

Cost of the Korean War

Was the Korean War worth the cost?

Several factors contributed to the Korean Conflict being called America's "Forgotten War." It never unified the country in its support the way World War II did. Americans were not asked to sacrifice through rationing and other programs. In World War II, defeat of Nazi Germany and Japan was the obvious goal. Korea was part of the Cold War global struggle against communism, but the United States was not directly fighting either the Soviet Union or China, its major proponents. American war aims in the Korean Conflict were not as clear. And the war never really ended. Neither side surrendered. A negotiated armistice established the 38th parallel as the dividing line between the two Koreas, just as it had been before the fighting commenced. The Korean peninsula was devastated. Was the cost of the war worth it?

Clash with Communists

The Korean peninsula off the east coast of Asia has had a long history of foreign invaders. In 1910, Japanese armies conquered Korea and occupied it until their defeat in 1945 at the end of World War II. During the war, several different nationalist factions fought against the Japanese for Korean independence. Some were supported by Communist China; others favored western democracy. In the last few months of World War II, the Soviet Union declared war against Japan and sent Russian soldiers into Korea. The U.S. made them stop their southern movement at the 38th parallel, and that line became the effective division between a communist North Korea and a western South Korea.

In 1950, after several border clashes near the dividing line, the North Korean army invaded the south and nearly occupied the entire peninsula. President Harry S. Truman and the West saw this act of aggression sponsored by the Soviet Union as part of a strategy for worldwide communist domination. Backed by a United Nations resolution condemning the invasion and building a military coalition led by the United States, Truman committed American forces to the defense of South Korea. The United Nations troops, under General Douglas MacArthur, began rolling back the North Korean forces. Fearing the advance, Communist China sent thousands of troops to support North Korea and American forces were driven back. Truman wanted to avoid an all-out war with China. MacArthur publicly disagreed and advocated bombing the Chinese. Truman fired the popular general who returned to the U.S. and began a speaking tour attacking the president's policies as weak. In 1952, General Dwight Eisenhower was elected president, and he made a secret trip to Korea to help bring about an armistice in 1953 that ended the fighting. A strip of land at the 38th parallel was declared a "demilitarized zone" but both sides established heavy defenses along its border.

Cost of Korea

Counting civilian casualties, an estimated 2,800,000 people lost their lives in the Korean Conflict. American losses totaled 33,741. Of those, approximately 580 were from Iowa. In 1995, the United States dedicated a memorial on the Capitol grounds to those who served in the Korean War. Iowa had dedicated its own Korean War memorial five years earlier. According to the Iowa government website:

"The drive for a Korean War monument began in November 1984, when students from a Harding Junior High School class in Des Moines wrote the governor, asking why Korean War veterans did not have a memorial. The Iowa monument, erected on a grassy area south of the Capitol, includes a 14-foot-tall central obelisk and eight 6-foot-tall tablets which tell the story of the Korean War utilizing words, pictures, and maps of Korea engraved in granite. The monument was dedicated by Governor Terry Branstad on May 28, 1989."

Supporting Questions

Why was there a war and how was it fought?

- [World Leaders Sign the United Nations Charter, June 25, 1945 \(Image\)](#)
- [Excerpts from the Geneva Convention: Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, August 12, 1949 \(Document\)](#)
- [South Korean Soldiers Prepare and Lay an Anti-Tank Mine, July 22, 1950 \(Image\)](#)
- [American Soldier Prepares a Leaflet Bomb in Yokohama, Japan, November 1, 1950 \(Image\)](#)
- ["Korean Pearl Harbor? Red China's Attack Threatens U.N. Victory as Mao Moves on Three Fronts" Article, November 15, 1950 \(Document\)](#)
- [Iowa Soldiers at the "Rock of the Marne" Holding the Sign "Happy New Year to the Folks at Home," 1951 \(Image\)](#)
- [187th Airborne Paratroopers on a Flight to Munsan-ni, Korea, March 1951 \(Image\)](#)
- [American Marines Capture Chinese Communists Along the Central Korean Front, March 2, 1951 \(Image\)](#)
- [Soldiers Seek Shelter from Mortar Shells in Korea, April 11, 1951 \(Image\)](#)
- [Marine Infantrymen Take Cover Behind a Tank Near Hongcheon, Korea, May 22, 1951 \(Image\)](#)
- [Aerial View of USS Iowa Near Koje, Korea, October 17, 1952 \(Image\)](#)
- [American and North Korean Generals Sign the Korean Armistice, July 23, 1953 \(Image\)](#)
- [Excerpt 1: Interview with Korean War Veteran William Donald Sinclair, April 2, 2004 \(Video\)](#)
- [Interview of Korean War Medics Tony and Tom Bazouska, 2015 \(Video\)](#)

What was both the financial and human cost of the Korean War?

