



## King County

# Metropolitan King County Council

## Regional Policy Committee

### Staff Report

**Agenda Item No.:** 8 **Name:** Beth Mountsier  
**Briefing No.:** 2010-B0125 **Date:** July 14, 2010

**SUBJECT:** A briefing and regional recognition of veterans of 'The Forgotten War' on the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean Conflict.

#### **SUMMARY:**

The Regional Policy Committee will hear from veterans and representatives of those who served in the Korean Conflict which began 60 years ago on June 25, 1950. They are expected to recount some of their experiences and discuss their lives as veterans of this conflict.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The Korean Conflict, known colloquially as the "The Forgotten War" (1950–53) was a military conflict between the Republic of Korea, supported by the United Nations, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), with air support from the Soviet Union.

The following is a summary from multiple sources (primarily Wikipedia) regarding the conflict. A more detailed history is provided at the end of this report, for reference purposes (some of the veterans and others who served during the conflict may refer to particular offenses or stages of the conflict).

#### **Korean Conflict-War – a short history**

The war began on 25 June 1950 and an armistice was signed on 27 July 1953. The war was a result of the political division of Korea by agreement of the victorious Allies at the conclusion of the Pacific War. The Korean peninsula had been ruled by Japan from 1910 until the end of that war. In 1945, following the surrender of Japan, American administrators divided the peninsula along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, with United States troops occupying the southern part and Soviet troops occupying the northern part. The failure to hold free elections throughout the Korean Peninsula in 1948 deepened the division between the two sides, and the North established a Communist government. The 38th Parallel increasingly became a political border between the two Koreas. Although reunification negotiations continued in the months preceding the war, tension intensified. Cross-border skirmishes and raids at the 38th Parallel persisted. The situation escalated into open warfare when North Korean forces invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950. It was the first significant armed conflict of the Cold War.

The United Nations, particularly the United States, came to the aid of the South Koreans in repelling the invasion. After early defeats by the North Korean military, when a rapid UN counter-offensive repelled the North Koreans past the 38th Parallel and almost to the Yalu River, the People's Republic of China (PRC) came to the aid of Communist North. With Communist China's entry into the conflict, the fighting took on a more dangerous tone. The rapid Chinese counter-offensive repelled the United Nations forces past the 38th Parallel. The Soviet Union materially aided North Korea and China. The threat of a nuclear world war eventually ceased with an armistice that restored the border between the Koreas near to the 38th Parallel and created the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), a 2.5-mile (4.0 km) wide buffer zone between the two Koreas.

During the war, both North and South Korea were sponsored by external powers, thus facilitating the war's metamorphosis from a civil war to a proxy war between powers involved in the larger Cold War. From a military science perspective, the Korean War combined strategies and tactics of World War I and World War II — swift infantry attacks followed by air bombing raids. The initial mobile campaign transitioned to trench warfare, lasting from July 1951 until the 1953 border stalemate and armistice.

### **Current status of Korea**

Political integration of the Koreas under a democratic government from the South is generally viewed as inevitable by all parties involved, except North Korea. However, the nature of unification, i.e. through North Korean collapse or gradual integration of the North and South, is still a topic of intense political debate and even conflict among interested parties, who include both Koreas, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

Some political analysts and many Koreans would say the process of reunification has already begun, albeit at a very gradual pace, through the current process of reconciliation and economic cooperation between the two Koreas. However, current reality would seem to indicate otherwise, as the DMZ that separates the two Koreas remains heavily guarded and North Korea has yet to give up its nuclear weapons.

**Korean reunification** (Korean: 조국통일, also called 남북통일 (in the South, literally *South-North Reunification*) and 북남통일 (in the North, literally *North-South Reunification*)) refers to the hypothetical future reunification of North Korea and South Korea under a single government. The process towards this was started by the historic June 15th North-South Joint Declaration in August 2000, where the two countries agreed to work towards a peaceful reunification in the future.

However, there are a number of hurdles in this process due to the large political and economic differences between the two countries and other state actors such as China, Russia, the United States and Japan. Short-term problems such as a large number of refugees from the North migrating into the South and initial economic and political instability would need to be overcome. Long-term problems such as cultural differences, contrasting political ideologies and possible discrimination will also need to be resolved.

### **Aging Veterans Population in Washington State**

According to federal VA projections, the number of Washington State veterans age 85 and over was expected to increase by 140% between 2000 and 2005, with an additional 35% between

2005 and 2010. By 2010, veterans in this cohort should comprise almost one-quarter of the total Washington State population 85 and over, up from 10% in 2000. This significant growth in the very elderly reflects the aging of World War II and Korean War veterans.

