuated him from the front.

**3 AUGUST** • HO3S-1s and OY-2 Sentinels of VMO-6 began Korean War operations in support of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in the vicinity of Changwon. During their first day in battle, the helicopters delivered rations and water to troops on a mountain, and evacuated men felled by the severe heat.

**3 AUGUST** • VMF-214, operating from *Sicily* (CVE 118) while she sailed in Tsushima Strait, began the combat operations of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in the Korean War with a rocket and incendiary bomb attack on North Korean troops at Chinju. *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116), with VMF-323 embarked, joined the action three days later. Marine squadrons flew close air support from light and escort carriers that logged 12 deployments during the war.

**4 AUGUST** • Fleet Air Wing 6, Capt. John C. Alderman commanding (acting), was established at Tōkyō, Japan. The wing assumed operational control over all U.S. and British patrol squadrons in the Japan-Korea area.

**5 AUGUST** • *Valley Forge* (CV 45) and *Philippine Sea* (CV 47) began almost three years of continuous fast carrier operations with attacks on enemy lines of communication in

southwestern Korea and close support missions for UN troops holding the perimeter around Pusan (Busan).

**7 AUGUST** • The Navy received delivery of airship ZP2K-1, subsequently redesignated ZSG-2. The modernized K-class airship was equipped with in-flight refueling equipment and attachments for picking up seawater as ballast.

**7 AUGUST** • An HO3S-1 equipped with a single-axis automatic pilot made the first Navy flight of a helicopter under automatic control at NAF Mustin Field, Philadelphia, Pa. The successful test confirmed the feasibility of a helicopter automatic pilot. L. S. Guarino oversaw the development of the system at the Aeronautical Instrument Laboratory, Naval Air Material Center.

**14 AUGUST** • At the request of the Lebanese government, *Midway* (CVB 41) and *Leyte* (CV 32) visited Beirut, and launched an aerial demonstration over the Lebanese capital.

**21 AUGUST** • Aircraft flying from *Valley Forge* (CV 45) and *Philippine Sea* (CV 47) indicated the escalation of the air war when they set new records for operations, completing 202 sorties in a day over the Pyōngyang area of North Korea.

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**24 AUGUST** • A RIM-2 Terrier surface-to-air guided missile intercepted an F6F Hellcat drone at a range of more than 11 miles from the point of launch at Naval Ordnance Test Station Inyokern, Calif.

**31 AUGUST** • VC-5 marked the introduction of long-range attack bombers to carrier operations with the completion of AJ-1 Savage carrier qualifications on board *Coral Sea* (CVB 43).

**6 SEPTEMBER** • *Leyte* (CV 32) sailed from the Atlantic Fleet and arrived in the Korean War theater on 9 October.

**14 SEPTEMBER** • Commander U.S. Far East Command and UN troops in Korea Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur, USA, surmised that a successful landing in the Inchon area of South Korea and the rapid seizure of the nearby airfield at Kimpo would enable the allies to liberate the South Korean capital of Seoul, turn the flank of the North Koreans, and cut their rail and road supply routes into the south. On this date, *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116) and *Sicily* (CVE 118) launched preliminary strikes against North Korean troops around Inchon and on roads leading into Seoul.

The following day, Task Force 90, Rear Adm. James H. Doyle commanding, sailed through a narrow channel and landed the 1st Marine Division at Inchon. Aircraft and naval gunfire supported the leading Marines as they seized fortified Wolmi Island. The landing craft regrouped and incurred a delay of about 12 hours to ensure that the treacherous tide again became favorable, and the Marines followed up with an assault of the mainland.

British carrier *Triumph* (R 16) operating with the Blockade and Covering Force provided air defense for the assault forces en route, and *Boxer* (CV 21) arrived on D-day. "The Navy and the Marines," MacArthur wrote Commander Seventh Fleet Vice Adm. Arthur D. Strubble, "have never shone more brightly than this morning." Through 3 October, carrier aircraft flew close air support missions and strikes against enemy lines of communication to support the advance inland. The success of the landings changed the course of the war.

**18 SEPTEMBER** • Fleet Logistic Air Wing, Atlantic/Continental, replaced Fleet Logistic Air Wing, with a status parallel to that of the previously established Fleet Logistic Air Wing, Pacific.

**19 SEPTEMBER** • Two days after troops had fought their way inland from Inchon and captured the airfield at Kimpo, South Korea, the first elements of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing arrived from Japan. Early the next morning, the Marine aircraft began air operations from there with strikes to support allied columns advancing on Seoul.

**23 SEPTEMBER** • An HO3S-1 equipped with an automatic pilot developed by the Aeronautical Instruments Laboratory was flown with three-axis automatic control at NAF Mustin Field, Philadelphia, Pa.

**2 OCTOBER** • The Bureau of Aeronautics authorized the establishment of Project Arowa (Applied Research: Operational Weather Analysis) at Norfolk, Va., to develop basic meteorological research data into practical weather forecasting techniques.

**10 OCTOBER** • Carriers moved into action off the east coast of Korea and launched strikes and sweeps from Ch'ongjin to Wönsan in preparation for amphibious landings at Wönsan. A heavy concentration of mines in the harbor delayed the scheduled landings and the naval attack shifted northward and inland to assist the push of UN forces. When troops landed on 26 October, the inland advance had swept past the intended objective area toward the Yalu River.

**28 OCTOBER** • Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Forrest P. Sherman directed the establishment by each station, air group, wing, and squadron of a permanent instrument flight board to check the instrument flying proficiency of naval aviators and naval aviation pilots, and to supervise and coordinate the instrument training of all pilots attached. He also directed the maintenance, with certain exceptions, by all Group I naval aviators of a valid instrument rating following 18 months from the date.

**29 OCTOBER** • The fast carrier force retired to Sasebo, Japan, because the advance of UN forces toward the Yalu River reduced the enemy-held area in Korea into which aircraft could attack.

**31 OCTOBER** • The National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics issued a report on tests at the Langley Aeronautical Laboratory in which a wind tunnel was used to determine the characteristics of a fully submerged,



Lt. Cmdr. William T. Amen of VF-111 from *Philippine Sea* (CV 47) scored the Navy's first MiG kill, 9 November 1950.

high-speed submarine. The experiment reemphasized the interrelationships of basic naval sciences dealing with aeronautics and naval architecture.