- [American Infantrymen Grieve for a Dead Fellow Soldier near Haktong-ni, Korea, August 28, 1950 \(Image\)](#)
- [Korean Woman Searches Through Rubble in Seoul, Korea, November 1, 1950 \(Image\)](#)
- [Memorial Service at Cemetery in Hamhŭng, Korea, December 13, 1950 \(Image\)](#)
- [Iowa Marines with a Hospital Attendant at Naval Station Great Lakes Hospital, March 1951 \(Image\)](#)
- [Red Cross Worker at a MASH Hospital in Korea, October 1952 \(Image\)](#)
- [Korean War Atrocities Report by U.S. Senate, January 1954 \(Document\)](#)
- [Excerpt 2: Interview with Korean War Veteran William Donald Sinclair, April 2, 2004 \(Video\)](#)
- [Korean War Marine Veteran Arthur E. Gentry Recalls Evacuation of Hamheung, 2015 \(Video\)](#)

How do we remember the Korean War?

- [U.S. Supreme Court Ruling on Bell v. United States, 1960 \(Document\)](#)
- ["Korean War Memorial Erected" Newspaper Article, May 17, 1989 \(Document\)](#)
- [Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., between 1995 and 2006 \(Image\)](#)
- [Korean War Memorial Fact Sheet, 2016 \(Document\)](#)
- [Korean War Memorial at the Iowa State Capitol, 2017 \(Image\)](#)

[*Printable Image and Document Guide](#)

Additional Resources

*Links to additional resources available in the [Cost of the Korean War Primary Source Set](#)

“Costs of Major U.S. Wars” by Stephen Daggett

This is a 2010 report by the Congressional Research Service that provides estimates of the costs of major U.S. wars from the American Revolution through current conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Iowa PBS: “Korean War 101”

This four-and-a-half minute video excerpt about the Korean War includes a brief look of soldiers from Iowa who served in Korea.

Korean Peninsula at Night

These images show area of light in South Korea and darkness in North Korea at night.

Korean War - Casualty Summary

This online document is a detailed summary of Korean War casualties, updated as of May 16, 2008. The casualties are categorized between the Army, Air Force, Marines and Navy.

Korean War Digital History Project

This online project is a developing website that houses multiple videos and tagged clips of veterans telling their experiences from the Korean War.

Korean War Legacy Project

Explore the origins and outcomes of the Korean War, the challenges that soldiers faced and its rich legacy exemplified by the democratization and rapid economic development of South Korea.

Korean War Veteran Regina H. Schiffman

This webpage from the Veterans History Project includes a small gallery of photographs of Korea War veteran Regina H. Schiffman, who served as a nurse during the war.

Remembering Vietnam: Online Exhibit

This exhibition presents both iconic and recently discovered National Archives records related to 12 critical episodes in the Vietnam War.

The Korean War

This online resource includes a brief history of the Iowa National Guard in the context of the Korean War.

“The United Nations Explained” Video

This is a useful video (2:25 minutes) that provides an overview of the United Nations for kids.

United Nations Prisoner of War (POW) Camp at Pusan

This photograph shows the United Nations’ prisoner of war camp at Pusan. The camp contains both North Korean and Chinese Communist prisoners.

Virtual Tour of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Take a virtual tour of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to learn more about The Wall and all of the elements that make up the memorial.

24th Infantry Division in Korea

This 28-minute video from the Korean War Legacy Foundation is a detailed look at the 24th Infantry Division as they serve in Korea.

Additional Resources

“64 Years After Korean War, North Still Digging Up Bombs” Associated Press Article

Published by Bloomberg Politics, this article looks at how North Koreans are still finding anti-tank mines that were left in the ground, undeployed from the war.

***Korea Reborn: A Grateful Nation Honors War Veterans for 60 Years of Growth* by Republic of Korea’s Ministry of Patriots**

This is a 2017 retrospective look at the Korean War and its impact. The photos and text tell the story from the perspective of both U.S. veterans who served in the conflict, and the South Koreans who prospered from the freedom left in their wake.

***Korean War Memorial* by Jennifer Burrows**

This is a 2010 book that tells about the creation and purpose of the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

***Remembering Korea: The Korean War Veterans Memorial* by Brent Ashabranner**

Readers are given an in-depth tour of this national monument through profiles of important figures, an examination of its planning and creation and an overview of the history of the war that claimed 35,000 American lives in this 2001 book.

World Leaders Sign the United Nations Charter, June 25, 1945



Courtesy of Harry S. Truman Presidential Library & Museum, "Signing the United Nations Charter," 25 June 1945

Description

At the end of World War II, several key world leaders got together to establish a new organization committed to preventing future world wars. In 1945, the United Nations was formed with 51 countries signing a charter that created the organization. At the conference in San Francisco, this photo shows Secretary of State Edward Stettinius signing the United Nations Charter while President Harry S. Truman (second from left) looks on. The United States delegation is gathered about.

The United Nations still exists today with five stated goals: maintain international peace and security, protect human rights, deliver humanitarian aid, promote sustainable development and uphold international law. Part of the charter is the idea that "an attack on one is an attack on all." The first test of this agreement came five years later, when North Korea crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea. United Nations members sent military troops and support from across the world to the Korean peninsula.