According to federal VA projections, Vietnam veterans will continue to represent the largest proportion of total veterans – between 31% and 34% in Washington State through 2015. King County's Veterans' Program reports that 55% of the veterans utilizing its services are Vietnam era veterans.

### A significant majority of King County veterans served Viet Nam era or before

In 2008, an estimated 2% (2,926) of veterans were currently on active duty; 0.8% (1,021) had been active within the last 12 months. For over 97% it had been at least 12 months since duty. Not included in these estimates are an additional 13,000+ persons who are currently enrolled in National Guard or Reserves but never activated at the time of the survey.

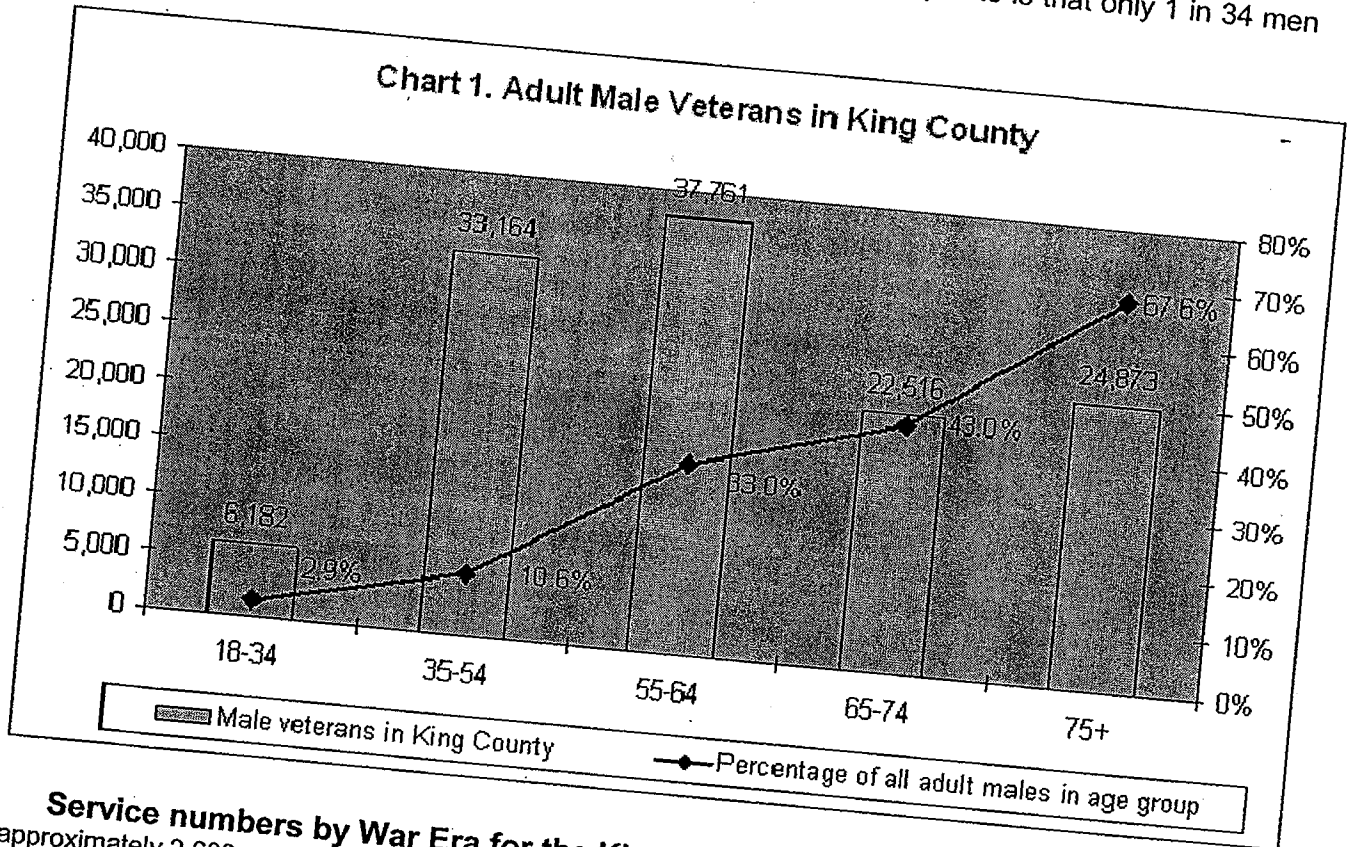
Table 2 shows that close to a third (36%) of all veterans are Vietnam era and a fifth (20%) are WWII and Korea war eras. An additional 10% were peace time between Korea and Viet Nam.

