

Armistice Signed at Last

WAR STOPS TODAY

Canadian Destroyers Bound for Far Pacific Join U.S. Naval Force

Ottawa, July 12, 1950 (CP) — Canada's three destroyers were in full fighting trim and ready for action when they steamed into Pearl Harbor naval base today and joined US naval task force Yoke for anti-Communist operations in the far Pacific.

Naval headquarters disclosed this tonight with release of a signal from HMCS Cayuga, flagship of the flotilla, and received while the ships were still at sea. It told of intensive exercises, including night attacks of the kind the Tribal class fighting ships might be expecting to make or meet in Korean waters.

These exercises were carried out continually during the seven-day voyage from Esquimaux, B.C. Typical was a night action last Monday night, in which HMCS Athabaskan and HMCS Sioux turned and made a mock attack on the Cayuga.

Losses Heavy, Reds Break off Assault on Hills

Seoul, October 23rd 1952 (Thursday) (AP) Chinese Communist troops, their ranks shattered by an estimated 1,245 killed, Wednesday broke off their onslaughts on Sniper Ridge which once carried them to the crest.

"We chopped up the better part of two battalions," said the South Korean officer who directed the stout defense of the strategic height on the central front.

After the last Chinese had pulled out to the north, South Korean soldiers counted 613 Communist corpses on the hill. Their offices estimated 600 other Chinese were killed in the battle that raged over the ridge from dusk Tuesday to Wednesday afternoon.

The Communists committed an estimated 2,000 men to one more furious attempt to take Sniper Ridge and its commanding pinnacle, Pinpoint Hill, captured by the South Koreans in last week's limited Allied offensive.



Invasion Route At Stake in Bitter Fight for Hills

Central Front, Korea — November 3rd 1952 (Monday) Osong Mountain, the strongest Communist fortress in Korea, looms over the Kumhwa valley — a brooding, sinister, evil shape.

Below its five great rocky bastions, two long ranges topped by the crests of Triangle Hill and Sniper Ridge, stretch to the southeast deep in Allied territory.

These two heights are massive hills themselves, but are slight indeed against the dark bulk of the Osong towering behind them.

To win the commanding heights of Sniper Ridge and Triangle Hill of these two lesser ranges, the Allies have been fighting a savage, swaying battle since the morning of Oct. 14 —

Enemy Pays Heavy Price for Advance

By Olen Clements
 Tokyo, April 24th 1951 (Tuesday) (AP) — The Chinese Communist offensive gouged a big hole through the allied line in Central Korea today and lunged south over the 38th parallel toward Chunchon.

The Reds in the centre penetrated four miles south of 38.

and the end is not yet. The losses in this concentrated bloody violence cannot be revealed. But when the numbers are made public, this bitter struggle for the Xumhwa ridges will take its rightful place among the more terrible battles of the Korean War.

For it as been one of the major actions of the war, a solid Allied assault against

a fortified hill system by the full strength of two divisions, one American and one South Korean. The losses have been shared almost equally.

To understand this battle, you must see the land in your mind's eye. Imagine the crouching sphinx of Egypt looking southeast. Its big head and heavy shoulders are reared high.

Canadians Repulse Heavy Enemy Attack

Seoul, May 4th 1953 (Monday) (CP) Canadian troops fought off a whirlwind Chinese Communist attack that raged for 2 1/2 hours inside Allied lines on the western sector of the Korean front late Saturday night and early Sunday. The Eight Army said 750 to 1,000 Red were driven off only after intense hand-to-hand combat in the trenches.

No casualty figures were announced. The 3rd battalions of the Royal Canadian Regiment and Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry bore the brunt of the Red assault. The Chinese made a feint toward the British Royal Fusiliers with heavy mortar and machine-gun fire, but the actual attack never came.

The fighting began about midnight Saturday with a 1,000-round barrage of Communist artillery and mortar fire on British Commonwealth Division positions northeast of Korangpo, between Little Gibraltar Hill and the Hook.

By 2 a.m. the Canadians had expelled all of the Chinese from their trenches and forced them to withdraw.

