

KOREAN WAR

1950-1953



KOREA BEFORE THE COLD WAR

Five Facts Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1wFrXKanC0>

- ▶ After the conclusion of WWII in September 1945, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan; this was done in agreement with the United States.
 - ▶ Japan had ruled over Korea for more than 30 years.
 - ▶ To weaken Japan's power, the SU liberated the northern part of Korea and the US occupied the southern region.
 - ▶ By 1948, the relationship between the SU and US soured.
- ▶ Neither the SU nor the US wanted to give up their influence in Korea; as a compromise, Korea was split into two at the 38th Parallel.
 - ▶ North → Democratic People's Republic of Korea
 - ▶ Supported by the SU and Chinese Communist Party
 - ▶ South → Republic of Korea
 - ▶ Supported by the US and had democracy
 - ▶ US hoped the division would keep the peace and prevent the spread of Communism in Asia.
 - ▶ The goal was to have the split be temporary but neither side wanted to give up their control.



HOW THE WAR BEGAN

- ▶ After growing tensions, North Korea invaded South Korea by crossing the 38th Parallel on June 25, 1950.
 - ▶ North Korea's goal → Unite North and South Korea under one government independent of foreign influence.
 - ▶ North Korea saw the separation of the country as the fault of unwanted American interference and they wanted to free South Korea from the grip of the US.
 - ▶ The SU and communist China were backing North Korea.
- ▶ The US was very surprised because their focus had been on stopping the spread of Communism in Europe; they really weren't prepared to deal with something in Asia.
- ▶ The South Korea army was no match for the North Koreans, who swiftly advanced.



<https://mholloway63.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/june-25-1950-the-korean-war-begins-after-north-korea-invades-south-korea.jpg>



<http://www.thehistoryreader.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/1.jpg>

SENDING IN THE TROOPS

- ▶ United Nations (UN) Security Council immediately called for a cease-fire but the North Koreans continued to attack.
- ▶ Top US advisors decided to take action; they were determined to not let another Asian nation fall to Communism since many felt they “lost” China years before.
 - ▶ Containment policy
- ▶ On June 27, 1950, the UN Security Council called on UN members to support South Korea; the SU ambassador was absent.
 - ▶ “I have ordered United States air and sea forces to give the Korean government troops cover and support.” –President Harry S Truman
 - ▶ Badly needed troops were sent in by the US and 15 other nations; this was the first time UN troops fought together in a major conflict.
- ▶ General Douglas MacArthur became the commander of the UN forces in July 1950; the fighters were mostly from the US and South Korea.



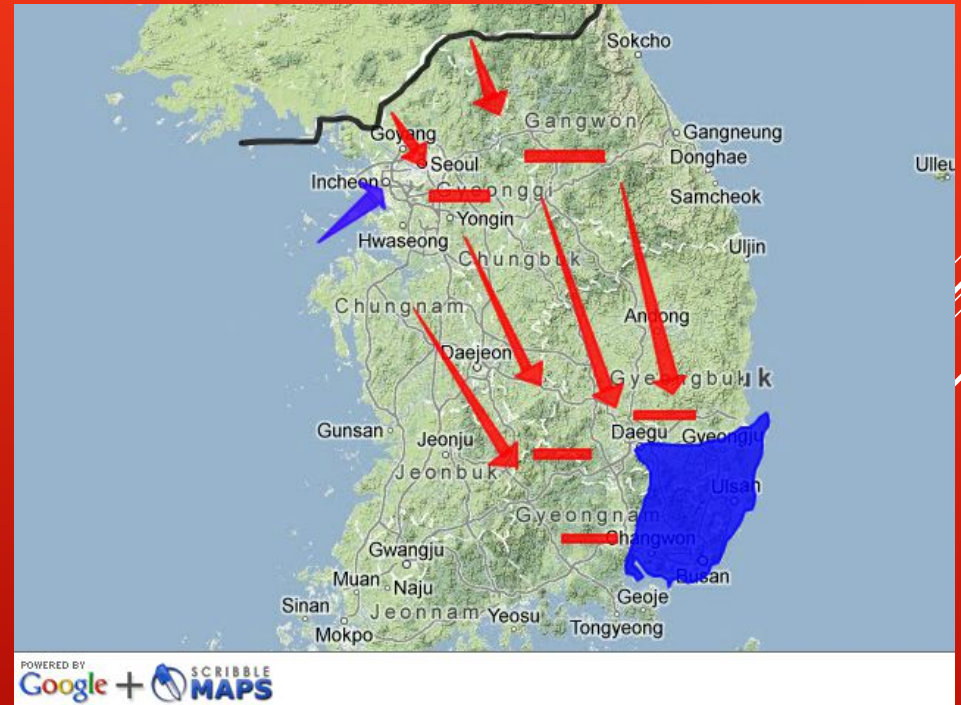
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HOW THE FIGHTING WENT...