**6 NOVEMBER** • United Nations forces approached the China–North Korean border along the Yalu River, and communist leaders from Moscow to Peking (Beijing) argued that the allied advance comprised part of a global U.S. conspiracy to encircle the Eastern Bloc. Chinese Premier Mao Tse-tung (Zedong) stated his expectation of American attacks across the Formosa (Taiwan) Strait, the Philippines, and French Indochina, and pledged to support the foundering North Korean regime. On 19 October, 12 Chinese divisions began to cross the Yalu from Manchuria, and several days later clashed with American and South Korean troops before deceptively withdrawing. As enemy opposition thus stiffened, the fast carriers returned on this date to attack targets in

their assigned area east of the 127th meridian. Two days later the carriers received the primary mission of cutting off Chinese Communist reinforcements from Manchuria by destroying the international bridges across the Yalu River. Political considerations restricted UN aircraft from pursuing communist aircraft across the river into Chinese territory to avoid escalating the war to embroil the Soviets. These restrictions frustrated the allies and allowed enemy aircraft to escape retribution in what became a safe haven.

**9 NOVEMBER** • Aircraft made the initial strikes against the bridges crossing the Yalu River at Sinŭiju, North Korea. Lt. Cmdr. William T. Amen, commanding officer of VF-111, led F9F-2B Panthers that covered the strike force of F4U Corsairs and AD Skyraiders. At least five Mikoyan and Gurevich (MiG) 15 Fagots flying from the sanctuary of Antung, Manchuria, counterattacked. The battle swirled

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from just above ground level up to 18,000 feet, and Amen shot down a MiG-15 to make the Navy's first MiG—and jet-on-jet—kill. The Skyraiders scored three direct hits and five near misses on the bridges during the first strike, and scored four hits with 2,000-pound bombs on the railroad bridge at Manpojin. All the attackers returned despite heavy and accurate enemy ground fire.

**10 NOVEMBER** • The Naval Guided Missile Training Unit No. 21, under training to operate RIM-2 Terrier surface-to-air missiles, was relocated from Naval Ordnance Test Station Inyokern, Calif., to seaplane tender *Norton Sound* (AV 11), and was redesignated a fleet activity under AirPac.

**14 NOVEMBER** • Two days of snow-covered flight decks and heavy seas severely hampered carrier operations off Korea, which gave the Communists time to repair the Yalu River bridges. On 16 November, a reconnaissance flight of two aircraft photographed the target areas around Sinŭiju and confirmed the transfer of most of the antiaircraft guns to the Manchurian side of the river, where politics constrained the allies from attacking the flak batteries.

**18 NOVEMBER** • Carriers launched a strike at the bridge at Sinŭiju, North Korea, to cut the communist supply lines across the Yalu River. Twelve MiG-15 Fagots jumped the strike group of VF-54 F4U-4Bs as the Corsairs rendezvoused at 31,000 feet with their high cover F9F-2 and F9F-3 Panthers. Lt. Cmdr. William E. Lamb, VF-52 commanding officer, and Lt. Robert E. Parker flew two Panthers and downed a jet (both shared), while Ens. Frederick C. Weber of VF-31 flying another Panther shot down a second MiG-15. Meanwhile, the Corsairs attacked the antiaircraft guns with 500-pound proximity-fuzed bombs, which facilitated an attack on the bridge by the AD Skyraiders of VA-55. The planes experienced difficulties hitting the dug-in guns, intense flak riddled a pair of Skyraiders, and the raid only damaged the bridge.

**27 NOVEMBER** • The failure to drop the bridges over the Yalu River, enabled the Chinese Communist Ninth and Thirteenth Army Groups comprising 26 divisions, numbering 260,000 men, to launch a second offensive to close the jaws of a giant trap. "We face an entirely new war," Commander U.S. Far East Command and UN troops in Korea Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur, USA, declared.

**29 NOVEMBER** • Within days of their offensive, the Chinese tore gaps in the allied lines, smashing through the South Korean troops, and then attacked the exposed flanks of the U.S. soldiers and Marines especially in the rugged mountains northwest of Chosin Reservoir. Their drive sent the UN troops into a retreat through the onset of winter. The crisis required a shift of emphasis in fast carrier operations from bridge strikes to close air support, which intensified through December to cover the retreat toward east coast ports and the evacuation of the troops and civilian refugees by ships. This continued into January as the enemy advance rolled south past the 38th parallel.

**30 NOVEMBER** • Naval aviation flew 6,725 Korean War sorties during November; 2,728 by heavy carriers, 583 by escort carriers, 473 by naval non-carrier aircraft, and 2,941 by Marines ashore. Six aircraft were lost to enemy action and 27 operationally.

**4 DECEMBER** • Ens. Jesse L. Brown of VF-31—the first African American to complete the Navy's basic flight training program for pilot qualification and to be designated a naval aviator—embarked on board *Leyte* (CV 32), flew a close support mission in an F4U-4 Corsair over Hagaru-ri, North Korea. Antiaircraft fire struck the Corsair and he made an emergency landing beyond Chosin. As darkness approached and the temperature fell, his wingman, Lt. j.g. Thomas J. Hudner, deliberately crash-landed nearby and attempted to pull Brown from the burning wreck. With the buckled fuselage trapping the pilot's legs, Hudner packed snow around Brown to protect him from the flames and returned to his aircraft to radio for a rescue helicopter. An HO3S-1 flown by 1st Lt. Charles C. Ward, USMC, of VMO-6 responded, and after repeated unsuccessful attempts to free Brown, had to leave him with the onset of nightfall. Brown died and Ward rescued Hudner, who subsequently received the Medal of Honor.

**6 DECEMBER** • Five days after her return from Korean waters, *Valley Forge* (CV 45) sailed under emergency orders to return to the war from San Diego, Calif.

**6 DECEMBER** • Col. Deane C. Roberts, USMC, commanding officer of VMR-152, provided an R5D to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing for a unique conversion into a tactical air direction center with situation maps and an extra radio.



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An F4U Corsair drops napalm on Chinese communist positions while supporting Marines during the fierce fighting near the Chosin Reservoir, 6 December 1950.

**6 DECEMBER** • Chinese troops redoubled their attacks on retreating Marines in North Korea. Eighteen VMF-214 F4U-4B Corsairs struck the enemy with rockets and proximity-fuzed 500-pound bombs but the Chinese rallied. Cmdr. Horace H. Epes Jr., VF-33 commanding officer, led eight F4U-4s that made repeated strafing and napalm runs on the enemy. In some instances the Corsairs bombed the Chinese as close as 50 yards ahead of the Marines.

**7 DECEMBER** • The advance of communist forces required the evacuation of airfields in North Korea. Without an additional break in flying close air support operations, the F4U-4 Corsairs of VMF-214 flew from Yonpo and landed on board *Sicily* (CVE 118) off Hŭngnam.

**9 DECEMBER** • After 12 days of fighting, the Marines retreating from Chosin linked up with other UN troops at Chinhung-ni.

**10 DECEMBER** • Task Force 90 began to evacuate troops and refugees from Hŭngnam, North Korea. In two weeks, ships rescued 105,000 American and South Korean troops, and 91,000 civilians who had fled the pursuing Communists. The vessels also loaded 350,000 tons of supplies. Naval aircraft supplemented allied types that covered the withdrawal and delayed the onslaught of Chinese and North Korean columns. Following the evacuation of the last survivors, troops destroyed the harbor facilities with demolition charges to prevent their use by the enemy.