The 2008 ACS data estimates approximately 4,000 individuals are currently Active Duty or have been within the last 12 months. A total of 9,500 individuals are war veterans post 9/11.

Veteran period of service		Now on active duty	Active duty during the last 12 months	Active Duty in the past	Total	
	1 Gulf War: 9/2001 or later	2002	620	2907	5529	4.12%
	2 Gulf War: 9/2001 or later and Gulf War: 8/1990 - 8/2001	924	401	2465	3790	2.83%
	3 Gulf War: 9/2001 or later and Gulf War: 8/1990 - 8/2001 and Vietnam Era	0	0	214	214	0.16%
	4 Gulf War: 8/1990 - 8/2001	0	0	13714	13714	10.23%
	5 Gulf War: 8/1990 - 8/2001 and Vietnam Era	0	0	1321	1321	0.99%
	6 Vietnam Era	0	0	48639	48639	36.28%
	7 Vietnam Era and Korean War	0	0	725	725	0.54%
	8 Vietnam Era, Korean War, and WWII	0	0	384	384	0.29%
	9 Korean War	0	0	10942	10942	8.16%
	10 Korean War and WWII	0	0	1230	1230	0.92%
	11 WWII	0	0	13183	13183	9.83%
	12 Between Gulf War and Vietnam Era only	0	0	19806	19806	14.77%
	13 Between Vietnam Era and Korean War only	0	0	13557	13557	10.11%
	14 Between Korean War and World War II only	0	0	819	819	0.61%
	15 Pre-WWII only	0	0	203	203	0.15%
	Total	2926	1021	130109	134056	
		2.18%	0.76%	97.06%	100.00%	
source:	2008 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates					

67.6% of all men over 76 in King County are vets. Most of veterans likely served in the 1950's. With each new generation, the proportion of adult men who serve in the military (of all adult men) has declined significantly

Analysis of ACS data demonstrates a shift from the draft and the significant conflicts in WWII, Korea and Viet Nam. One third of all men in King County 55 to 64 and over 1/2 of all men over 65 are veterans. Only 10.5% of adult men 35-54 (post draft era.) are veterans. As of now, only 2.9% of all adult men in King County under 35 are veterans. This represents a significant culture shift among men growing up in the US – where everyone over 55 is likely to have served or personally knows someone who served in the military. The opposite is that only 1 in 34 men under 35 are veterans.



**Service numbers by War Era for the King County Veteran's Program (2009)**  
 (approximately 2,600 served by KCVP in 2009, data for 1,632 clients that provided their enlistment dates)

War Era	2009	% of Total
WWI		
WWII		
Korean War	24	1.47%
Vietnam	37	2.27%
Gulf War	934	57.23%
GWOT	567	34.74%
	70	4.29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1632*</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## A detailed History of the Korean Conflict beginning June 1950

Under the guise of counter-attacking a South Korean provocation raid, the KPA crossed the 38th parallel, behind artillery fire, at Sunday dawn of 25 June 1950. The KPA said that Republic of Korea Army (ROK Army) troops, under command of the régime of the "bandit traitor Syngman Rhee", had crossed the border first, and that they would arrest and execute Rhee. Prior to this both Korean armies had continually harassed each other with skirmishes and each continually staged raids across the 38th parallel border.

Hours later, on 25 June 1950, the United Nations Security Council unanimously condemned the North Korean invasion of the Republic of South Korea, with UNSC Resolution 82. The USSR, a veto-wielding power, boycotted the Council meetings since January 1950, protesting that the Republic of China (Taiwan), not the People's Republic of China, held a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.<sup>[54]</sup> After debating the matter, the Security Council, on 27 June 1950, published Resolution 83 recommending member state military assistance to the Republic of Korea. On 27 June President Truman ordered US air and sea forces to help the South Korean régime. On 4 July the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister accused the US of starting armed intervention on behalf of South Korea.<sup>[55]</sup>

The USSR challenged the legitimacy of the war for several reasons. The ROK Army intelligence upon which Resolution 83 was based came from US Intelligence; North Korea was not invited as a sitting temporary member of the UN, which violated UN Charter Article 32; and the Korean conflict was beyond UN Charter scope, because the initial north-south border fighting was classed as civil war. The Soviet representative boycotted the UN to prevent Security Council action, and to challenge the legitimacy of the UN action; legal scholars posited that deciding upon an action of this type required the unanimous vote of the five permanent members.

