

## **KOREAN WAR**

### ***PROLOGUE***

On 10 August 1945 with the Japanese surrender imminent and following a plan drawn up by the United States, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to divide Korea along the 38th parallel. Japanese forces north of that line would surrender to the Soviet Union; those to the south to the United States. Thus, without consulting the Korean people, the two major powers had divided the Korea peninsula into two occupation zones. The United States did not envision this as a permanent partition, though its later policies and actions contributed to Korea's division.

In December 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to administer the country temporarily. Both countries established governments in their respective halves favorable to their political ideology. In the process, U.S.-run elections supervised by the U.N. replaced an indigenous, left-wing government that had formed in June 1945 with one led by the right-wing politician and anti-Communist Syngman Rhee. The southern partition's left-wing parties boycotted the elections. The Soviet Union, in turn, approved and furthered the rise of a Communist government led by Kim Il-Sung in the northern part. The Allies said that Korea would be a unified, independent country under an elected government but failed to specify the details or work to do so. In 1949, both Soviet and American forces withdrew.

### ***CIVIL WAR***

South Korean President Syngman Rhee and North Korean General Secretary Kim Il-sung were intent on reuniting the peninsula under their own system. Their willingness to use force to do so became obvious during 1949 and early 1950 as both sides launched a number of limited military attacks across the 38th parallel. Partly because of Soviet tanks and heavy arms, the North Koreans were the ones able to escalate substantially the level of attacks into a full blown civil war,

while South Korea, with only limited American backing and domestic political support, had far fewer options. The American government believed at the time that the Communist bloc was a unified monolith, and that North Korea acted within this monolith as a pawn of the Soviet Union (documents from the Soviet archives show that Kim Il-sung, operating with Soviet assistance and outdated equipment, was responsible for the attack on the Southern regime, and discrediting one viewpoint of the 1960s and 1970s that the war was just as much caused by South Korean and Western provocation). The view that global communism was monolithic and that the North Koreans were little more than stooges of the Soviet Union prevented the United States and other nations from understanding the initial conflict as a civil war, wherein each side wished to reunite the peninsula, albeit under their own political system.

### ***THE "FORGOTTEN WAR"***

Dismissed as the "forgotten war," Korea was in actuality one of America's most significant conflicts. Although born of a misapprehension, the Korean War triggered the buildup of U.S. forces in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), began American involvement in the Vietnam War, and, although seen as an aberration at the time, now serves as the very model for America's wars of the future.

One reason the importance of the Korean War is not better appreciated is that from the very start the conflict presented confusing and contradictory messages. Historian and Korean War combat veteran T.R. Fehrenbach wrote in his classic *This Kind of War*: "Americans in 1950 rediscovered something that since Hiroshima they had forgotten: you may fly over a land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it, and wipe it clean of life--but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground the way the Roman legions did, by putting your young men into the mud."

Fehrenbach concluded: "By April 1951, the Eighth Army had again proven Erwin Rommel's assertion that American troops knew less but learned faster than any

fighting men he had opposed. The tragedy of American arms, however, is that having an imperfect sense of history, Americans sometimes forget as quickly as they learn." Those words proved to be only too true.

Two years later, as the war came to an end, Air Force Secretary Thomas K. Finletter declared that "Korea was a unique, never-to-be-repeated diversion from the true course of strategic air power." For the next quarter century, nuclear weaponry dominated U.S. military strategy. As a result, General Maxwell D. Taylor, the Eighth Army's last wartime commander (and later chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Vietnam War), complained that "there was no thoroughgoing analysis ever made of the lessons to be learned from Korea, and later policy makers proceeded to repeat many of the same mistakes."

The most damning mistake those policy-makers made was to misjudge the true nature of the war. As Karl von Clausewitz, the renowned Prussian philosopher of war, wrote in 1832: "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and the commander has to make is to establish...the kind of war on which they are embarking....This is the first of all strategic questions and the most important."

As President Harry S. Truman's June 27, 1950, war message made evident, the U.S. assumption was that monolithic world communism, directed by Moscow, was behind the North Korean invasion. "The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt," said Truman, "that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war."

### ***NATO RESPONSE***

That belief, later revealed as false, had enormous and far-reaching consequences. Believing that Korea was a diversion and that the main attack would come in Europe, the United States began a major expansion of its NATO forces. From 81,000 soldiers and one infantry division stationed in Western

Europe when the war started, by 1952 the U.S. presence had increased to six divisions--including the National Guard's 28th and 43rd Infantry divisions--503 aircraft, 82 warships and 260,800 men, slightly more than the 238,600 soldiers then in combat in Korea.