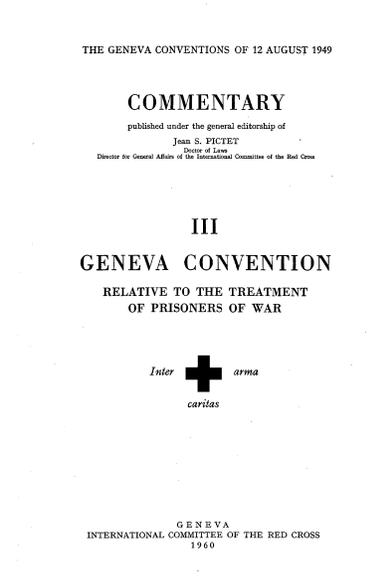
Source-Dependent Questions

- At the end of World War II, several key world leaders got together to establish a new organization committed to preventing future world wars - the United Nations. What would be the benefits of countries banding together to start this organization? Are there any drawbacks?
- The United Nations still exists today with five stated goals: maintain international peace and security, protect human rights, deliver humanitarian aid, promote sustainable development and uphold international law. Discuss each of the goals. Why is each important? Speculate as to why the United Nations limited itself to those goals.

Citation Information

"Signing the United Nations Charter," 25 June 1945. Courtesy of Harry S. Truman Presidential Library & Museum

Excerpts from the Geneva Convention: Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, August 12, 1949



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Pictet, Jean S., "Geneva Convention: Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War," 12 August 1949

Description

Jean Pictet, the director of the Red Cross, published this commentary, including the original text, of the Geneva Convention of 1949. The 1949 convention gathered to specifically address the treatment of prisoners of war and to state where consequences would happen if that humane treatment was not carried out.

[Transcribed Excerpts from the Geneva Convention](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- According to the excerpts of the 1949 Geneva Convention, formulate a one-sentence summary of how prisoners of war were to be treated.
- Based on these excerpts, how would you describe life in a Prisoner of War (POW) camp? What evidence from the text led you to that description?

Citation Information

Pictet, Jean S., "Geneva Convention: Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War," pp. 1, 12, 27, 139, 152, 196, 236, 12 August 1949. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

South Korean Soldiers Prepare and Lay an Anti-Tank Mine, July 22, 1950



Courtesy of Library of Congress, “[South Korean soldiers of the 1st Division, I Corps, prepare and lay an antitank mine somewhere in Korea during the Korean conflict],” 22 July 1950

Description

Landmines have been used in warfare for decades. The United States used M15 anti-tank mines for the first time in the Korean War. It was designed to be a “track breaker,” causing a tank to no longer move but likely not killing the crew inside the tank.

Unexploded land mines are a danger for decades after a war ends. Long after the soldiers have gone home, undetonated mines remain as deadly reminders of the war. Their victims often are playing children. Specialized “bomb squads” are trained to handle these explosives at significant risk to themselves.

Source-Dependent Questions

- Describe what the Korean soldiers are doing in this photo. In wars, why would landmines or explosive devices be buried? What would be the benefits? What would be the drawbacks?
- Why might landmines be particularly useful or effective in the Korean Conflict?

Citation Information

“South Korean soldiers of the 1st Division, I Corps, prepare and lay an antitank mine somewhere in Korea during the Korean conflict,” 22 July 1950. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

American Soldier Prepares a Leaflet Bomb in Yokohama, Japan, November 1, 1950



Courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command "Korean War Psychological Warfare," U.S. Army, 1 November 1950

Description

An American soldier loads an M16M1 cluster adapter at the Far Eastern Command FEC Printing Plant in Yokohama, Japan. The bomb type adapter contains 22,500 psychological warfare leaflets.

Source-Dependent Questions

- Look closely at the photo and describe what the person is doing.
- This type of bomb is designed for **psychological warfare**. Who would be the target of this type of bomb? How did it "injure" its target?
- How did this type of **warfare** compare to other types of warfare you have seen in this source set?

Citation Information

"Korean War Psychological Warfare," U.S. Army, 1 November 1950. [Courtesy of Naval History and Heritage Command](#)

“Korean Pearl Harbor? Red China’s Attack Threatens U.N. Victory as Mao Moves on Three Fronts” Article, November 15, 1950

Pathfinder

November 15, 1950: p. 22

Korean Pearl Harbor?

*Red China’s attack threatens U.N. victory
as Mao moves on three fronts*



New U.N. foe. First Chinese Communists taken prisoner

Courtesy of OldMagazineArticles.com, “Korean Pearl Harbor? Red China’s Attack Threatens U.N. Victory as Mao Moves on Three Fronts,” Pathfinder Magazine, 15 November 1950

Description

This article is from the 1950 *Pathfinder Magazine*. It discusses the surprise attack on U.S. forces, and the entry of China as a military force on the side of the North Korean Army.

[Transcript of “Korean Pearl Harbor?” Article](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- How did China’s entry into the Korean War further embed the U.S. commitment to the conflict? What was the United States’ reaction to this surprise attack?
- According to the article, why did China join on the side of North Korea?

Citation Information

“Korean Pearl Harbor? Red China’s Attack Threatens U.N. Victory as Mao Moves on Three Fronts,” *Pathfinder Magazine*, 15 November 1950. [Courtesy of OldMagazineArticles.com](#)

Iowa Soldiers at the “Rock of the Marne” Holding the Sign “Happy New Year to the Folks at Home,” 1951



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, 1951

Description

Iowa soldiers serving with the 3rd Division's "Rock of the Marne," are shown in this photograph sending a New Year's greeting from Korea in 1951. The 3rd Division's "Rock of the Marne" was known as a rapid-response unit and even nicknamed the "Fire Brigade," and while their last Korean combat was in 1953, the division remained in Korea until 1958.