The fighting was the toughest in which the Commonwealth Division has been involved since it returned to the line about a month ago.

The charging, screaming Chinese poured heavy rifle and machine-gun fire into the Canadians and overran forward trenches. They were beaten off after the defenders skirmished with them in the dark with bayonets, tommy guns and grenades.

Brigade Going to Korea: Over 5,000 Canadians to Sail Soon

Ottawa, February 22, 1951 (Thursday) — Between 5,000 and 6,000 of the Canadian UN force now in training will be moved in to Korea very soon, Defense Minister Claxton said tonight.

In Fort Lewis, Wash., where the troops have been using live ammunition in mock battles, Brig. J.J. (Rocky) Rockingham alerted the men to be ready to move within two weeks.

Defense Minister Claxton said the unified command of the UN had asked Canada only Tuesday if the 25th Infantry Brigade — the core of the army's special force — was trained and ready to go. Mr. Claxton's

announcement tonight won a spurt of applause in the sparsely populated House of Commons.

There are about 1,200 or 1,300 Canadians of the 2nd Battalion, Princess Pats, in Korea now.

11-minute Ceremony Closes Three Years of Hostilities

Reds Seize Key Hill, Armistice Hopes Fade

October 9th 1952 (Thursday) — The long and frustrating Korean armistice negotiations today appeared to be nearer collapse than at any time since they began on July 10, 1951.

The Allied decision yesterday to call an indefinite recess was made on higher authority and came at a time when fighting in Korea reached its most fierce pitch in a year.

A special North Korean broadcast heard in Tokyo referred to the failure of the negotiations, charged that the allies ignored a new Red offer, and declared responsibility lies with the US.

It complained that the Allied delegation walked out while the new Red plan was being explained. The of the broadcast showed, however, the Communists had not budged from their position that all prisoners of war must be repatriated, the last major issue remaining.

Officials in Washington said the higher authority was the US government, which presumably acted after consulting other UN members with troops in Korea.

State Secretary Acheson told a press conference the suspension was an affirmative step toward obtaining an armistice. He added the Allied team was ready to meet whenever the Communists agree to an honest settlement of the prisoner-of-war question.

Tokyo, July 27 (Monday) — The Communists and UN delegates met this morning at Panmunjon and signed the armistice ending the three-year-old Korean War.

Under the truce terms hostilities cease at 10 p.m. (9 a.m. EDT Monday)

The historic document was signed in the roadside hall which the Communists built specially for the occasion. The whole ceremony, attended by representatives of 16 United Nations powers, took precisely 11 minutes. Then the respective delegates walked from the meeting place without a word or handshake between them.

The matter-of-fact procedure underlined what spokesmen of both sides have emphasized that though the should would cease within 12 hours the signing only an uneasy armed truce and political difficulties, perhaps even greater than those of the armistice negotiations, were ahead.

The representatives of both sides were expressionless as they put their names to the pile of documents providing for the exchange of prisoners, the established of a neutral zone, a ceasefire and the later political conference which would attempt to settle the tragic Korean questions unsolved by three years of fighting.

For the UN the document was signed by Lt. Gen. William K. Harrison. For the Communists the signer was North Korean Gen. Nam Il, Russian-trained school teacher who donned the military uniform after the outbreak of the Korean War.

Seated at separate tables, each put his name nine times to nine copies of the armistice agreement drawn up in English, Korean and Chinese.

There were representatives of Turkey, Thailand, the Netherlands, France, the United Kingdom and Commonwealth countries, Columbia, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, Ethiopia, the Philippines and Norway.

STALL ATTACK SEVEN MILES SOUTH OF 38

Tokyo, April 25, 1951 (Wednesday) (AP) — UN troops today halted a Chinese Red breakthrough force in Central Korea and fought fierce see-saw battles in the west more than 20 miles above newly imperiled Seoul.

There were allied withdrawals but a front-line officer said the UN forces were still rolling with the punch. He added that the withdrawals are definitely not a sign of defeat.