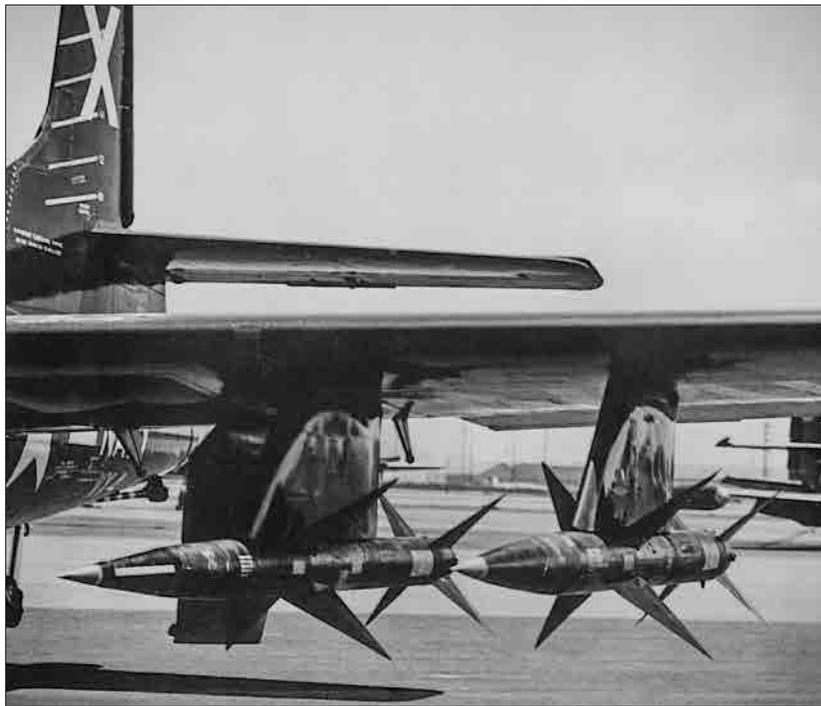
**17 DECEMBER** • *Bataan* (CVL 29), with VMF-212 embarked, joined forces in the Sea of Japan that protected the evacuation of troops and refugees from Hŭngnam and other North Korean ports. *Bataan* was pressed into service after her delivery of replacement aircraft to Japan, and her embarked F4U-4 Corsairs had been evacuated from Yonpo earlier in the month.

**18 DECEMBER** • VP-892 began operations from Iwakuni, Japan, as the first all-Reserve squadron to operate in the Korean War.

**19 DECEMBER** • President Harry S. Truman proclaimed a national emergency because of the Chinese successes in the Korean War.

**22 DECEMBER** • Chinese Premier Mao Tse-tung (Zedong) ordered his commanders to launch a third Korean War offensive.

**31 DECEMBER** • In December, naval aviation flew 6,781 Korean War sorties; 3,630 by heavy carriers, 1,470 by escort carriers, 535 by naval non-carrier aircraft, and 1,146 by Marines ashore. Enemy action claimed 16 aircraft and accidents 32 others.



AAM-N-2 Sparrow I air-to-air missiles mounted on the wing of an F3D Sky Knight of VX-4 at Naval Air Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, Calif.

## 1951

**4 JANUARY** • The Chinese Communists and North Koreans drove UN forces from the South Korean capital of Seoul.

**16 JANUARY** • The Navy implemented a step in a program that provided for the early service evaluation of BW-0 (subsequently redesignated RIM-2A) Terrier surface-to-air and AAM-N-2 Sparrow I air-to-air missiles, together with the development of production engineering information and the establishment of production facilities, by placing an advance order for 1,000 Sparrows with Sperry Gyroscope Company.

**17 JANUARY** • Commander Eighth Army Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway, USA, ordered a counterattack against the communist forces in Korea. Naval aircraft flew close air support missions and interdicted enemy supply routes during the ensuing fighting.

**29 JANUARY** • Task Force 77 commenced a series of air attacks against rail and highway bridges along North Korea's east coast. The force subsequently received the additional assignment of bombing highways and lines of communication in the northeastern part of the peninsula, which occupied a major share of its attention through the end of the Korean War.

**1 FEBRUARY** • Heavy Attack Wing 1, Capt. Robert Goldthwaite commanding, was established at Norfolk, Va., as the first of two such units. The next day, VC-5 reported as the wing's first squadron.

**5 FEBRUARY** • Six AJ-1 Savages and three P2V-3C Neptunes of VC-5 departed NAS Norfolk, Va., and flew via Bermuda and the Azores to NAS Port Lyautey, French Morocco. A lack of spare parts compelled the grounding of one of the Savages at Lajes in the Azores, but the remaining five AJ-1s completed the first U.S. transatlantic flight by carrier-type aircraft three days later. Planners initially based the Savages at Port Lyautey. In the event of war, they were to load atomic bombs and fly to carriers sailing en route to the eastern

Mediterranean, and operate from them against Soviet military targets along the outer fringe of the Eastern Bloc to tear holes in the Soviet defenses to enable Air Force bombers to penetrate to strike deeper targets.

**8 FEBRUARY** • After a period in Japan, Marine fighter squadrons returned to the Korean War and resumed their support operations from an airfield at Pusan (Busan), South Korea.

**16 FEBRUARY** • United Nations forces began a naval siege of the North Korean port of Wŏnsan that continued throughout the war. The allies temporarily developed the port into a sanctuary for aircraft damaged by enemy fire that ditched in the harbor. Helicopters pulled the downed aircrew to safety and thereby saved men from death or enemy imprisonment.

**6 MARCH** • Naval Ordnance Test Station Inyokern, Calif., launched a ramjet-powered Talos surface-to-air missile. It operated for two minutes in the longest full-scale ramjet flight achieved to date.

**29 MARCH** • Carrier Air Group 101, the first all-Reserve group to deploy to Korean waters, flew its initial combat missions from *Boxer* (CV 21). Reserve squadrons composed the group called to active duty from Dallas, Texas; Glenview, Ill.; Memphis, Tenn.; and Olathe, Kans.

**29 MARCH** • An XSSM-N-8 Regulus test vehicle operating under airborne command took off from the lakebed, circled the field, and landed successfully at Edwards AFB, Calif.

**31 MARCH** • A contract issued to Convair for the XFY-1 initiated a program to develop a propeller-driven vertical takeoff fighter. Lockheed received an order three weeks later for a similar aircraft known as the XFO-1 (later redesignated XFV-1) as an alternate solution to the design problems.

**2 APRIL** • Two F9F-2B Panthers of VF-191, each loaded with four 250- and two 100-pound general-purpose bombs, catapulted from *Princeton* (CV 37) to attack a railroad bridge near Songjin, North Korea. Their attack marked the Navy's first recorded use of jet aircraft as bombers.