### ***VIETNAM***

Another critical action was the decision to become involved in Vietnam. In addition to ordering U.S. military forces to intervene in Korea, Truman directed "acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the Associated States in Indo-China and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with those forces."

On 17 September 1950, Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) Indochina was formed, an organization that would grow to the half-million-strong Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) before U.S. involvement in that country came to an end almost a quarter century later. As in Korea, the notion that monolithic world communism was behind the struggle persisted until almost the very end.

The fact that such an assumption was belied by 2,000 years of Sino-Vietnamese hostility was ignored, and it was not until Richard Nixon's diplomatic initiatives in 1970 that the United States became aware of, and began to exploit, the fissures in that so-called Communist monolith. By then it was too late, for the American people had long since given up on Vietnam.

### ***ORIGINS OF THE CONFLICT***

The fact that the U.S. response to both the Korean War and the Vietnam War was built on the false perception of a Communist monolith began to emerge after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. At a July 1995 conference at Georgetown University, Dr. Valeri Denissov, deputy director of the Asian Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry, revealed the true nature of the Korean War's origins.

Drawing from the hitherto secret documents of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Denissov revealed that far from being the instigator of the war, Soviet Premier Josef Stalin was at best a reluctant partner. In September 1949, the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party rejected an appeal from North Korea's Kim Il Sung to assist in an invasion of the South. But in April 1950, said Denissov, Stalin changed his mind and agreed to provide assistance for an invasion of the South. For one thing, Kim had convinced Stalin that the invasion was a low-risk operation that could be successfully concluded before the United States could intervene.

"Thus," said Denissov, "the documents existing in Russian archives prove that...it was Kim Il Sung who unleashed the war upon receiving before-hand blessings from Stalin and Mao Zedong [Mao Tse-tung]."

Why did Stalin change his mind? The first reason lay in Mao Tse-tung's victory in the Chinese Third Civil War. Denissov asserted that "Stalin believed that after the U.S.A. deserted Chiang Kai-shek 'to his own fortunes' in the internal Chinese conflict they would not risk a participation in a Korean-Korean war as well." Another factor, Denissov believed, was that "the Soviet Union had declared the creation of its own nuclear bomb, which according to Stalin's calculations deprived Americans of their nuclear monopoly and of their ability to use the 'nuclear card' in the confrontation with the Soviet Union."

Another Russian Foreign Ministry official at the conference, Dr. Evgeny Bajanov, added yet another reason for Stalin's change of heart--the "perceived weakness

The 6th Infantry Division in Pusan was deactivated in December 1948. This left the 7th Infantry Division as the only remaining U.S. combat unit in Korea. It was also transferred to Japan in 1949, leaving only the several hundred men of the Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG).

"In Moscow," Denissov said, "American military presence in South Korea in 1945-1949 was viewed as a 'detering factor' which became defunct after

America's withdrawal from the South." Yet another sign of lack of American will was Secretary of State Dean Acheson's public statement in January 1950 that Korea was outside the U.S. defense perimeter in Asia. Finally, Moscow must have been well aware of the drastic cuts made in America's defenses by the false economies of Truman and Louis Johnson, his secretary of defense.

### ***PRESIDENT TRUMAN***

While Stalin's and Kim Il Sung's perceptions of U.S. lack of resolve may have been well-founded, they were also wrong. During a Pentagon briefing in 1974, General Vernon Walters, then deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was asked about the unpredictability of U.S. reaction. "If a Soviet KGB spy had broken into the Pentagon or the State Department on 25 June 1950, and gained access to our most secret files," Walters said, "he would have found the U.S. had no interest at all in Korea. But the one place he couldn't break into was the mind of Harry Truman, and two days later America went to war over Korea."

In taking the United States to war in Korea, Truman made two critical decisions that would shape future military actions. First, he decided to fight the war under the auspices of the United Nations, a pattern followed by subsequent presidents. Second, for the first time in American military history, Truman decided to take the nation to war without first asking Congress for a declaration of war. Using the U.N. Security Council resolution as his authority, he said the conflict in Korea was not a war but a "police action."

With the Soviet Union then boycotting the U.N. Security Council, the United States was able to gain approval of U.N. resolutions labeling the North Korean invasion a "breach of the peace" and urging all members to aid South Korea.