On the fourth day of the

Red counter-offensive the allies appeared to be giving up virtually all holdings inside Red Korea north of the 38th parallel.

Allied strategy was to give ground but made the Reds pay a bloody price in men.

A field dispatch today said the 130,000 Reds who broke through the mountainous centre appeared to have run out of steam. They were stopped at least momentarily seven miles south of the parallel by fresh allied reinforcements.

US Troops Lose Hold on Key Hill in Three Battles

Seoul, October 6th 1952 (Monday) (CP) Canadian troops fought off a whirlwind Chinese Communist attack that raged for 2 1/2 hours inside Allied lines on the western sector of the Korean front late Saturday night and early Sunday. The Eight Army said 750 to 1,000 Red were driven off only after intense hand-to-hand combat in the trenches.

No casualty figures were announced. The 3rd battalions of the Royal Canadian Regiment and Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry bore the brunt of the Red assault. The Chinese made a feint toward the British Royal Fusiliers with heavy mortar and machine-gun fire, but the actual attack never came.

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By 2 a.m. the Canadians had expelled all of the Chinese from their trenches and forced them to withdraw.

The fighting was the toughest in which the Commonwealth Division has been involved since it returned to the line about a month ago.

The charging, screaming Chinese poured heavy rifle and machine-gun fire into the Canadians and overran forward trenches. They were beaten off after the defenders skirmished with them in the dark with bayonets, tommy guns and grenades.

A Canadian spokesman said the Chinese attacked about 11.30 p.m. after ambushing a Canadian patrol in no-man's land.

A second patrol was sent out to rescue the remnants of the first. Then the Chinese attacked the main British and Canadian positions.

"Chinese and their mortars hit us simultaneously," said one British officer, who fought through the attack. "They came in screaming, hurling grenades and firing heavily."

UN Forces Also Land Above Pohang

Tokyo, Sept. 15th 1950 (Friday) (AP) — United Nations invasion forces landed today at Incheon, the port city for Seoul on Korea's west coast. Incheon is 150 miles behind the 130,000-man Red army at the fighting front.

Covered by planes and warships, United States troops stormed ashore on the island of Wolmi, linked to Incheon by a causeway, South Korean marines landed at Incheon.

In a simultaneous operation, South Korean forces landed immediately behind the Communist lines on the east coast. They made two landings — one two miles northeast of Red-held Pohang, the other at Yongdok, more than 25 miles north of Pohang.

The west coast invasion, preceded by cruiser and destroyer bombardments and sweeping carrier-plane strikes, swung the United Nations to the offensive for the first time since the Reds began the war last June 25.

The invasion at Incheon, putting UN forces close to the 38th parallel, which the Reds crossed June 25, was announced by the South Korean commander-in-chief, Maj.-Gen. Chung Il Kwon.

He said heavy pressure was quickly exerted by the invasion forces on the Communists near Kimpo airfield, Seoul's big air base.

Kimpo is 12 miles northwest of Seoul and 10 miles north of Incheon.

AP Correspondent William Shinn also heard a report that other invading forces went ashore at Kunsan, a west coast city 100 miles south of Seoul. The report came from a South Korean national assemblyman, Chin Soo, who said a warship bombardment supported it.

One thousand South Korean commandos went ashore on the east coast near Pohang, striking at a coastal road which would bar the way to any retreat by Red forces defending the port. The commandos quickly called for air support.

A big U.S. battleship was reported off Pohang yesterday.

Yesterday U.S. Superforts rained air bows on the west coast, closely following up a big bombardment by British and U.S. warships.

A UN offensive had been expected after Lieut.-Gen. Walton Walker, U.S. 8th Army commander in Korea, had told his men their defensive role was about to be dropped and an offensive one was to be assumed shortly.

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Francis Bayne

Canada, Keeping the peace

War Stories

Norm Van Tassel

I served ten years in the Canadian Army, the 2nd Battalion, Queen's Own Rifles. During my tour of duty in Korea I went over as a driver-operator, we were the battalion that was there after the 27th of July '53, when the ceasefire took place, along with the Canadian Guards and the Black Watch. When they left we were by ourselves, and we were the last Canadian regiment that served in Korea.