A Regulus I surface-to-surface missile uses jet-assisted takeoff rockets to boost its launch during testing.



*Tunny* (SSG 282) launches a Regulus I surface-to-surface missile test vehicle.

**5 APRIL** • The Chinese Communists and North Koreans launched their fifth offensive with the aim of pushing the UN forces back from the 38th parallel and enveloping the South Korean capital of Seoul. During the following two weeks, allied aircraft flew daily close air support strikes to aid combat-engaged Marines and soldiers.

**8 APRIL** • Intelligence indications of a possible Chinese Communist amphibious attack on Formosa (Taiwan) compelled the temporary detachment of Task Force 77 from Korean waters to make a show of strength in the Formosa Strait. From 11 to 14 April, the ships steamed off the China



429191

F9F Panthers of VF-191 dump their reserve fuel before landing on board *Princeton* (CVA 37) following a strike over Korea.



428678

AD-4 Skyraiders destroy the Hwachon Dam with torpedoes, 1 May 1951.

coast and their aircraft flew aerial parades in international airspace off the Chinese mainland before returning to the Korean War.

**1 MAY** • In the first and only use of aerial torpedoes during the Korean War, carrier aircraft attacked the Hwachon Dam 50 miles northeast of Seoul, South Korea. The dam contained the waters of the Pukhan River, which ran high because of the spring thaw and thus enabled communist troops to attack the exposed flanks of allied troops. The Chinese and North Koreans emplaced antiaircraft guns

along likely aerial approaches and strengthened the dam with rocks. Cmdr. Richard C. Merrick, Carrier Air Group 19 commanding officer, led a strike group from *Princeton* (CV 37) consisting of eight VA-195 AD-4 Skyraiders and three others from VC-35 Detachment 3, supported by eight VF-192 F4U-4 Corsairs and four of VF-193. The Corsairs attacked the flak batteries while the Skyraiders ran the gauntlet and dropped their torpedoes. Two of the eight torpedoes malfunctioned and missed but the remaining six weapons struck the dam and tore breaches in the flood gates, releasing millions of gallons of water. VA-195 laconically tallied the success at the bottom of a list of targets attacked as “Flood Gates: 2 Destroyed, 1 Damaged.” The attack prevented communist forces from easily crossing the now flooded valleys.

**1 JUNE** • The 1st Marine Aircraft Wing inaugurated the policy of basing one squadron immediately in the rear of the 1st Marine Division to provide ground alert aircraft on call through the Joint Operations Center to provide close air support.

**5 JUNE** • Task Force 77 commenced participation in Operation Strangle—a joint offensive with the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and the Air Force to interdict eight communist supply routes across the Korean Peninsula. These strikes continued until ongoing aerial reconnaissance missions



Korean railroad bridges fell after repeated bombing during the interdiction campaign.

revealed by 20 September that the operation failed to cut the enemy routes. Chinese and North Korean efforts to camouflage and conceal trucks, tanks, rail and boat traffic, and supply dumps and caches, and their endeavors to repair damage reduced the effectiveness of these raids.

**12 JUNE** • Two PB4Y-2s of VP-772 were transferred from NAS Atsugi, Japan, to Pusan (Busan), South Korea. The Privateers dropped flares to support Marine night bombing, and their success persuaded planners to continue the practice of assigning specially equipped patrol aircraft for this purpose during the subsequent months.

**17 JUNE** • Convair received a contract for the development of a delta wing, hydroski equipped research seaplane

with fighter characteristics that subsequently became the (redesigned) XF2Y-1.

**18 JUNE** • Airship ZPN-1 made its first flight.

**1 JULY** • The Naval Air Turbine Test Station was established at Trenton, N.J. Its mission consisted of the testing and evaluation of turbojet, turboprop, ramjet, and pulsejet engines, together with their accessories and components.

**3 JULY** • Capt. James V. Wilkins, USMCR, of VMF-312, flew an F4U-4B as part of a four-plane armed reconnaissance mission when antiaircraft fire struck his Corsair and the plane crashed near Yon-Dong, 35 miles southwest of Wŏnsan, North Korea. Lt. j.g. John K. Koelsch of HU-1



424772

Three of eight HTL-3s transported for use in evacuating Korean War battle casualties prepare to lift off from *Valley Forge* (CV 45) off the Japanese coast in early January 1953.



1053760

Because of devastating strike damage, there is little evidence that this stranded locomotive was ever on a railway.

piloted an HO3S-1, embarked on board Japanese-manned tank landing ship *Q-007*, in an attempt to rescue Wilkins. Despite thick fog and the approach of darkness Koelsch spotted Wilkins and hovered overhead. Aircrewman AD3 George M. Neal lowered the hoist, but enemy fire shot down the helicopter. The three men evaded the communists on the ground for nine days before their capture. During their imprisonment, Koelsch inspired his fellow prisoners with his defiance of their captors, but died during captivity and posthumously received the Medal of Honor. Wilkins and Neal survived, and Neal was awarded the Navy Cross.

**10 JULY** • Commander Naval Forces Far East Vice Adm. C. Turner Joy led a delegation of UN military representatives for armistice discussions with communist leaders at Kaesong, Korea. The unabated fighting across the Korean Peninsula, however, compelled the repeated suspension of negotiations during the remainder of the war.

**22 JULY** • Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Forrest P. Sherman suffered a fatal heart attack while visiting Naples, Italy. Born on 30 October 1886 in Merrimack, N.H.,



F2H-2 Banshees of VF-172 flying from *Essex* (CV 9) seek North Korean targets.

Sherman graduated from the Naval Academy in 1917, completed flight training in 1922, and become an early proponent of naval aviation. He served through both world wars and became one of the principal authors of the National Security Act of 1947.

**7 AUGUST** • An experimental prototype Navy shipboard jet fighter, designated XF3H-1, completed its first flight at McDonnell Aircraft Corporation, St. Louis, Mo.

**7 AUGUST** • A Viking high-altitude sounding rocket developed by the Naval Research Laboratory achieved an altitude of 135.3 miles over the White Sands Proving Grounds, N. Mex.

**7 AUGUST** • Douglas test pilot William B. Bridgeman set an unofficial world speed record of 1,238 mph in a Navy sonic research D-558-2 Skyrocket over Edwards AFB, Calif.

**8 AUGUST** • Secretary of the Navy Dan A. Kimball established the classification AVM for Auxiliaries, Guided Missile Ship. The action redesignated modified seaplane tender *Norton Sound* from AV-11 to AVM-1.

**15 AUGUST** • Douglas test pilot William B. Bridgeman reached 79,494 feet—an unofficial world altitude record—in a Navy sonic research D-558-2 Skyrocket over Edwards AFB, Calif.