Despite the rapid post-Second World War Allied demobilizations, there were substantial US forces occupying Japan; under General Douglas MacArthur's command, it was understood that they could be made ready to fight the North Koreans. Only the British Commonwealth had comparable forces in the area.

On Saturday, 24 June 1950, US Secretary of State Dean Acheson informed President Truman by telephone, "Mr. President, I have very serious news. The North Koreans have invaded South Korea." Truman and Acheson discussed a US invasion response with defense department principals, who agreed that the United States was obligated to repel military aggression, paralleling it with Adolf Hitler's 1930s aggressions, and said that the mistake of appeasement must not be repeated. In his autobiography, President Truman acknowledged that fighting the invasion was essential to the American goal of the global containment of communism as outlined in the National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68) (declassified in 1975):

"Communism was acting in Korea, just as Hitler, Mussolini and the Japanese had ten, fifteen, and twenty years earlier. I felt certain that if South Korea was allowed to fall. Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations closer to our own shores. If the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threat and aggression by stronger Communist neighbors."<sup>[61]</sup>

President Truman announced that the US would counter "unprovoked aggression" and "vigorously support the effort of the [UN] security council to terminate this serious breach of peace." In Congress, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Omar Bradley warned against appeasement, saying that Korea was the place "for drawing the line" against communist expansion. In August 1950, the President and the Secretary of State obtained the consent of Congress to appropriate \$12 billion to pay for the military expenses.

Per State Secretary Acheson's recommendation, President Truman ordered General MacArthur to transfer materiel to the Army of the Republic of Korea while giving air cover to the evacuation of US nationals. The President disagreed with his advisors recommending unilateral US bombing of the North Korean forces, but did order the US Seventh Fleet to protect the Republic of China (Taiwan), whose Nationalist Government asked to fight in Korea. The US denied the Nationalist Chinese request for combat, lest it provoke a communist Chinese retaliation.

The Battle of Osan, the first significant engagement of the Korean War, involved the 540-soldier Task Force Smith, which was a small forward element of the 24th Infantry Division.<sup>[30]:45</sup> On 5 July 1950, Task Force Smith attacked the North Koreans at Osan but without weapons capable of destroying the North Koreans' tanks. They were unsuccessful; the result was 180 dead, wounded or taken prisoner. The KPA progressed southwards, forcing the 24th Division's retreat to Taejeon, which the KPA captured in the Battle of Taejeon;<sup>[30]:48</sup> the 24th Division suffered 3,602 dead and wounded and 2,962 captured, including the Division's Commander, Major General William F. Dean.<sup>[30]:48</sup>

By August, the KPA had pushed back the ROK Army and the Eighth United States Army to the vicinity of Pusan, in southeast Korea. In their southward advance, the KPA purged the Republic of Korea's intelligentsia by killing civil servants and intellectuals. On 20 August, General MacArthur warned North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung that he was responsible for the KPA's atrocities. By September, the UN Command controlled only the Pusan city perimeter, about 10% of Korea, in a line partially defined by the Nakdong River.

The conflict escalated through September and October of 1950. In October China entered the conflict. Premier Zhou Enlai informed the United Nations that "Korea is China's neighbor ... The Chinese people cannot but be concerned about a solution of the Korean question". Thus, via neutral-country diplomats, China warned that in safeguarding Chinese national security, they would intervene against the UN Command in Korea.

After secretly crossing the Yalu River on October 15, the PVA 13th Army Group launched the **First Phase Offensive** on October 25, attacking the advancing UN forces near the Sino-Korean border. After decimating the ROK II Corps at the Battle of Onjong, the first confrontation between Chinese and US military occurred on 1 November 1950; deep in North Korea, thousands of soldiers from the PVA 39th Army encircled and attacked the US 8th Cavalry Regiment with three-prong assaults—from the north, northwest, and west—and overran the defensive position flanks in the Battle of Unsan. The surprise assault forced the UN forces to retreat back to the Ch'ongch'on River, while the Chinese unexpectedly disappeared in their mountain hideouts following their victory.