During our tour of duty we spent a lot of time on patrols, live fire exercises, things of that na-

ture to keep us prepared in case there was another attack from the North, and we were constantly on the defense. We often went out on live fire exercises, we did exercises that if the enemy were going to attack us, or if, in some cases, one company attacked another company, of course, under live fire you were pretty well supervised, and if you were doing an advance on to another company then of course you would cease firing long before you could do any damage to the other company.

Dorothy Butler

I was on continuous naval duty with the WRENS during the Korean combat. And I was stationed in Cornwallis and I was stationed in Stadacona in Halifax and I was at Naden on training and I was in Shearwater where I finished my time.

At Shearwater, I was the only WREN in the hospital there, and it was my duty to go out on, if a WREN was out on a job somewhere out in the boondocks and took sick, they would fly me out in a helicopter to pick her up and bring her back. But at Naden, we were trained to take the place of a doctor the same as the men were trained because when they were on ships, there wasn't a doctor available. They had to be able to read the symptoms and act on them and even perform minor operations if necessary. So we were trained to take their place when they left for sea. That was our main object.

Jan Van Der Rassel

When the Korean War broke out in June of 1950, myself and three other friends joined the Army in Toronto at 6 Personnel Depot. Two of them went into the infantry - the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. The other went into the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. I wound up in the Corps of Engineering, the RCE.

The main tasking of 57th Independent Field Squadron, Royal Canadian Engineers, was the building of timber-truss and Bailey bridges, including the Labatt's fiftieth anniversary, Class 80 Bailey bridge. They donated us quite a few cases of beer for this privilege. This was done by 3 Troupe.

Also, we had to do the bulldozing of roads through the bush areas in Korea. Other duties included setting up concertina barbed wire, and demonstrating minefield and gap marking procedures, should we have to recover one of our own minefields. The North Koreans and Chinese troops very rarely used minefield tactics. They generally just laid their mines in groups of three or four along trails, roads, or verges. These mines were a wooden box-type, anti-tank style, which were hard to detect with the metal mine detectors that we were using from the Second World War. Due to their lack of metal, we usually had to use a bayonet to prod for these mines.

Francis Bayne

I served in the Royal Canadian Artillery in Korea with the 81st Field Regiment. And I was Gun Position Officer, with Easy Troop of the 81st Field in Korea from March 1953 'til May 1954. When our regiment arrived in Korea, there was a stalemate going on and both sides were highly dug in. There was a lot of patrolling and attacking. And the Chinese would do massed attacks. At times, these attacks would overrun the Canadian positions. And the only thing that would stop these attacks were massed artillery fire. 'Cause the Chinese used to send troops through the mine fields to blow them up, then lay on the wire and then the next wave would come over with grenades, throw their grenades, go to ground, followed by the next wave of burp gunners.

The night of 2nd and 3rd of May, 1953, the third battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment, faced such an attack. The position was overrun and their infantry officer ordered the artillery observer, Lieutenant George Ruffy, to call down fire on their own position. Because the Chinese were on top of it and capturing and killing the RCR soldiers. The guns fired all night. We fired 1200 rounds from our troop alone and the barrels of the guns got red hot that night. We tried to cool them by throwing water on them. And then we continued to fire all night long. In the morning, the Chinese withdrew and there were quite a number of casualties on Hill 187.

Cy Carney

I'm a Veteran of the Korean War. I was there April, 1952, to May, 1953.

As a lineman, we were responsible for communications within the Regiment toward headquarters, and also to forward positions on the front line. And these forward positions were called FOP - we were Forward Observation Posts. There were two people in these posts. If any movement was observed, the infantry commander at the time, if he needed support - gun support - he would call back the map coordinates to the artillery regiment, and they would fire a barrage of twenty-five pound shells.

There were many mine fields in Korea also, and most of them were discovered and marked by

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951 Mar 9 IM 1 33

Ottawa, Ont.