Source-Dependent Questions

- The soldiers in this photo are from Iowa in the 3rd Division "Rock of Marne." This division was a rapid-response unit, meaning they could respond to a situation quickly. Why would it be a good idea for military units involved in war to specialize in certain areas, like this rapid-response unit? What are the drawbacks?
- This unit stayed in Korea for five years after the [armistice](#) was signed. Why would a military presence remain in Korea five years after the conflict was over?

187th Airborne Paratroopers on a Flight to Munsan-ni, Korea, March 1951



Courtesy of National Archives, "COMBAT CARGO, KOREA - Paratroopers of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team..." March 1951

Description

Paratroopers of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team are shown in this photograph seated in the cargo compartment of a 314th Troop Carrier Group C-119 on a flight to the dropzone at Munsan-ni, Korea, in March 1951. This was the second combat airborne assault for the U.S. Air Force aircraft since their arrival in Korea in August 1950. The first assault was at Sukchon-Sunchon, Korea, in September 1950, when the 187th was dropped shortly after the Allied landing on the beachhead at Inchon. Dropping paratroopers is only one of the many missions performed by the 314th since they joined the conflict two years earlier.

Source-Dependent Questions

- Look closely at the photo, what do you observe about the paratroopers? Why are the men holding their gear and supplies?
- Compare this photo with [Soldiers Seek Shelter](#). Make inferences about why paratroopers might have been beneficial in the Korean terrain.

Citation Information

"COMBAT CARGO, KOREA - Paratroopers of the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team, seated in the cargo compartment of 314th Troop Carrier Group C-119 'Flying Boxcar,' 'sweat out' the flight to the dropzone at Munsan-ni, Korea," March 1951. [Courtesy of National Archives](#)

American Marines Capture Chinese Communists Along the Central Korean Front, March 2, 1951



Courtesy of National Archives, "Men of the 1st Marine Division capture Chinese Communists during fighting on the central Korean front. Hoengsong," 2 March 1951

Description

Prisoners of war were taken by both sides in the Korean War. The United Nations set up several prison camps, with Goeje-do being the largest one. About 170,000 people were committed to United Nations camps, and 7,614 people died in those camps. Sixty-five percent of those deaths were from infectious diseases. The United Nations committed to humane conditions in Prisoner of War (POW) camps, including safe and adequate supplies of food and water.

Source-Dependent Questions

- About 170,000 people were committed to United Nations camps, and 7,614 people died in those camps. Sixty-five percent of those deaths were from infectious diseases. Why would infectious diseases have such an impact in the United Nations' POW camps?
- In a war, both sides will have captured prisoners. Both North and South Korea were under the international law established in the terms of the [1949 Geneva Convention](#), which was designed to guarantee humane treatment of prisoners of war. Predict what might go wrong with this arrangement and the consequences that might have.

Citation Information

"Men of the 1st Marine Division capture Chinese Communists during fighting on the central Korean front. Hoengsong," 2 March 1951. [Courtesy of National Archives](#)

Soldiers Seek Shelter from Mortar Shells in Korea, April 11, 1951



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Signal Corps, U.S. Army, 11 April 1951

Description

Mortars were common ammunition used by both sides in the Korean War. The portable, muzzle-loading weapon was designed for high-angle fire, with a range of about 4,000 yards. These weapons could fire 40 rounds of ammunition in two minutes. In this photograph, a group of infantrymen sought cover from a mortar shell and debris it sent flying.

Source-Dependent Questions

- What threats were the men of the 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment facing in this photo?
- How were these men equipped to face the threats?

Citation Information

"Korean Conflict. Men of the 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division, covering up behind rocks to shield themselves from exploding mortar shells, near the Hantan River in central Korea," Signal Corps, U.S. Army, 11 April 1951. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Marine Infantrymen Take Cover Behind a Tank Near Hongcheon, Korea, May 22, 1951



Courtesy of National Archives, "Marine infantrymen take cover behind a tank while it fires on Communist troops ahead. Hongchon Area," 22 May 1951

Description

Marine infantrymen in this photograph are shown taking cover behind a tank while it fires on Communist troops ahead near Hongcheon County on May 22, 1951. Five uniformed army soldiers are seen kneeling behind a tank and one man is seen coming out of the top of the tank. The tank is traveling on a dirt road in the rural area of Korea.

Source-Dependent Questions

- How are these infantrymen equipped to face the communist troops?
- Compare this photo to [Soldiers Seek Shelter from Mortar Shells](#). How might the terrain of Korea have impacted those who were fighting?