The United States was named executive agent for the conduct of the war, and on 10 July 1950, Truman appointed General of the Army Douglas MacArthur as commander in chief of the U.N. Command. In reality, however, the U.N. involvement was a facade for unilateral U.S. action to protect its vital interests in

northeast Asia. The U.N. Command was just another name for MacArthur's Far East Command in Tokyo.

At its peak strength in July 1953, the U.N. Command stood at 932,539 ground forces. Republic of Korea (ROK) army and marine forces accounted for 590,911 of that force, and U.S. Army and Marine forces for another 302,483. By comparison, other U.N. ground forces totaled some 39,145 men, 24,085 of whom were provided by British Commonwealth Forces (Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand) and 5,455 of whom came from Turkey

Truman's decision not to seek a declaration of war set a dangerous precedent. Claiming their war making authority rested in their power as commanders in chief, both Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard M. Nixon refused to ask Congress for approval to wage war in Vietnam, a major factor in undermining support for that conflict. It was not until the Gulf War in 1991 that then President Bush rejected suggestions that he follow the Korean precedent and instead, as the Constitution provides, asked Congress for permission to wage war.

### ***TASK FORCE SMITH***

All those political machinations, however, were far from the minds of those of those who were then on occupation duty in Japan. They were as surprised as Stalin and Kim Il Sung at Truman's orders to go into action in Korea. For one thing, they were far from ready. For example, the only active company in the 24th Infantry Division's heavy tank battalion was equipped not with heavy tanks but with M-24 Chaffee light reconnaissance tanks, armed with low-velocity 75mm guns, that proved to be no match for the North Koreans' Soviet-supplied T-34 85mm-gun medium tanks.

Also inadequate were the infantry's 2.36-inch anti-tank rocket launchers. Radios did not work properly, and were critically short of spare parts. Instead of the usual three rifle battalions, the infantry regiments had only two. And the 24th's field artillery battalions had only two of their three authorized firing batteries. Although

its officers and sergeants were mostly World War II combat veterans, they were truly a "hollow force."

The 24th Infantry Division was the first U.S. ground combat unit committed to the war, with its initial elements landing in Korea on 1 July 1950. It soon found itself outgunned by the advancing North Korean People's Army (NKPA). Task Force Smith was the first of the 24th Infantry Division's units to be committed. Named after its commander, Lt. Col. Charles B. "Brad" Smith, the task force consisted of the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry, and "A" Battery, 52nd Field Artillery Battalion. The task force came under attack by the infantry columns of the NKPA 4th Infantry Division and the T-34s of the 209th Armored Brigade at Osan on 5 July 1950. Outnumbered and unable to stop the NKPA tanks, it was forced to fall back toward Taejon. There, the remainder of the 24th Infantry Division made a stand until 20 July, before being pushed back into the Naktong Perimeter--losing the commander, Maj. Gen. William F. Dean (captured by the NKPA), in the process. Going into action with some 16,000 soldiers, the 24th Division had only 8,660 men left by the time it was relieved by the 1st Cavalry Division on 22 July.

Although at a terrible price, the 24th Division had bought time for the remainder of the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) to move from Japan to Korea. Contrary to Kim Il Sung's calculations, America had been able to intervene in time. North Korea's attempt to conquer South Korea in one lightning stroke had been thwarted.

The shock of those initial disasters still reverberates throughout the U.S. Army. More than four decades later, after the end of the Cold War in 1991, the watchwords of Army Chief of Staff General Gordon Sullivan were "Remember Task Force Smith," a warning not to let the Army again become the hollow force of 1950 that paid in blood for America's unpreparedness.

Wars are fought on three interconnected levels. At first, the United States was still pursuing the same policy of "rollback and liberation" that it had followed in earlier wars. That policy called for temporarily going on the defensive tactically to



buy time operationally in order to prepare for a strategic offensive that would carry the war to the enemy in order to destroy his will to resist.

While EUSA held the Naktong River line against a series of North Korean assaults, General MacArthur laid plans to assume the strategic, operational and tactical offensive with a landing behind enemy lines at Inchon.

### **COUNTER ATTACK**

In a brilliant strategic maneuver, MacArthur sent his X Corps consisting of the Army's 7th Infantry Division and the Marine 1st Division Corps ashore on 15 September 1950. It rapidly cut the enemy's lines of supply and communication to its forces besieging the Naktong Perimeter to the south, forcing them to withdraw in disarray. While X Corps pressed on to recapture Seoul, South Korea's capital city, EUSA broke out of the Naktong Perimeter and linked up with X Corps near Osan on 26 September. Seoul fell the next day.