**23 AUGUST** • *Essex* (CV 9), the first of the postwar converted carriers to fight in the Korean War, joined Task Force 77 off the east coast of Korea and launched her aircraft into battle. During this strike, F2H-2 Banshees flown by VF-172 went into action for the first time.

**25 AUGUST** • F2H-2 Banshees from VF-172 and VF-51 F9F-2 Panthers, embarked on board *Essex* (CV 9) operating with Task Force 77 in the Sea of Japan, escorted Air Force



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Sailors arm an F9F-3 Panther's 20mm guns.



428982

Aviation ordnancemen prepare an AD Skyraider for a raid over Korea.

Boeing B-29 Superfortresses on a high-altitude bombing mission against the Rashin railroad marshalling yards near the USSR-China border with North Korea.

**7 SEPTEMBER** • Guided missile ship *Norton Sound* (AVM 1) made the first RIM-2A surface-to-air missile launch, firing a Terrier that intercepted an F6F Hellcat target drone.

**15 SEPTEMBER** • The Department of Defense Joint Parachute Test Facility was established at NAAS El Centro, Calif. Navy and Air Force parachutists under Bureau of Aeronautics management manned the facility.

**21 SEPTEMBER** • By this time, Korean War fighting gradually developed into positional warfare. On this date, the fast carrier task force consequently received orders to reduce its close air support missions and to concentrate attacks on railroads as part of an interdiction program.

**3 OCTOBER** • HS-1, Cmdr. Joseph T. Watson Jr. commanding, was established at NAS Key West, Fla. as the first helicopter antisubmarine squadron in the Navy.

**29 OCTOBER** • AD Skyraiders from VF-54, embarked on board *Essex* (CV 9), raided the communist party headquarters building at Kapsan, North Korea. An intelligence report revealed the meeting to planners, and the attack killed or wounded scores of enemy officials.

**6 NOVEMBER** • Soviet fighters shot down a P2V-3W, BuNo 124284, of VP-6, as the Neptune flew a weather reconnaissance mission over international waters off Vladivostok, Siberia. All ten men on board were reported missing and presumed dead.

**1 DECEMBER** • The Naval Aviation Safety Activity was established at Norfolk, Va. This operated under the Chief of Naval Operations to promote the aviation safety program and direct a specific effort toward maintaining the highest practicable level of aviation safety throughout the fleet. In



One of the very first AD-1 Skyraiders, BuNo 09177, fires a salvo of Mighty Mouse air-to-air rockets during tests at NOTS Inyokern, Calif., 26 January 1950.

April 1955, the activity was redesignated the Naval Aviation Safety Center.

**11 DECEMBER** • Aircraft from Air Task Group (ATG) 1 flew their first combat mission from *Valley Forge* (CV 45) against coastal rail lines and bridges in northeastern North Korea. ATG-1 was the first such group formed following experience in the Korean War that demonstrated that the five squadrons originally comprising carrier air groups did not operate effectively in combat from *Essex* (CV 9)-class carriers. The temporary withdrawal of one squadron from each group scheduled for deployment provided the squadrons needed for the ATGs. These temporary groups did not formally establish and operated from 1951 to early 1959 with eight in existence by 1955.

**12 DECEMBER** • The Kaman Aircraft Corporation K-225 made its first flight at Windsor Locks, Conn. This Navy-sponsored development of a helicopter equipped with a

Boeing YB-502 turbine engine marked the first demonstration of the adaptability of gas-turbine engines to helicopters.

**19 DECEMBER** • *Philippine Sea* (CV 47) tested her nuclear weapons emergency assembly capabilities while at San Diego, Calif.

## 1952

**4 JANUARY** • The creation of the new classifications CAG and CLG for heavy and light cruiser guided missile ships brought about the redesignation of converted heavy cruisers *Boston* and *Canberra* from CA-69 and -70 to CAG-1 and -2, respectively.

**1 FEBRUARY** • Chief of Naval Operations Adm. William M. Fechteler approved a modification of the Project 27A carrier conversion program that provided an increase in the capacity of deck operating equipment. The changes included the use of more powerful arresting gear, higher performance catapults, and replacement of the number three



An F9F Panther launches from *Antietam* (CVA 36) during the operational suitability testing of the angled flight deck on 14 January 1953.

centerline elevators with a deck-edge type of greater capacity. Three *Essex* (CV 9)-class carriers that incorporated these modifications completed their conversion under Project 27C (Axial Deck) in 1954.

**1 APRIL** • Guided Missiles Service Unit No. 211 was formed at the Naval Mine Depot, Yorktown, Va. The first of six scheduled RIM-2 Terrier surface-to-air missile units, the command consisted of sailors trained by Guided Missiles Training Unit No. 2 at the Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, San Diego, Calif.

**26 APRIL** • *Wasp* (CVS 18) and destroyer minesweeper *Hobson* (DMS 26) collided as *Wasp* conducted night flying operations in the Atlantic, 700 miles west of the Azores while en route to Gibraltar. The destroyer broke in two and sank quickly. *Wasp* and destroyer minesweeper *Rodman* (DMS 21) rescued 52 survivors, but 176 men died. *Wasp* had no casualties, but a 75-foot gash in her bow required drydock work at Bayonne, N.J. In ten days, the bow of *Hornet* (CV 12)—undergoing conversion to an attack carrier at Brooklyn—was removed and floated by barge to replace *Wasp*'s shattered stem.

**28 APRIL** • The Navy announced the adoption of the British-developed steam catapult for use on board U.S.

aircraft carriers, with the first installation scheduled for *Hancock* (CV 19). The decision followed tests conducted during the first three months of the year at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, Pa.; NOB Norfolk, Va.; and at sea; during which British carrier *Perseus* (A 197) had launched U.S. naval aircraft by this device.

**8 MAY** • The Fleet Air Gunnery Unit was established as an integral part of the operating forces of the Pacific Fleet under AirPac. Its mission was to provide air gunnery training on an individual and tactical unit basis for the Pacific Fleet.

**16 MAY** • Two RIM-2 surface-to-air missiles fired separately at F6F-5K target drones destroyed the Hellcats. This success culminated the Terrier developmental program, permitting the shift of emphasis to the production of the first tactical model.

**26 MAY** • The Navy's first, and for many years the world's largest, wind tunnel was disestablished at the Naval Gun Factory, Washington, D.C. The 8-by-8-foot wooden tunnel had been completed in 1914, and served the Navy for more than 30 years as an aerodynamic laboratory for research in aircraft design.

**26 MAY** • Jets and other aircraft from the Naval Air Test Center and the Atlantic Fleet demonstrated the feasibility of the angled-deck concept during three days of tests using a simulated angled deck on board *Midway* (CVB 41).