Citation Information

"Marine infantrymen take cover behind a tank while it fires on Communist troops ahead. Hongcheon Area," 22 May 1951. [Courtesy of National Archives](#)

Aerial View of USS Iowa Near Koje, Korea, October 17, 1952



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, "Aerial view of U.S.S. Iowa taken after battery gunfire aimed at Communist defenses. Offshore Koje, Korea," 17 October 1952

Description

This photograph shows an aerial view of the U.S.S. Iowa taken after battery gunfire aimed at Communist defenses near Koje, Korea. The USS Iowa was commissioned in 1943 and served until 1990. The Iowa sailed to the Korean peninsula in 1952, targeting North Korean supply lines, weapons, railroad lines and bridges, tunnels, and a North Korean military division headquarters. The ship also hosted helicopters, providing close air support missions to support United Nations ground forces. In July of 1953, the USS Iowa left the Korean War as she was reassigned to naval training in northern Europe.

Source-Dependent Questions

- This photograph shows the USS Iowa after battery gunfire aimed at Communist defenses near Koje, Korea. The USS Iowa sailed to the Korean peninsula in 1952, targeting North Korean supply lines, weapons, railroad lines and bridges, tunnels and a North Korean military division headquarters. Why would the roles that the USS Iowa played in the Korean War be important?
- South Korea wanted a free and democratic government. Using other images within the source set, what strategies did they use when North Korea's 1950 invasion threatened that?

American and North Korean Generals Sign the Korean Armistice, July 23, 1953



Courtesy of National Archives, "General W. K. Harrison, Jr., signs armistice ending 3-year Korean conflict. General Harrison, left table, and North Korean General Nam Il, right table, sign documents.," 23 July 1953

Description

General W. K. Harrison, Jr., is shown in this photograph signing armistice ending the three-year Korean conflict. Harrison is at the left table, while North Korean General Nam Il is at the right table. According to the National Archives, 158 meetings happened over a two-year period to reach this point. The armistice agreement ended open hostilities, created the "demilitarized zone" at the 38th parallel to be a 4,000-meter-wide zone between North and South Korea, arranged for release and exchange of prisoners of war and set up a committee to discuss any violations of the agreement that arise. This military agreement remains in effect today. In the end though, no treaty was ever signed.

Source-Dependent Questions

- Look closely at the photo and describe the surroundings. What national symbols do you see in this photo?
- The armistice agreement ended open hostilities, created the "demilitarized zone" at the 38th parallel to be a 4,000-meter-wide zone between North and South Korea, arranged for release and exchange of prisoners of war and set up a committee to discuss any violations of the agreement that arise. Why would the armistice highlight these points as part of the agreement?
- How might the lives of North and South Koreans have been different if the Korean War had ended with a treaty to which all countries agreed?

Citation Information

"General W. K. Harrison, Jr., signs armistice ending 3-year Korean conflict. General Harrison, left table, and North Korean General Nam Il, right table, sign documents.," 23 July 1953. [Courtesy of National Archives](#)

Excerpt 1: Interview with Korean War Veteran William Donald Sinclair, April 2, 2004



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Sinclair, William D., "Oral history interview with William Donald Sinclair," Veterans History Project, 2 April 2004

Description

After serving as a navigator in the Army Air Force in World War II, William Sinclair was contacted in 1947 about competing for a commission in the newly formed Air Force. He graduated in July 1949 from pilot training and 18 months later, he was off to serve in the Korean War, assigned to the 8th Fighter Bomber Squadron. The Korean War introduced new aircraft and technology, which also meant inexperienced pilots making errors, some of them fatal. Sinclair flew over 100 missions, dropping napalm on enemy troops and attacking supply trains. When his replacement arrived early, Sinclair left two days before his tour was complete; two days later, his old base was overrun and his replacement was killed.

[Full Transcript from Interview with William Donald Sinclair](#)

[Transcribed Excerpt 1 from Interview with William Donald Sinclair](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- In addition to more than 100 combat missions, what else did Sinclair use his flying expertise for during the Korean war?
- According to Sinclair, what was the culture and weather of Korea like?

Citation Information

Sinclair, William D., "Oral history interview with William Donald Sinclair," Veterans History Project, 2 April 2004.
[Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Interview of Korean War Medics Tony and Tom Bazouska, 2015



Courtesy of Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc., Interview of Tony and Tom Bazouska, Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc., 2015

Description

This is a video clip featuring Korean War veterans Tony and Tom Bazouska, who are speaking about their role as medics in combat. The two describe how they were identified as medics in their units, and what weapons they were issued as combat medics.

Source-Dependent Questions

- What does their story tell you about life as a combat veteran and how the Korean War was fought?
- As you listen to their interview, what unique facts are revealed about military combat that you may not have known before?
- How does this interview connect to other primary sources within this source set in terms of how the Korean War was fought?

Citation Information

Interview of Tony and Tom Bazouska, Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc., 2015. [Courtesy of Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc.](#)

American Infantrymen Grieve for a Dead Fellow Soldier near Haktong-ni, Korea, August 28, 1950



Courtesy of Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper, "Chang, Sfc. Al. U.S. Army, near Haktong-ni, Korea," Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper, 28 August 1950

Description

This photograph captured a grief stricken American infantryman whose fellow soldier has been killed in action and he was comforted by another soldier. In the background, a corpsman was methodically filling out casualty tags in the Haktong-ni area on August 28, 1950.

Source-Dependent Questions

- How does this image support the statement that "not all injuries are physical?"
- In the background a soldier is filling out casualty tags. What are casualty tags? Why would they be important?