"After the Inchon landing," Secretary of State Acheson told the Senate in May 1951, "General MacArthur called on these North Koreans to turn in their arms and cease their efforts; that they refused to do, and they retired into the North, and what General MacArthur's military mission was, was to pursue them and round them up [and] we had the highest hopes that when you did that the whole of Korea would be unified."

On Korea's western coast, EUSA crossed the 38th parallel dividing North and South Korea and captured the North Korean capital of Pyongyang on 19 October 1950. EUSA continued to drive north against light opposition. On 1 November 1950, it reached its high-water mark when the village of Chongdo-do, 18 air miles from the Yalu River separating Korea and the Chinese province of Manchuria, was captured by the 21st Infantry Regiment.



Border crossing at the 38th Parallel

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War)

Meanwhile, on the opposite coast, X Corps had moved into northeastern Korea. The 1st Marine Division occupied positions around the Chosin Reservoir, while on 21 November, elements of the Army's 7th Infantry Division's 17th Infantry Regiment reached the Yalu River near its source at Hyesanjin in eastern Korea. It seemed as though the war was over.

### ***COMMUNIST CHINESE INTERVENTION***

But disaster was at hand. On 4 October 1950, Chairman Mao Tse-tung had secretly ordered "Chinese People's Volunteers" into action in Korea. The Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) consisted of some 380,000 soldiers, organized into two army groups, nine corps-size field armies and 30 infantry divisions.

From 13 to 25 October, the 130,000-man CCF XIII Army Group covertly crossed the Yalu River in the western sector opposite EUSA. Two weeks later, the 120,000-man CCF IX Army Group also moved surreptitiously into the eastern sector in Korea, opposite X Corps. Because of intelligence failures, both in Washington and in Korea, the Chinese managed to achieve almost total surprise. Their intervention would change not only the battlefield conduct of the war but also its strategic nature.

According to the Soviet archives, in May 1950, Mao had agreed to join with the Soviet Union and support the North Korean invasion of South Korea. As the Russian Foreign Ministry's Evgeny Bajanov noted at a 1995 Georgetown conference, Chinese Foreign Minister Chou En-lai "confirmed [on 2 July 1950] that if the Americans crossed the 38th parallel, Chinese troops disguised as Koreans would engage the opponent" and that Chinese armies had already been concentrated in the area of Mukden in Manchuria. "In August-September 1950 on a number of occasions," said Bajanov, "Mao personally expressed concerns over the escalation of American military intervention in Korea and reiterated the readiness of Beijing to send troops to the Korean peninsula 'to mince' American divisions." But when Stalin sent a message to Mao on October 1, asking him to "come to the rescue of the collapsing Kim regime," Mao refused, instead suggesting "the Koreans should accept defeat and resort to guerrilla tactics."

Under intense Soviet pressure, however, on 13 October, "the Chinese, after long deliberation, did agree to extend military aid to North Korea," said Bajanov. "Moscow in exchange agreed to arm the Chinese troops and provide them with air cover. According to the available information, it was not easy for Beijing to adopt that military decision. Pro-Soviet Gao Gang and Peng Dehuai [who would later command the CCF in Korea] finally managed to convince Mao to take their side. Their main argument was that if all of Korea was occupied by the Americans, it would create a mortal danger to the Chinese revolution."

In any event, after feints in early November against EUSA at Unsan and against X Corps at Sudong, both of which were ignored by Far East Command intelligence officers, the CCF launched its main attack. On 25 November, the XIII Army Group struck the EUSA, driving it out of North Korea and retaking Seoul on 4 January 1951. Meanwhile, on 27 November, the CCF IX Army Group struck X Corps, and by 25 December 1950, had forced its evacuation from North Korea as well.

At first, both Moscow and Beijing were elated. On 8 January 1951, Bajanov reported, Stalin cabled Mao, "From all my heart I congratulate Chinese comrades

with the capture of Seoul." But Bajanov added, "By the end of January 1951...the euphoria of Communists started to decline and quite soon it disappeared and was replaced with worries, fear, confusion and at times panic."

What made the difference was Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, who took command of EUSA on 26 December 1950, replacing Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker, who had been killed in a jeep accident. Ridgway turned EUSA from dejection and defeat into a tough, battle-ready force within a matter of weeks. "The Eighth Army," wrote Fehrenbach, "rose from its own ashes in a killing mood....By 7 March they stood on the Han. They went through Seoul, and reduced it block by block....At the end of March the Eighth Army was across the parallel."