**17 JUNE** • The Aviation Medical Acceleration Laboratory was dedicated at the Naval Air Development Center. The laboratory featured a human centrifuge with a 110-foot arm capable of producing accelerations of up to 40 Gs, and was designed and constructed as a research tool for investigating pilot reactions to the accelerations encountered in high-speed flight at various temperatures and altitudes, and also afterward proved useful in the astronaut training program.

**20 JUNE** • A contract was issued for the construction of a 7-by-10 foot slotted throat transonic wind tunnel at the David Taylor Model Basin, Washington, D.C.

**23 JUNE** • Air Force, Navy, and Marine aircraft virtually destroyed North Korean electric power potential with more than 1,200 sorties during two days of attacks on military targets that had been bypassed during previous raids. The main effort struck the hydroelectric plant at Suiho, 40 miles up the Yalu River from Antung, Manchuria. The raids continued the following day focused on the plants at Chosin, Fusen, and Kyosen.

**1 JULY** • The Naval Guided Missile School was established at the Fleet Air Defense Training Center, Dam Neck, Va. The school provided the fleet with people trained in the operation, maintenance, and control of surface- and submarine-launched guided missiles. The Naval Air Guided Missile School (Advanced) was also established at the Naval Air Technical Training Center, NAS Jacksonville, Fla., to provide technicians for air-launched guided missiles.



A Marine HRS helicopter carries supplies to an isolated outpost in the Korean mountains.

**11 JULY** • The allies gradually developed a program of mass air attack over the course of the Korean War. During one of the major coordinated air efforts of the conflict, USN, USMC, USAF, Australian, and British aircraft flew round-the-clock strikes into the following day on railroad yards and industrial facilities at the North Korean capital, Pyöngyang.

**14 JULY** • The keel of *Forrestal* (CVA 59) was laid at the Newport News (Virginia) Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. She was the first of the 59,900-ton carriers and the name ship of her class.

**1 AUGUST** • The Naval Air Special Weapons Facility was established at Kirtland AFB, N. Mex. This provided for naval participation in various programs involved in the application of nuclear weapons to aircraft.

**6 AUGUST** • A fire swept the hangar deck of *Boxer* (CV 21), killing eight men and seriously injuring two, forcing the



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An AJ-1 Savage lands on board *Lake Champlain* (CV 39).

carrier to undergo emergency repairs from 11 to 23 August at Yokosuka, Japan. *Boxer* returned to Korean waters and then, on 26 September, returned to San Francisco, Calif. The ship underwent repairs there until March 1953.

**7 AUGUST** • Squadron Leader John R. Gardner, RAF, on an exchange from the Royal Air Force, and airborne intercept operator SSgt. R. G. Kropp of VMF(N)-513 launched in an F3D-2 Sky Knight for a training mission from K-8 near Kunsan, South Korea. Controllers diverted them to search for aircraft showing emergency IFF and, although they failed to engage the elusive enemy, the event marked the first combat sortie of a Sky Knight. A detachment of Sky Knights from VC-4 augmented the Marine F3D-2s, and the sailors and Marines subsequently flew close escort and barrier patrols for Air Force Boeing B-29 Superfortresses during night bombing raids over North Korea.

**28 AUGUST** • Guided Missile Unit 90, embarked on board *Boxer* (CV 21), launched an explosive-laden F6F-5K Hellcat drone under control of two AD Skyraiders against a railroad bridge at Hŭngnam, North Korea. The attack marked the first of six such Navy drone operations.

**29 AUGUST** • Task Force 77 carrier air squadrons teamed with Fifth Air Force, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, British, and South Korean aircraft for around-the-clock strikes over two days against communist supply concentrations around Pyŏngyang, North Korea.

**1 SEPTEMBER** • After the completion of an outfit with RIM-2 Terrier surface-to-air missiles at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Va., battleship *Mississippi* (AG 128) reported to Commander Operational Development Force to take part in Terrier evaluations.

**1 SEPTEMBER** • Vessels that participated in Operation Mainbrace, NATO's first large scale naval exercise in the North Atlantic, included battleship *Wisconsin* (BB 64), *Midway* (CVB 41), and *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CVB 42).

**1 SEPTEMBER** • Carrier aircraft from Task Force 77 attacked the North Korean oil refinery at Aoji about eight miles from the Soviet border.

**3 SEPTEMBER** • The firing of the first fully configured AAM-N-7 Sidewinder I air-to-air missile initiated a period of developmental testing at Naval Ordnance Test Station Inyokern, Calif.

**8 SEPTEMBER** • The Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air) assumed responsibility for all phases of basic and technical training of people for air-launched missiles. The Commander Naval Air Technical Training Command administered the program. The Bureau of Naval Personnel formerly held responsibility for all individual training.

**11 SEPTEMBER** • After World War II, Yugoslav support of the Eastern Bloc deteriorated. On this date, *Coral Sea* (CVB 43) called at Split, Yugoslavia. The next day, Yugoslav President Josip Broz (Tito) briefly visited the ship as a demonstration of the availability and acceptability of U.S. aid to the Yugoslavs. *Coral Sea* sailed on 14 September.

**15 SEPTEMBER** • VX-4 was established at NAMTC Point Mugu, Calif. The squadron served within AirPac to conduct operational evaluation tests of air-launched missiles, and initially assisted with the testing of AAM-N-2 Sparrow I air-to-air missiles.

**1 OCTOBER** • Aircraft Carriers (CV) and Large Aircraft Carriers (CVB) were redesignated Attack Aircraft Carriers (CVA).

**9 OCTOBER** • Carrier aircraft struck communist troops along the front lines in the Korean Peninsula that operated beyond the range of UN artillery. Naval aviators referred to these raids as “Cherokee strikes” in recognition of the Native American ancestry of Commander Seventh Fleet Vice Adm. Joseph J. Clark.

**28 OCTOBER** • The XA3D-1 bomber designed to carry nuclear weapons made its first flight. Skywarriors also later served in reconnaissance, electronic warfare, and tanker configurations.

**3 NOVEMBER** • Guided missile ship *Norton Sound* (AVM 1) launched a Regulus assault missile from off NAMTC Point Mugu, Calif. The Regulus impacted on San Nicolas Island in the first shipboard demonstration of the system.

**3 NOVEMBER** • Maj. William T. Stratton Jr., USMCR, and airborne intercept operator MSgt. Hans C. Hoglind, USMC, of VMF(N)-513 manning an F3D-2 Sky Knight, shot down a North Korean Yakovlev Yak-15 by 20mm cannon fire in the vicinity of Sinŭiju, North Korea. Their victory marked the first enemy jet destroyed by U.S. airborne intercept radar-equipped night fighters.

**12 NOVEMBER** • The final configuration of nonrigid airship ZP3K (later ZSG-3) was flown and accepted at NAS Lakehurst, N.J. The designers intended the modernized

antisubmarine adaptation of K-class airships for carrier-based operations and 30 received the modification.