William Hector Middleton
1139 Reader Crescent Calgary Alberta.

Pers 5983 Rec/CAS Sincerely regret to inform you that your son
TM 90008 Lieut. Roderick Morrison Middleton twp Battalion PPCLI
has been reported wounded in action on March seventh stop
Diagnosis lacerated forehead stop Not reported dangerous or
serious stop Further information will be forwarded immediately
upon receipt at Army Headquarters.

Director of Army Personnel.
Ottawa



June Baron



Cy Carney

Leo Joseph

I went over to Korea when I was eighteen years old. I got there when I was nineteen years old.

I remained there with the 3rd Battalion until they had the ceasefire on the 27th of July 1953, and then we became peacekeepers after that. What we did mostly from then on, we

the engineers. Of course, there were always a few that didn't get marked, and there was always a danger of... as a lineman, we would go cross-country with the wire, and always concerned about these, but I was very fortunate not to encounter any. But some nights, we would hear mine explosions set off by small animals.

There's a road in the valley, what they called the "Bowling Alley," that was leading to Hill 355. During this time, we were under observation from the enemy. I can recall one experience when we were traveling in a jeep, laying line, of course raising a bit of dust. They observed us, and started firing at us. Of course, we turned around, and the jeep really moved fast that day."

were just in the defensive positions and did patrolling at night. After the ceasefire we built what they call the 'demarcation line'. We put up constantine's of wire. I worked on the one that was called the Kansas Line. After the demarcation lines were built up between us and the enemy lines they mounted outposts, and we used to go and man the outposts at night, and stay there all night long for observation. After the ceasefire we lived in tents for the remainder of the time. We did mostly

training to keep us occupied until the time we came home, which was in the end of March or the 1st of April 1954. When we came home there was nobody to greet us at all. We got off the ship, they put us on a train, gave us our passes and sixty days' leave, and that was the end of that. As it was, nowadays you see somebody come home from somewhere and everyone is there to greet them - the Governor General, the Prime Minister. When we came home

from Korea there was nobody there to greet us at all. I guess that's why they call in The Forgotten War, but now they're starting to give us recognition. When I came back from Korea we had two medals: the United Nations and the Korean Medal. After that we got the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal, we got the Peacekeeping Medal, and that took us some twenty years to get after the Korean War. But they're beginning to recognize us veterans more and more as time goes by.

Phil Burke

I was with the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. I landed in Korea in 1951. We moved up to the front lines in April, and if you're not familiar with Korea, it's a very hilly country. On the morning of the 23rd of April, we were moving into our positions because the Chinese had trapped an American division in there, as well as some South Koreans, so we had set up a perimeter to try to allow them to escape

through a junction by the (?) River. What happened was that we moved up. There was about two to three feet of snow in the hills. It was raining that morning, and very cold. We set up our positions. We were on Hill 677, and to our south was the Middlesex Regiment, and that was a British regiment. And we had also the Australian regiments - they were to our east.

On that day, April 23rd, the Communists put on quite a

display and they attacked our position. There were times when they overran some of our positions but we fought them off with machine gun and mortar fire. Then, on the 24th, they attacked again and we beat them off again. We had sustained... the first night, we lost eight killed and about fifteen wounded, but we put heavy losses on them. On the 24th of April, things got very bad again. We had ten killed and twenty-three wounded.



Francis Bayne



Bert Picotte



Dorothy Butler

around the world



Mort Lightstone



Norm VanTassel

Donald Hibbs

I was with the 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in Korea and we arrived in Busan just before Christmas in 1950. For some of us our first time away from our homes, families and friends, the Army put on an excellent Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. Just made our first few days in Korea more pleasant.

We had a tour of Busan after Christmas and what we saw was a country that was devastated. People were living in huts and some were even living in cardboard shacks. Poverty was everywhere and the refugees filled the streets begging for food. We were caught unawares of the hardship these people were going through. At that time, most of the members of the 2PPCLI made the decision that were not adventurers any more, we are now defenders of these poor people who are being devastated by the war.