- ▶ By September 1950, the North Korean troops had taken everything but the southeastern tip of Korea; fighting raged there for six weeks.
- ▶ MacArthur and other military leaders came up with a daring plan at a port city, which allowed them to launch a surprise attack on the North Koreans from behind their lines.
- ▶ UN forces quickly drove the invading North Koreans out of South Korea.
- ▶ In just over a month, MacArthur captured the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.
- ▶ Soon, UN forces reached the Chinese-Korean border.



[https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/vzeEOdEwGBbcBcTV7jwJpJMrQ1g=/640x480/filters:no_upscale\(\)/PusanPerimeterIncheonInvasion1950-56a042073df78cafdaa0b5e8.jpg](https://www.thoughtco.com/thmb/vzeEOdEwGBbcBcTV7jwJpJMrQ1g=/640x480/filters:no_upscale()/PusanPerimeterIncheonInvasion1950-56a042073df78cafdaa0b5e8.jpg)

THE FIGHTING CONTINUES

- ▶ Some Chinese troops began fighting alongside the North Koreans earlier in the war, and soon thousands more backed the NKs.
- ▶ UN forces were pushed back across the 38th Parallel.
- ▶ MacArthur called for air and ground troops to attack China, but Truman refused.
 - ▶ MacArthur openly criticized Truman in a letter by stating, "There is no substitute for victory."
 - ▶ Truman ultimately relieved MacArthur of his command in April 1951.
- ▶ UN forces managed to push the blended North Korean and Chinese troops back across the 38th Parallel.



https://www.dw.com/image/44687346_303.jpg



https://www.historyonthenet.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/M20_75_mm_recoilless_rifle_korean_war.jpg

ENDING THE WAR

- ▶ By Spring 1951, it was clear that neither side would achieve victory.
 - ▶ “Everybody could see that we had reached stalemate, unless someone started chucking atom bombs.” –British soldier
- ▶ Peace talks began in July 1951.
 - ▶ The American public soon grew frustrated with the lack of progress.
 - ▶ The war became a major topic in the 1952 election; Truman chose not to run for reelection, knowing many blamed him for the US's involvement.
- ▶ After Dwight D. Eisenhower won the election, he traveled to Korea.
 - ▶ Peace talks did not yield results and more soldiers kept dying as fighting flared up.
 - ▶ Eisenhower brought up the possibility of using atomic weapons.
- ▶ A cease-fire was signed on July 27, 1953, essentially ending the fighting.
 - ▶ Korea was again divided roughly along the 38th Parallel.
 - ▶ A narrow demilitarized zone (DMZ) was made between the two countries; soldiers are still there today.
 - ▶ Significant casualties: 1.5 million NK/Chinese soldiers, 845,000 SK soldiers, 155,000 US forces, and 3 million NK and SK civilians

SO THE WAR IS OVER, RIGHT?

- ▶ Technically, the North and South Koreans had only signed a truce.
 - ▶ The Armistice Agreement formally ended fighting and divided the Korean peninsula, but it was not a peace treaty.
 - ▶ Technically, North and South Korea are still at war.



<https://tripsout.co/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Korean-War-Memorial-Washington-DC-Tour.jpg>

RESULTS OF AND AFTER THE KOREAN WAR

- ▶ In one sense, the Korean War changed nothing since the border between the two countries remained about the same and the north remained Communist.
- ▶ On the other hand, the Korean War pushed back the invasion of the North Koreans, essentially maintaining South Korea's democracy and showing the world that the US was ready to fight Communism's expansion into non-Communist nations.
- ▶ After the war...
 - ▶ North Korea's economy – already in trouble before the war – was struggling; support from the SU and China wasn't enough, and there are still problems with jobs and housing today.
 - ▶ North Korea also remains under the rule of a strict Communist dictatorship.
 - ▶ South Korea quickly ousted its leader after the war and struggled with its economy for a while; during the Vietnam War, SK gave support to the US, and that was rewarded with \$200 million from the US, which boosted its economy.
 - ▶ South Korea continues to do well today.



<https://static.independent.co.uk/s3fs-public/thumbnails/image/2014/02/25/08/v4-North-Korea-at-night.jpg?w968h681>