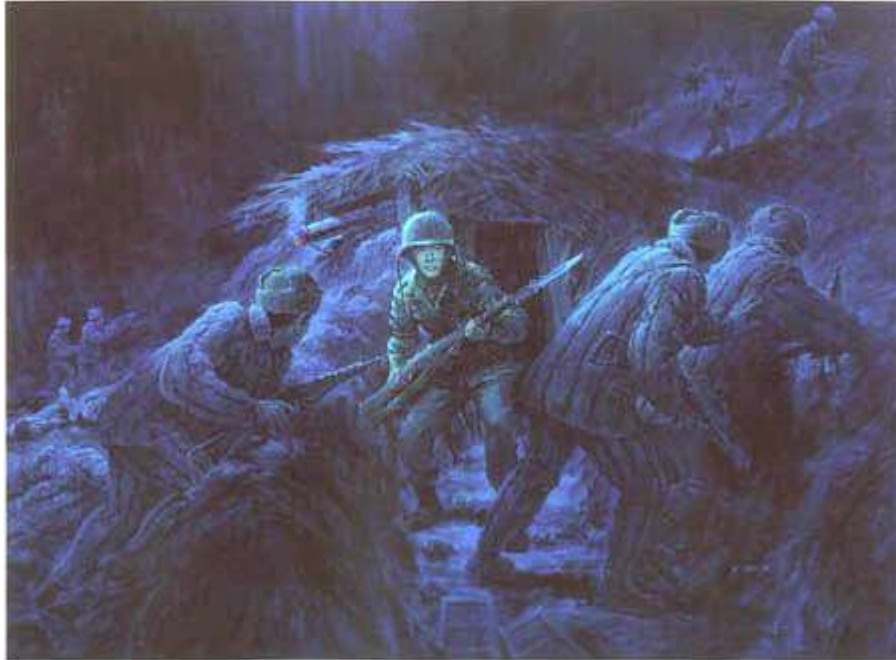
Attempting to stem that tide, on 22 April 1951, the CCF launched its great spring offensive, sending some 250,000 men and 27 divisions into the attack along a 40-mile front north of Seoul.

### ***NEW MEXICO'S TOP SECRET HERO***

Hiroshi Miyamura, born in Gallup, New Mexico on 6 October 1925, was drafted into the Army in 1944, and served briefly with the 442nd Infantry Regiment, an all Japanese-American unit. Following the war he enlisted in the Army reserve, and was recalled to active duty following the start of the Korean War.

On the night of 24 April 1951, Corporal Miyamura's unit, Company H, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, occupied a defensive position near Taejon, South Korea, when it was attacked by the enemy. As the enemy force overran the Americans' position, Miyamura, a machine-gun squad leader, leaped from his shelter and, in close hand-to-hand combat, killed 10 of the enemy with his bayonet. After the first attack, while Miyamura administered first aid to the wounded and ordered the evacuation of his men, the enemy dealt another savage blow. Miyamura delivered devastating fire with his machine gun until he ran out of ammunition. He then bayoneted his way to a second gun emplacement and covered the withdrawal of his unit with machine gun fire until his ammunition

was depleted. Miyamura killed more than 50 of the enemy before he was severely wounded and later captured. He spent 28 months as a prisoner of war and was released in August 1953. Word of his Medal of Honor was kept secret during his time in captivity for his protection.



CORPORAL HIROSHI N. MIYAMURA Korean War, George Akimoto, 1977

Historian and Korean War veteran Bevin Alexander had this to say about Chinese tactics in his book *How Wars Are Won*:

*The Chinese had no air power and were armed only with rifles, machineguns, hand grenades, and mortars. Against the much more heavily armed Americans, they adapted a technique they had used against the Nationalists in the Chinese civil war of 1946–49. The Chinese generally attacked at night and tried to close in on a small troop position — generally a platoon — and then attacked it with local superiority in numbers. The usual method was to infiltrate small units, from a platoon of fifty men to a company of 200, split into separate detachments. While one team cut off the escape route of the Americans, the others struck both the front and the flanks in concerted assaults. The attacks continued on all*

*sides until the defenders were destroyed or forced to withdraw. The Chinese then crept forward to the open flank of the next platoon position, and repeated the tactics.*

### **STALEMATE**

The 1951 spring offensive was the largest battle of the war, but by 20 May the CCF, after some initial gains, had been turned back with terrible losses. As *Time* magazine put it, "The U.S. expended ammunition the way the Chinese expended men." After that success, the United States was in good position to retake the offensive and sweep the CCF from Korea. But Washington ordered EUSA to maintain its defensive posture, for U.S. military policy had changed from rollback and liberation to containment. That ruled out battlefield victory, for the best possible result of defensive operations is stalemate.