Rod Middleton

I served as an infantry platoon commander, and some of my experiences included mounting attacks on several Chinese features, and my most memorable experience was probably an attack that we mounted on Hill 532 on the 7th of March. The Chinese had heavily defended this feature with bunkers, trench systems and so on, and despite our best efforts and heavy casualties, we were not able to take the hill that day.

Mort Lightstone

My name is Mort Lightstone. I joined the Canadian Air Force when I was eighteen.

My first exposure to a war environment was the Korean War. I joined the Air Force in 1951 and graduated as an officer and got my navigator's wings in April of 1952.

Typically, we brought troops, supplies, mail, medicines to Haneda, and we would return with, usually, wounded soldiers. These wounded service personnel were quite often Americans. My first flight on the Korean airlift was a rather dramatic one for

me because, at the time, I was 19 and, up to that point, I understood the glory of war to be what we all see in the movies. However, while we were in the cockpit, ambulance buses arrived at the aircraft with the wounded. Prior to that point I have to comment that some additional personnel were on our flight and these were American army nurses. They looked really tremendous. Any nurse would look particularly good in a nice well-tailored uniform. Eventually, we heard from the rear-end crew that everybody was strapped in and we were ready for takeoff and off we went.

because earlier in a bunker clearing incident I had changed magazines and I guess I caught up a bit of mud on the end of the magazine which caused it to jam. I very quickly cleared the action and dispatched this young soldier and then I was faced with the prospect of having to climb over his still warm body and proceeding further up the trench, and that is something that has lived with me to this very day.

We climbed up to altitude and set on course for Shemua, and I knew that once I established that we were in fact on track and everything was okay, I decided, as a nineteen-year-old - you can't forget that - to go back as an officer and chat to the wounded soldiers and tell them how proud we are of what they've done and so on. And I put on my new officer's cap and I was very proud of that cap, because it symbolized a lot to me. Anyways, I stepped into the cabin and I was not prepared for the sight that was in front of me. All the wounded were in stretchers, strapped on

Austin Bradley

I was wounded in Korea, and I was evacuated by a helicopter. I was evacuated to an American M.A.S.H., and then sent over to Japan to the 29th British Commonwealth General Hospital. When I got out of there, I went to a convalescent - getting the body back into shape. They told me, when I reported back to the unit in Japan, that I had a ticket home if I wanted to go. The

special riggings that we carry in the aircraft. Those very pretty nurses were scurrying around, their uniforms were already covered with blood, and the soldiers had arms missing, legs missing, pipes and gadgets holding their faces together - it was the sight I was not prepared for. And the term I use to describe that is that's when the movie ended, and the reality of war set in. Did a 180, went back into the cockpit, strapped myself into the navigator's position, and sat there for the remainder of that twelve-hour flight. I was really shaken by that one experience.

group that I went over to the Far East with, we only had about four or five months to go on the tour and we'd all come home together, and I asked if I could go back to Korea to the unit. They obliged me, and I went back to Korea and was there for the rest of my journey.

When I got back, as a lot of us did, we had gone into kind of a depression. "My God, what have I just done?" kind of thing. When you're seventeen or eighteen, it was quite an experience to have killed a man, and you start thinking about this. It wasn't a very pleasant homecoming for me. I had a lot of issues to deal with. I had a record of about twenty-eight that I had killed, or wounded. Anyway, I had shot at them and seen them fall. Who am I to have taken a life like that? It really played on my mind. But with time, I was able to deal with it, and to bring it down to the idea that it was me or him.

Korean War - Brief History

by Ted Barris

Outbreak of the War

Midway through the Second World War, leaders of the Allied powers – including Britain, the U.S. and China – met to discuss, among other things, that following victory over Japan, “Korea shall become free and independent in due course.” When the war finally ended, it was agreed the Soviets would receive the surrender of Japanese forces north of the 38th parallel and the Americans south of it. That seemingly innocuous agreement sealed Korea’s fate. The Soviets took the surrender arrangement as a granting of territorial rights. And that touched off a battle for the hearts and minds of Koreans and turned a previously homogenous people on both sides of that parallel into mortal enemies.