Citation Information

"Chang, Sfc. Al. U.S. Army, near Haktong-ni, Korea," Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper, 28 August 1950. Courtesy of Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper

Korean Woman Searches Through Rubble in Seoul, Korea, November 1, 1950



Courtesy of Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper, Huff, C.W., "An aged Korean woman pauses in her search for salvageable materials among the ruins of Seoul, Korea," Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper, 1 November 1950

Description

This photograph shows an aged Korean woman who paused in her search for salvageable materials among the ruins of Seoul, Korea. The photo was taken on November 1, 1950, by Army Captain C. W. Huff.

Source-Dependent Questions

- Analyze what the woman in this photo is doing.
- Connect this photo to the [landmines photo](#). What environmental costs of war can you infer from those images? How might these costs impact the people who live here?
- How would this destruction economically impact the South Korean people?

Citation Information

Huff, C.W., "An aged Korean woman pauses in her search for salvageable materials among the ruins of Seoul, Korea," *Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper*, 1 November 1950. Courtesy of Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper

Memorial Service at Cemetery in Hamhŭng, Korea, December 13, 1950



Courtesy of Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper, "Marines of the First Marine Division pay their respects to fallen buddies during memorial services at the division's cemetery at Hamhung, Korea..." Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper, 13 December 1950

Description

Marines of the First Marine Division are shown in this photograph paying their respects to fallen comrades during memorial services at the division's cemetery at Hamhung, Korea, following the break-out from Chosin Reservoir on December 13, 1950. A total of 36,576 Americans lost their lives in the Korean War, and 508 of them were from Iowa. Exact numbers are difficult to obtain, but estimates list the total military deaths from both sides of the Korean War at about 900,000, and the total civilian deaths at about 1,700,000.

Source-Dependent Questions

- What cost of war does this photo show?
- How is honor being displayed in this memorial service?
- How are images like this one used to both encourage and discourage future involvement in armed conflict?

Citation Information

"Marines of the First Marine Division pay their respects to fallen buddies during memorial services at the division's cemetery at Hamhung, Korea, following the break-out from Chosin Reservoir," *Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper*, 13 December 1950. Courtesy of Morning Calm Weekly Newspaper

Iowa Marines with a Hospital Attendant at Naval Station Great Lakes Hospital, March 1951



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, March 1951

Description

Corporal Robert Tague of Fort Dodge and Sergeant John Brandenhorst of Oskaloosa posed in this photograph with hospital attendant F.E. Hodkinson of Des Moines at Naval Station Great Lakes' hospital in March 1951. Several Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (MASH) units operated during the Korean War. These field hospitals stabilized casualties until they could be transported to general hospitals for further treatment and recovery. During the Korean War, medical advances such as kidney dialysis and blood vessel transplants were perfected and became more widely available.

Source-Dependent Questions

- How would the location of Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) units close to the front impact injured soldiers?
- Not everyone in the military trains for combat jobs. What careers would the military recruit for in order to staff MASH units?

Red Cross Worker at MASH Hospital in Korea, October 1952



Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, October 1952

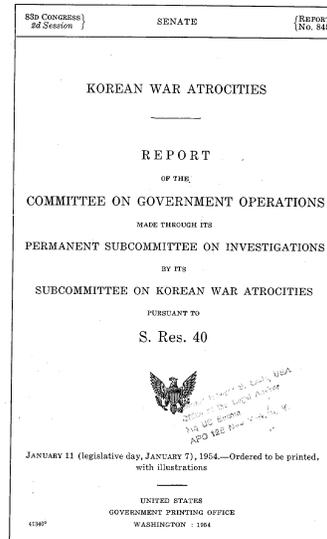
Description

This photograph shows a wounded Korean soldier in a Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (MASH) hospital being attended by a Red Cross worker from Burlington, Iowa, Mary Jane White. White wears a uniform with a Red Cross logo on the left sleeve. She is bent down in conversation with a wounded soldier who is reclining on a hospital cot. The patient's head is bandaged, and he holds a magazine in his hands.

Source-Dependent Questions

- Based on the photo and the caption, what role is this woman playing in the Korean War? What other roles might women have played in the Korean War?
- After looking at this photo, refer to the [Iowa Marines in a MASH Hospital](#). How is a MASH hospital the same and different than the hospitals we are used to?

Korean War Atrocities Report by U.S. Senate, January 1954



Courtesy of Library of Congress, U.S. Congress, January 1954

Description

U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy appointed a special subcommittee on October 6, 1953, to investigate the war crimes committed by Communist forces in Korea with the purpose of bringing them to the world's attention. The Korean War Atrocities report, which was released in January 1954, details these findings.

The Hon. Charles E. Potter (chairman), the senator from Michigan, presided over the sub-committee hearing on the War Atrocities committed during the Korean War. The purpose of these hearings was to bring to "the attention of the world in general and to the American people in particular" the type of enemy the U.S. was fighting in Korea, "to expose their horrible acts committed against our troops, and to foster appropriate legislation."