**18 NOVEMBER** • VX-1 demonstrated the feasibility of using helicopters as aerial minesweepers in the first of a series of tests conducted with an HRP-1 off Panama City, Fla.

**18 NOVEMBER** • Seven Soviet MiG-15 Fagots approached ships of Task Force 77 while carriers launched strikes against North Korean targets from international waters near Vladivostok, Soviet Union. Three F9F-5 Panthers of VF-781, flying combat air patrol from *Oriskany* (CVA 34), intercepted the intruders and shot down two MiGs, damaged a third, and forced the survivors to retire.

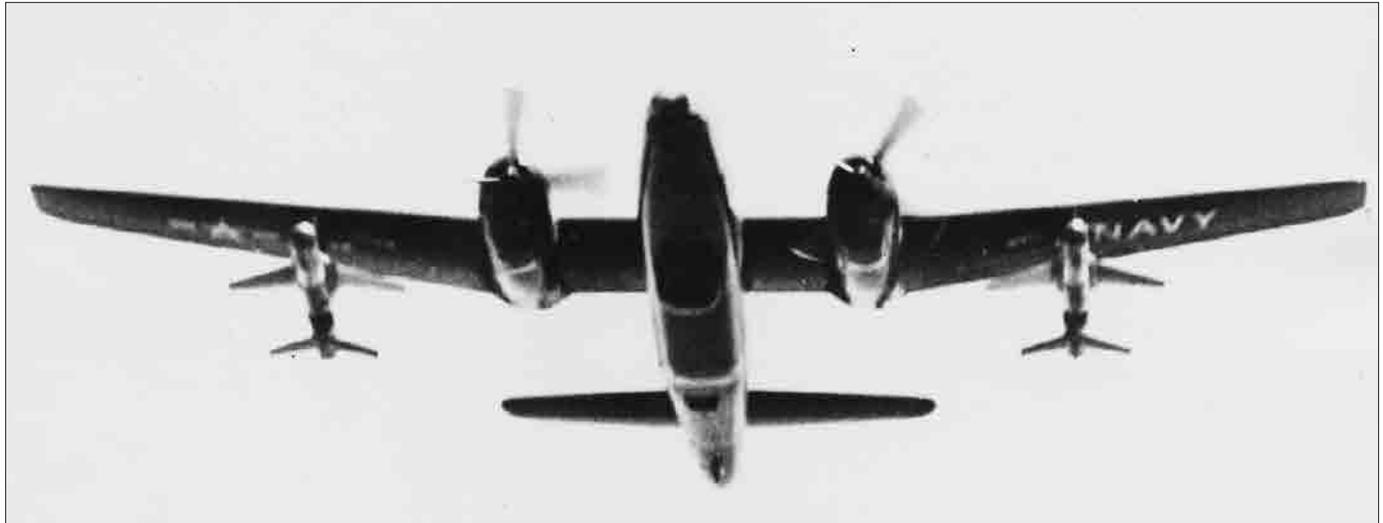
**4 DECEMBER** • The Grumman XS2F-1, the prototype of the first carrier-borne aircraft designed specifically to hunt submarines, made its first flight.

**16 DECEMBER** • *Princeton* (CVA 37) catapulted F2H-2P Banshee control jets followed by a Regulus assault missile from the sea test range off NAMTC Point Mugu, Calif. The Banshees guided the Regulus to a transfer point on San Nicolas Island, where they handed off control to other aircraft that successfully guided the missile to its impact.

## 1953

**12 JANUARY** • Ship’s skipper Capt. Samuel G. Mitchell landed in an SNJ Texan on board *Antietam* (CVA 36) in the initiation of test operations on board the Navy’s first angled deck carrier. During the next four days, six aircraft models made landings, touch-and-go landings, night landings, and takeoffs in winds of varying force and direction. Angled flight decks eventually became a feature on all Navy carriers and contributed to the reduction in the number of accidents.

**18 JANUARY** • Chinese Communist antiaircraft guns shot down P2V-5, BuNo 127744, of VP-22 while the Neptune patrolled the Formosa (Taiwan) Strait off Swatow, China. The plane ditched in the strait, but Chinese shore batteries fired on the rescuers who had to contend with high seas. Despite fire from the island of Nan-ao Tao, a Coast Guard



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A P2V Neptune carries two Petrel antiship guided missiles suspended beneath its wings, April 1956.

PBM-5 rescued 11 of the 13 Neptune crewmembers, but the Mariner crashed while attempting to takeoff in 8- to 12-foot swells. Destroyer *Halsey Powell* (DD 686) rescued ten survivors while a Mariner from VP-40 that assisted took antiaircraft fire, and shore batteries targeted destroyer *Gregory* (DD 802), which held her fire and cleared the area. Eleven men died including seven from the Neptune.

**9 FEBRUARY** • The carriers of Task Force 77 launched two days of maximum effort strikes against Chinese and North Korean supply concentrations and transport targets from Wŏnsan on the east coast through Songjin to Ch'ŏngjin on the west coast.

**13 FEBRUARY** • The first full-guidance flight of an AAM-N-6 Sparrow III air-to-air missile occurred at NAMTC Point Mugu, Calif.

**1 MARCH** • Aircraft from Task Force 77 heavily damaged the North Korean hydroelectric plant at Chosin. Four days later, they repeated the attack and cut the penstocks and destroyed sections of the main power plant.

**6 MARCH** • Submarine *Tunny* (SSG 282) returned to the fleet after the completion of her refit to launch Regulus assault missiles at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Calif.

**19 MARCH** • The carriers of Task Force 77 launched a heavy strike that ravaged the industrial section of Ch'ŏngjin, North Korea.

**20 MARCH** • ZP2N-1 (later ZPG-2) made its first flight at Akron, Ohio. The airship was the production model of the nonrigid N-class but with an envelope of 975,000 cubic feet. The designers originally intended it to conduct mid-ocean antisubmarine warfare and convoy-escort operations, thus the airship contained provisions for in-flight refueling, reprovisioning, and servicing. The Navy procured 17 of these airships in antisubmarine and airborne early warning configurations; the latter were designated ZPG-2W.

**9 APRIL** • The experimental delta wing XF2Y-1 jet seaplane equipped with hydroskis made its first flight at San Diego, Calif.

**3 MAY** • Commanding General, Far East Air Forces listed 30 major North Korean airfields that were to be rendered unserviceable in order to limit communist air action and prevent augmentation of the enemy's air strength preceding the date of a rumored armistice. Task Force 77 received the responsibility to bomb six of these fields and the naval air campaign featured periodic attacks on these targets through the end of the Korean War.

**21 MAY** • An AD-4 Skyraider took off with a bomb load of 10,500-pounds from NAS Dallas, Texas. Its combined weight including guns, ammunition, fuel, and pilot totaled a useful load of 14,491 pounds—3,143 pounds more than the weight of the plane.