The Soviets had ideas as to how their neighbour should develop. They cut off nearly all traffic into and out of the northern part of the peninsula. Meanwhile, the Americans moved 25,000 troops, recently victorious over the Japanese on Okinawa, to the southern part for occupation duty. The two sides began establishing their spheres of influence.

Meantime, the “trusteeship” of Korea remained in the hands of a US-USSR Joint Commission, led by an American general and a Soviet general. When a further attempt to negotiate Korean independence failed, the American secretary of state took the issue to the United Nations (in just its second ever general assembly.) On Nov. 14, 1947, despite Soviet opposition, the UN adopted the US-sponsored motion to establish Korean independence, withdraw all occupying forces and stage free elections in 1948. The UN General Assembly then named a nine-nation UN Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) to supervise the electoral process.

As the debate over the future of Korea intensified, both the American and the Soviet military commands sponsored returning

exiles they saw as potential leaders of their version of a unified Korea. In the north, the Soviets supported Kim Il Sung. In the south, the Americans heralded Syngman Rhee.

Both the Soviet Union and the United States were committed to withdrawing their occupational forces. On May 19, 1948, an election took place in the south. As house speaker, Syngman Rhee addressed an assembly with 100 seats left vacant for the representatives from the north. By July, Rhee was president. August 15, 1948, he established his government and proclaimed the independent Republic of Korea, which became known as South Korea. Not to be upstaged by Seoul, the North approved a communist constitution, staged elections and proclaimed the Democratic People’s Republic, soon referred to as North Korea, with Kim Il Sung as its first premier. The Soviet Union completed its troop withdrawal by December 25, 1948. The last American troops withdrew to Japan on June 29, 1949, leaving behind a group of 500 military advisors.

Border fighting became nearly an everyday occurrence. On June 26, 1949, heavy fighting at the 38th parallel attracted UN officials who travelled to the area by naval vessel and reported that North and South could engage in major battles at any moment and that Korea had entered “a state of warfare.” The formal declaration of war came at 4 a.m. on Sunday, June 25, 1950..

Key Moments of the War

The UN called its efforts on the Korean peninsula “a policing action” or “a war of containment.” But by the end of July in 1950, the North Korean advance had boxed three American and five South Korean divisions into a small corner of South Korea at Pusan, “the Pusan perimeter,” and nearly pushed them into the sea.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur had

been a hero in the Philippines in the Pacific theatre of the Second World War; then, in charge of UN – principally U.S. – troops in Korea, in September 1950, he succeeded in a surprise attack behind the North Korean lines at Inch'on (near Seoul) driving the Communist Forces back into North Korea; Then, in what he called “a war for rollback,” MacArthur ordered the advance of American troops to North Korea’s very border with China, the Yalu River and that brought the Communist Chinese Army into the Korean War; McArthur was shortly after relieved of his duties.

Momentum of fighting shifted rapidly southward again until April 1951, when Canadian troops moved into the line at Kap’young, just above the 38th

parallel, where they helped to halt a second North Korean invasion of the south. From that point, with MacArthur removed from the picture, UN Command desired “a war of stabilization.” A year after its opening salvos, the Korean War front had returned virtually to where it began.

The three infantry regiments that Canada sent as part of its “Special Force” to Korea – the Royal 22nd Regiment (“Vandoo’s”), Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI), and the Royal Canadian Regiment (RCR) – all won key battles during the Korean War: the PPCLI at Kap’young (Hill 677) on April 24-16, 1951; RCR at Chail-li on May 30, 1951; and the Vandoo’s at Little Gibraltar (Hill 355) on November 23-25, 1951.

The Armistice

Meantime, during the summer of 1951, the Communists and the UN initiated the first peace talks at Panmunjom near the 38th parallel. In July of 1953 members of the peace negotiating teams signed an armistice or ceasefire, in which both sides agreed to halt all hostile action against the other on July 27, 1953; however, it did not bring about peace. It was in effect the first act of what became known as the Cold War, lasting nearly 40 years. Almost 60 years after signing the armistice, North and South Korea are still technically in a state of war.