[Full Transcript of the Korean War Atrocities Report](#)

[Transcribed Excerpts from the Korean War Atrocities Report](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- Describe how the American soldiers who were prisoners of war were treated by the North Korean army.
- What is similar between the two testimonies of Mr. Manring and Sergeant Weinle?
- Refer back to the [Geneva Convention](#). Why do you think it was important for our government to investigate these atrocities of the Korean War and share the findings publicly?

Citation Information

"Korean War Atrocities Report of the Committee on Government Operations made through its Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations by its Subcommittee on Korean War Atrocities," U.S. Congress, January 1954.

[Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Excerpt 2: Interview with Korean War Veteran William Donald Sinclair, April 2, 2004



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Sinclair, William D., "Oral history interview with William Donald Sinclair," Veterans History Project, 2 April 2004

Description

After serving as a navigator in the Army Air Force in World War II, William Sinclair was contacted in 1947 about competing for a commission in the newly formed Air Force. He graduated in July 1949 from pilot training and 18 months later, he was off to serve in the Korean War, assigned to the 8th Fighter Bomber Squadron. The Korean War introduced new aircraft and technology, which also meant inexperienced pilots making errors, some of them fatal. Sinclair flew over 100 missions, dropping napalm on enemy troops and attacking supply trains. When his replacement arrived early, Sinclair left two days before his tour was complete; two days later, his old base was overrun and his replacement was killed.

[Full Transcript from Interview with William Donald Sinclair](#)

[Transcribed Excerpt 2 from Interview with William Donald Sinclair](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- Why might new and replacement soldiers be eager to jump into their roles?
- What might have happened if Sinclair's replacement would have arrived on time instead of arriving early?

Citation Information

Sinclair, William D., "Oral history interview with William Donald Sinclair," Veterans History Project, 2 April 2004.
[Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Korean War Marine Veteran Arthur E. Gentry Recalls Evacuation of Hamheung, 2015



Courtesy of Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc., Interview of Arthur E. Gentry, Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc., 2015

Description

Korean War Marine veteran Arthur Gentry recalls when he and approximately 5,000 soldiers were evacuated out of Korea near Hamhŭng (Hamheung). He remembers that about 100,000 North Korean refugees were also evacuated, and singing the Marine Corps Hymn as they marched to the harbor where ships were waiting for their arrival.

Source-Dependent Questions

- How does this video share the human cost of the Korean War?
- Using examples from the video, why do you believe this memory is so emotional for Arthur Gentry?

Citation Information

Interview of Arthur E. Gentry, Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc., 2015. [Courtesy of Korean War Legacy Foundation, Inc.](#)

Excerpts from *Bell v. United States*, 1960

BELL v. UNITED STATES. 405

393 Opinion of the Court.

aboard the *Leopard* and impressed into service in the British Navy. There he served for five years and nine days before he finally was repatriated. Years later his widow sued for his pay and rations as a member of the United States Navy during the period he had been held by the British. The Court of Claims ruled that, even though we had not been at war in 1807, the *Chesapeake* had nevertheless been "taken by an enemy," and that Straughan's widow was entitled to the United States Navy pay and allowances that had accrued while he was serving with the British. *Straughan v. United States*, 1 Ct. Cl. 324.¹⁵

In October, 1863, a lieutenant in the Union Army named Henry Jones was taken prisoner by Confederate guerrillas near Elk Run, Virginia. Jones was confined in Libby Prison until March 1, 1865, when he was exchanged and returned to the Union lines. Upon his return he found that he had been administratively dismissed from the service in November, 1863, because he had been in disobedience of orders at the time of

Courtesy of Library of Congress, Stewart, Potter, "U.S. Reports: *Bell v. United States*, 366 U.S. 393 (1961)," U.S. Supreme Court, 1960

Description

Bell v. United States was a lawsuit reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court. In the case, veterans of the Korean War were suing the U.S. government for denying them pay while they were in a Prisoner of War (POW) camp in North Korea as well as after their release when they traveled to Communist China to live for a period of time. The Supreme Court overturned the lower court's ruling, giving the veterans their pay earned during their active service despite being POWs and as they reportedly "consorted and fraternized with the enemy."

[Transcribed Excerpts of *Bell v. United States*](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- Why were these veterans denied their claim to their active duty pay during the time period they were held as POWs?
- Why did the U.S. Supreme Court reverse the verdict in the lower courts?
- How did this ruling honor those veterans who served in the Korean War?

Citation Information

Stewart, Potter, "U.S. Reports: *Bell v. United States*, 366 U.S. 393 (1961)," U.S. Supreme Court, pp. 405-408, 412-416, 1960. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

“Korean War Memorial Erected” Newspaper Article, May 17, 1989



Bullard, Charles, “Korean War Memorial Erected,” The Des Moines Register, pp. 1, 17 May 1989

Description

This article and photograph were published on May 17, 1989, in The Des Moines Register. They focused on the newly-installed Korean War Veterans Memorial on the grounds of the Iowa Capitol.

[Transcript of “Korean War Memorial Erected” Newspaper Article](#)

[Printable Excerpt of “Korean War Memorial Erected” Newspaper Article](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- Who launched the initiative to establish a Korean War Veterans Memorial at the Iowa Capitol grounds?
- How does this memorial honor Korean War Veterans?

