CHAPTER ONE

THE BEGINNINGS

We see, therefore, that war is not merely a political act but a real political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, a carrying out of the same by other means.

VON CLAUSEWITZ

Communists do not in the least idealise acts of violence. They would be very pleased to drop violent methods if the ruling classes agreed to give way to the working classes.

JOSEPH STALIN

THE INVASION

War came to Korea at dawn on a Sunday morning. At 0400 hours local time on 25 June 1950 the Korean People's Army launched its offensive against the Republic of Korea. After a co-ordinated artillery and mortar barrage at many points seven infantry divisions, an armoured brigade, and other independent units moved south across the Parallel on a 150-mile front from the Yellow Sea to the Sea of Japan. The invasion force included 150 Russian-built T-34 tanks. Opposing the North Korean forces which numbered about 90,000 men were elements of four South Korean divisions and a brigade. They lacked any heavy equipment and were stationed in defensive positions below the 38th Parallel.

The offensive progressed from west to east and the Ongjin peninsula was soon sealed off with Kaesong occupied by about 0930. Meanwhile the main North Korean effort, launched by two infantry divisions and supported by most of the tank brigade, struck down the Uijongbu corridor, the historic invasion route.

Dates and times of events in Korea and Japan are given throughout in Far Eastern time which is 14 hours ahead of Washington (EST) and 9 hours ahead of London (GMT). Thus 0400 25 June in Korea would be 1400 EST, 1500 EDT, 2100 BST, 2000 GMT, 1900 BST, 14 June, in New York and Washington; and 1900 GMT, 2000 BST, 15 June, in London.
President Truman and General MacArthur during the Wake Island meeting, 15 October 1950, the only occasion on which the two men met.
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