More than three million people died in Korea between June 25, 1950 and July 27,

1953. On the northern side, nearly 316,000 North Korean soldiers were killed or became missing in action. Their Chinese allies lost 422,000. Another 400,000 Chinese and North Korean troops died of disease. On the southern side, about 113,000 Republic of Korea soldiers lost their lives. Among the fifteen members of the United Nations forces sent to defend South Korea, the United States sustained nearly 64,000 killed or missing in action, while the rest (including Canada) would experience nearly 5,900 casualties – killed, wounded, captured or missing in action.

Aftermath of the War

The Korean War is often referred to as “the forgotten war.” Because of the odd nature of the armistice in 1953, the war never officially came to an end. A demilitarized zone (DMZ) was established at the 38th parallel and UN troops maintained a presence along that DMZ for several years after the ceasefire. Consequently, soldiers returned to Canada and the U.S. not in victory, but leaving behind a three-year war unresolved and with two Koreas still hostile with each other.

In recent years, each July 27, on the anniversary of the armistice, Canadian veterans of the Korean War gather in Brampton, Ontario. That’s because in 1997, following many years of unsuccessful campaigning for a national war memorial in Ottawa, members of the Korea Veterans Association of Canada completed arrangements with a cemetery in Brampton (Meadowvale Cemetery) to build a “Wall of Remembrance” in honour of those Canadians killed in the war. The 200-foot-long by two-foot-high wall of granite contains brass plaques commemorating each of the 516 Canadians killed in the war.



Korean War - activities and discussion questions

by Ted Barris

1) Choose a newspaper story that covered some aspect of the Korean War. What has the reporter focused on in his/her report? – location, names of soldiers killed or wounded, nature of the fighting. Now take a contemporary newspaper story covering the Canadians in Afghanistan and compare the similarities and differences on how the two conflicts are covered in the media.

2) Search the Memory Project Digital Archive (www.thememoryproject.com) and identify a selection of Canadian service-women who served in the Korean War. You’ll discover that no Canadian women served in what are called front-line positions. In Afghanistan, however, women serve in the Canadian Forces both in front-line and behind-the-lines situations. Contact veterans organizations such as the Canadian Women’s Army Corps, the Women’s Royal Naval

Service, or the Women’s Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force and find out in what roles women have served Canada in wartime in the past and how they’re serving today.

3) Many Canadians who served in the Korean War trained as paratroopers. They learned to jump with parachutes with “survival supplies” in the packs they had strapped to their bodies.. As a learning project, remove all the school supplies from your backpack; then research what paratroopers would have carried in their jump packs and try to recreate those supply boxes and bags in your backpack. As a final step, weigh the contents of your pack to get an idea of the way paratroopers worked.

4) Several profiles from the Memory Project Digital Archive mention being wounded in battle.

Use contemporary sources, to find out what medical facilities, such as evacuation transportation, medicines, operating room procedures, were available to wounded soldiers between 1950 and 1953 in the time of the Korean War.

5) Research the way the Korean War ended. You’ll see from the newspaper stories that the war ended with an armistice, as did the First World War. Explain the differences between the armistice that ended the First World War and the one that ended the Korean War. Then, have a discussion about what an armistice in Afghanistan might look like.

6) In 1997, following many years of unsuccessful campaigning for a national war memorial in Ottawa, members of the Korea Veterans Association of Canada completed arrangements with a



cemetery in Brampton, Ontario to build a “Wall of Remembrance” in honour of those Canadians killed in the war. Visit the websites of Veterans Affairs Canada

and the Korea Veterans Association of Canada to learn about the men and women lost from your school, community or province.. Then, for Remembrance Day,

prepare tributes – written, audio or visual – or perhaps invite Korean War veterans to your school to honour them during a November 11 ceremony.

www.thememoryproject.com