Citation Information

Bullard, Charles, “Korean War Memorial Erected,” The Des Moines Register, pp. 1, 17 May 1989. Courtesy of The Des Moines Register

Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., between 1995 and 2006



Courtesy of Library of Congress, Highsmith, Carol M., "Korean War Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C.," between 1995 and 2006

Description

Visitors to the Korean War Memorial experience a memorial rich in symbolism. Walking uphill represents mountainous terrain, and the ground cover around the statues represents the rough terrain. Among the ground cover are granite slabs that represent rice paddies. An aerial view show that the memorial is shaped like a triangle with the soldiers forming the tip that points to the "Pool of Remembrance" at the top of the incline. "Freedom is not Free" is inscribed on the wall near the Pool of Remembrance, and 2,400 faces of men and women - and one dog - who fought in the Korean War are etched in the black granite mural wall. The memorial cost \$18.1 million to build, and by law, none of that money could come from the United States government. It was entirely funded through donations and fundraisers, including \$2 million donated by South Korean businessmen. The Korean War Memorial was dedicated on July 27, 1995.

Source-Dependent Questions

- After looking at the photo, read the [Korean War Memorial Fact Sheet](#). What symbolism does the Korean War Memorial contain?
- The memorial cost \$18.1 million to build, and by law, none of that money could come from the United States government. It was entirely funded through donations and fundraisers, including \$2 million donated by South Korean businessmen. What message do the donations and fundraisers convey about the desire for a memorial for this war?

Citation Information

Highsmith, Carol M., "Korean War Veterans Memorial, Washington, D.C.," between 1995 and 2006. [Courtesy of Library of Congress](#)

Korean War Memorial Fact Sheet, 2016

Korean War Memorial

Quick Facts

- The N. and S. Korean border was at the 38th parallel
- Statues are over 7 feet tall
- The 19 statues are reflected on the wall to make 38 images.
- Statues are made of stainless steel in a ghostly hue
- You walk uphill representing the mountains
- Ground cover represents the rough terrain
- Granite slabs represent the rice paddies and order in the chaos
- The Mural Wall wavy appearance evokes mountainous ranges
- Soldiers were equipped like WWII soldiers
- Etched on the wall with no identification are 2400 photos of men, women, and a dog who served in Korea
- Was a U.N. action against the invasion of S. Korea by N. Korea



- The mural wall measures 164 feet long and eight inches thick, and from an aerial view, the memorial appears as an isosceles triangle, with the soldiers spearheading the tip which intersects a circle over the Pool of Remembrance.

History

Korea had been occupied by Japan from 1910 to the end of WWII. After the defeat of Japan in 1945, the Soviet Union took control of the area north of the 38th parallel and the United States took control of the area south. Because of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, Korea had separate governments in the north and south. Both parts claimed to be the legitimate government of all of Korea, and neither accepted the border as permanent.

The conflict turned into open warfare when North Korean forces, supported by the Soviet Union and China, invaded the south on June 25, 1950. On June 27, 1950, the UN Security Council dispatched UN forces to repel the North Korean invasion of the South. While 17 countries contributed troops, the United States supplied 88% of the UN's military personnel.

After 39 months of warfare, an armistice was signed on July 27, 1953, ending the fighting. This agreement created the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to separate North and South Korea and allowed for the exchange of prisoners. However, because no peace treaty was ever signed, the two Koreas are technically still at war.

In 1986, the U.S. Congress authorized the construction of a memorial to honor Korean War veterans. In 1995, President Bill Clinton and South Korean President Kim Young Sam dedicated the memorial.

Statues



The 19 statues represent a patrol who are walking uphill. The soldiers all wear ponchos over their equipment, signifying the bitter, cold winds. The juniper ground cover represents the rough terrain while the granite slabs represent water and rice paddies. Each branch of

Courtesy of Eileen Rothberg, Rothberg, Eileen, "Korean War Memorial Fact Sheet," 2016

Description

This informative and concise fact sheet tells of the symbolism, history and features of the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C.

[Transcript of Korean War Memorial Fact Sheet](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- What is significant about the design of the soldier statues?
- How does this memorial continue to honor Korean War veterans?

Citation Information

Rothberg, Eileen, "Korean War Memorial Fact Sheet," 2016. Courtesy of Eileen Rothberg

Korean War Memorial at the Iowa State Capitol, 2017



Courtesy of Rebecca Helland, 2017

Description

Initiated by a letter to Governor Terry Branstad, students at Washington Irving Junior High School launched a campaign to fundraise for and create a memorial to Korean War Veterans on the Iowa Capitol grounds. Their goal was to raise \$85,314 - \$1 for each Iowan who fought in the war. Five years and over \$100,000 later, the dedication ceremony took place.

[Transcript of Inscriptions on Korean War Memorial in Des Moines, Iowa](#)

Source-Dependent Questions

- Read the transcript of inscriptions on the Iowa Korean War Memorial. Which country built the tanks that the North Koreans advanced into South Korea with? What message does that arrangement send about the war?
- Armistice was signed to end the Korean War in 1953. A campaign to establish a memorial in Des Moines started in 1984. What does this indicate about why the Korean War is sometimes referred to as "The Forgotten War?"

Citation Information

Courtesy of Rebecca Helland, 2017