On 10 July 1951, armistice talks began between the U.N. Command and the CCF/NKPA. After the front line stabilized in November 1951, along what was to become the new demarcation line, the fighting over the next 20 months degenerated into a bloody battle for terrain features like Old Baldy, Heartbreak Ridge and Pork Chop Hill. The U.S. forces suffered some 63,200 casualties to gain or retain those outposts. With victory no longer in sight, public support for the war plummeted, and in 1952 Truman decided not to run for re-election rather than risk almost certain defeat. With the signing of the armistice agreement on 27 July 1953, the war finally came to an end.

### **NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD**

The War Department made allotments for the reorganization of the Guard in March 1947. This order gave the state five separate anti-aircraft battalions, one operations detachment, two signal radar units, one engineer searchlight maintenance unit, three ordnance companies, one transportation truck company and one army band. Also, in this same time the Guard was allotted a fighter-bomber squadron for its Air National Guard. The organization listed above remained static until August 1950.

In August 1950 the New Mexico National Guard's 716th and 726th AAA Gun Battalions along with the 394th Signal Radar Maintenance Unit were activated into Federal service for the Korean Conflict.

The 181st Operations Detachment and the 717th AAA Gun Battalion followed in May 1951.

All of these units first convoyed to Ft. Bliss, Texas. The 716th remained there as school troops until their discharge in May 1952. The 726th was ordered to Sandia Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico in October 1951 to provide for the air defense of that installation.

In March 1952 the 717th was ordered overseas to become part of the 12th AAA Group at Karlsruhe, Germany, but reverted to state control one year later.

The 395th Signal Detachment served at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts until its release on 7 June 1953.

The 181st Operations Detachment first spent over twenty weeks in the field at Fort Bliss providing operational control for the 24th Brigade. During that period the unit also supported the Artillery School in class work and demonstrations for students. Then, in January 1951 the 181st was assigned to the 5th Army at Fort Sheridan to support the air defense of Chicago, Illinois. Then, from February through April of 1952 the 181st controlled the air defense of the lock complex at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan – reverting to state control in April 1953.

Additionally, New Mexico units furnished individual members as replacements to units engaged in active combat. No complete unit saw action in the hills of Korea.

### ***AFTERMATH***

The war left the peninsula divided, with a garrisoned pro-Soviet, totalitarian Communist state in North Korea and a pro-American dictatorial republic (democratized in the late 1980s) in the South. American troops remain in Korea as part of the still-functioning UN Command, which commands all allied military

forces in the ROK - American Air Forces, Korea, the Eighth U.S. Army, and the entire ROK military. The DMZ remains the most heavily-defended border in the world.

Many Korean families were divided by the war, most of whom have had no opportunity to contact each other or reunite.

600,000 Korean soldiers died in the conflict according to US estimates. More than a million South Koreans were killed, 85% of them civilians. According to figures published in the Soviet Union, 11.1% of the total population of North Korea perished, which indicates that 1,130,000 people were killed. In total about 2,500,000 people were killed. More than 80% of the industrial and public facilities and transportation works, three-quarters of the government offices, and one-half of the houses were destroyed.

54,246 Americans also died from in this conflict. That number was divided by the Defense Department in 1993 into 33,686 battle deaths, 2,830 non-battle deaths, and 17,730 deaths of Defense Department personnel outside the Korean theatre. There were also 8,142 US personnel listed as Missing In Action (MIA) during the war.

214 New Mexicans were lost. Thirty of whom were declared missing in action and presumed dead. Ten perished as prisoners of war.

Dwarfed by the total U.S. victory in World War II, the negotiated settlement in Korea seemed to many observers to be a defeat and at best a draw. Certainly it seemed no model for the future.

It was Eisenhower's strategy of massive nuclear retaliation that dominated the immediate postwar era. Conventional forces, like the Korean War itself, were dismissed as irrelevant. Even when the atomic war strategies were challenged by the John F. Kennedy administration's policy of flexible response, conventional forces were still ignored in favor of the "new" counterinsurgency war. Vietnam would be its test case.



Compiled and edited by Lou Hoffman with material reliance upon "Korean War: A Fresh Perspective" by Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., U.S. Army (ret.), former Distinguished Fellow of the US Army War College.