**7 JUNE** • The carriers operating in Korean waters directed their major effort against the communist front lines and supporting positions to counter enemy efforts to gain ground for negotiating leverage before a cease fire. These raids continued round-the-clock through 19 June.

**23 JUNE** • Lt. Cmdr. George H. Whisler Jr., attached to VR-31, completed the first transcontinental round-trip solo flight between sunrise and sunset. Whisler departed NAS Norfolk, Va., in an F9F-6 Cougar, BuNo 127432, and after stops at NAS Memphis, Tenn., and Webb AFB, Texas, landed at NAS North Island, Calif. He then took off in an F3D-2 Sky Knight, BuNo 127076, from North Island, refueled at NAS Dallas, Texas, and landed at Norfolk.

**25 JUNE** • Task Force 77 deployed four F4U-5Ns to operate under the Fifth Air Force for an indefinite period from Kimpo, South Korea. Communist nuisance night attacks on the field by aircraft flying too slowly to be intercepted by jets prompted the Corsair deployment.

**30 JUNE** • Reorganization Plan No. 6 from President Dwight D. Eisenhower became effective. This included the abolishment of the Research and Development Board and three other activities of the Department of Defense whose functions shifted to the Secretary of Defense; the creation of six new assistant secretaries of Defense; and the assignment of managerial control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

**8 JULY** • The designation Anti-Submarine Support Aircraft Carrier (CVS) was established for attack carriers assigned to hunt submarines. The decision became effective one month



Maj. John F. Bolt, USMC, an ace in World War II, becomes an ace in the Korean War and the first U.S. naval aviator to claim five victories in jet aerial combat.



One of three D-558-2 high-speed research aircraft makes an early test flight with a JATO rocket assist in October 1949. Lt. Col. Marion E. Carl Jr., USMC, later set an unofficial altitude record of 83,235 feet in the type.

from this date and redesignated five assigned carriers, not all operational—*Enterprise* (CVS 6), *Franklin* (CVS 13), *Bunker Hill* (CVS 17), *Leyte* (CVS 32), and *Antietam* (CVS 36).

**10 JULY** • The Naval Air Development Unit was established at NAS South Weymouth, Mass. The unit participated in the development and testing of equipment designed for antisubmarine warfare and air defense.

**11 JULY** • Maj. John F. Bolt, USMC, made his fifth and sixth MiG kills of the Korean War while operating with the 39th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron of the Fifth Air Force. He flew an F-86E Sabre named *Darling Dottie*, Serial No. 52-2852, when his second section of four aircraft turned for base because of low fuel. Bolt spotted four MiGs and despite diminishing fuel attacked, with his wingman, the enemy head-on and repeatedly engaged the MiGs. He became the first U.S. naval aviator to attain five victories in jet aerial combat and the only Marine ace of the Korean War. Bolt received the Navy Cross for this action.

**15 JULY** • Submarine *Tunny* (SSG 282) launched a Regulus assault missile from a position off NAMTC Point Mugu, Calif., in the first submarine firing of the missile. The missile was recovered on San Nicolas Island after the simulated attack.

**16 JULY** • Lt. Guy P. Bordelon Jr., temporarily deployed ashore with VC-3 Detachment D to intercept communist night harassment raids against Seoul, shot down a North Korean Polikarpov Po-2 biplane while flying an F4U-5N Corsair. This battle marked Bordelon's fifth kill and made him the Navy's only ace of the Korean War.

**25 JULY** • The aircraft of Task Force 77 established a record for one day of operations in the Korean War by flying 538 offensive and 62 defensive sorties.

**27 JULY** • On the final day of the Korean War, Task Force 77 expended its major effort against Chinese and North Korean transportation facilities and designated airfields as secondary targets. These attacks claimed the destruction or damage of 23 railroad cars, 11 railroad bridges, a railroad tunnel, nine highway bridges, and a number of buildings.

**27 JULY** • United Nations and communist representatives signed an armistice at Panmunjom, Korea, which ended the major fighting of the Korean War. Isolated outbreaks occurred for years, however, because of North Korean violations of the agreement.

**12 AUGUST** • Battleship *Mississippi* (AG 128) fired a RIM-2 surface-to-air missile in the first successful shipboard launching of a fully guided missile. The Terrier hit the approaching F6F Hellcat drone.

**21 AUGUST** • Lt. Col. Marion E. Carl Jr., USMC, in a D-558-2 Skyrocket, attained a new altitude record of 83,235 feet over Edwards AFB, Calif.

**2 SEPTEMBER** • The Navy promulgated a conversion plan for *Midway* (CVA 41)-class carriers designated Project 110. The basic changes matched those for the angled-deck versions of Project 27C but with the addition of modified C-11 steam catapults in the angled-deck areas.

**11 SEPTEMBER** • In the first successful interception by an AAM-N-7 air-to-air missile, a Sidewinder shot down an F6F Hellcat drone at Naval Ordnance Test Station Inyokern, Calif.

**1 OCTOBER** • *Hornet* (CVA 12) completed conversion as the last of nine *Essex* (CVA 9)-class carriers to be modernized under Project 27A at New York Naval Shipyard, N.Y.

**3 OCTOBER** • Lt. Cmdr. James F. Verdin set a new official world speed record in an F4D-1 Skyray of 752.943 mph over a three-kilometer course at Edwards AFB, Calif. The achievement marked the first time that a carrier aircraft established the record in its normal combat configuration.

**16 OCTOBER** • Test pilot R. O. Rahn broke the 100-kilometer closed course speed record in an F4D-1 Skyray at 728.114 mph.

**30 OCTOBER** • The Department of Defense adopted National Security Council Directive No. 126, which reflected President Dwight D. Eisenhower's "New Look" defense policy focused on strategic power.

**19 NOVEMBER** • Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Robert B. Carney endorsed the common use of the Fleet Air Gunnery Unit by the Pacific and Atlantic Fleets and the Marine Corps "as a step towards increased emphasis and standardization in the combat employment of aircraft armament."

**3 DECEMBER** • The Steam Catapult Facility at NAMC Philadelphia, Pa., was established with the launching of F9F Panthers and AD Skyraiders.



Lt. Cmdr. James F. Verdin, here shown on board *Coral Sea* (CVA 43) in the first of two XF4D-1 Skyray prototypes during final carrier qualifications in late October 1953, had earlier in the month set a new world speed record in the second prototype.

**3 DECEMBER** • The first successful test of super circulation—boundary-layer control—on a high-speed aircraft took place with an F9F-4 Panther at Grumman Aircraft Corporation, Bethpage, N.Y. Bureau of Aeronautics engineer John S. Attinello received credit for developing this practical application of the aerodynamic principle.



A pair of F2H-2 Banshees of VF-62 sweep past *Lake Champlain* (CV 39) en route to their North Korean targets.