By November 30, the PVA 13th Army Group managed to expel the US Eighth Army from northwest Korea. Retreating from the north faster than they had counter-invaded, the Eighth Army again crossed the 38th parallel border in mid December. The UN morale hit rock bottom, while the commanding General Walton Walker of the US Eighth Army was killed on December

23, 1950 in an automobile accident. At northeast Korea by December 11, the US X Corps managed to cripple the PVA 9th Army Group while establishing a defensive perimeter at the port city of Hŭngnam. They were forced to evacuate by December 24 in order to reinforce the badly depleted US Eighth Army to the south. About 193 shiploads of UN Command forces and materiel (approximately 105,000 soldiers, 98,000 civilians, 17,500 vehicles, and 350,000 tons of supplies) embarked from Hŭngnam to Pusan. The SS *Meredith Victory* was noted for evacuating 14,000 refugees, the largest rescue operation by a single ship, even though it was designed to hold only 12 passengers. Before escaping, the UN Command forces effected scorched earth operations, razing most of Hŭngnam city, especially the port facilities; and on December 16, 1950, President Truman declared a national emergency with Presidential Proclamation No. 2914, 3 C.F.R. 99 (1953), which remained in force until 14 September 1978.

The UN Command, however, was unconvinced that the Chinese had openly intervened due to the sudden Chinese withdrawal. On November 24, the **Home-by-Christmas Offensive** was launched with the US Eighth Army advancing in northwest Korea, while the US X Corps were attacking along the Korean east coast. But the Chinese were waiting in ambush with their **Second Phase Offensive**. On November 25 at the Korean western front, the PVA 13th Army Group attacked and over-ran several ROK Army divisions at the Battle of the Ch'ongch'on River, and then struck the flank of the remaining UN forces. The UN Command retreated; the US Eighth Army's retreat (longest in US Army history), was made possible because the Turkish Brigade's successful, but very costly, rear-guard delaying action near Kunuri that slowed the PVA attack for two days (November 27–29). On November 27 at the Korean eastern front, a US 7th Infantry Division Regimental Combat Team (3000 soldiers) and the US 1st Marine Division (12,000–15,000 marines) were unprepared for the PVA 9th Army Group's three-pronged encirclement tactics at the Battle of Chosin Reservoir, but they managed to escape under X Corps support fire—albeit with some 15,000 collective casualties.

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### **Fighting around the 38th parallel (January – June 1951)**

With Lieutenant-General Matthew Ridgway assuming the command of the US Eighth Army on December 26, the PVA and the KPA launched their **Third Phase Offensive** (also known as the

"Chinese New Year's Offensive") on the New Year's Eve of 1951, utilizing night attacks in which UN Command fighting positions were stealthily encircled and then assaulted by numerically superior troops who had the element of surprise. The attacks were accompanied by loud trumpets and gongs, which fulfilled the double purpose of facilitating tactical communication and mentally disorienting the enemy. UN forces initially had no familiarity with this tactic, and as a result some soldiers "bugged out," abandoning their weapons and retreating to the south. The Chinese New Year's Offensive overwhelmed the UN Command forces and the PVA and KPA conquered Seoul on 4 January 1951.

These setbacks prompted General MacArthur to consider using the atomic bomb against the Chinese or North Korean interiors, intending to use the resulting radioactive fallout zones to interrupt the Chinese supply chains. However, upon the arrival of the charismatic General Ridgway, the *esprit de corps* of the bloodied Eighth Army immediately began to revive.

UN forces retreated to Suwon in the west, Wonju in the center, and the territory north of Samcheok in the east, where the battlefront stabilized and held. The PVA had outrun its logistics and thus was forced to recoil from pressing the attack beyond Seoul; food, ammunition, and materiel were carried nightly, on foot and bicycle, from the border at the Yalu River to the three battle lines. In late January, upon finding that the enemy had abandoned the battle lines, General Ridgway ordered a reconnaissance-in-force, which became *Operation Roundup* (5 February 1951), a full-scale X Corps advance that gradually proceeded while fully exploiting the UN Command's air superiority, concluding with the UN reaching the Han River and recapturing Wonju.

In mid-February, the PVA counterattacked with the **Fourth Phase Offensive** and managed to achieve a victory at Hoengseong. But the offensive was soon blunted by the IX Corps positions at Chipyeong-ni in the center. Units of the US 2nd Infantry Division and the French Battalion fought a short but desperate battle that broke the attack's momentum.

In the last two weeks of February 1951, *Operation Roundup* was followed by *Operation Killer* (mid-February 1951), carried out by the revitalized Eighth Army. It was a full-scale, battlefront-length attack staged for maximum exploitation of firepower to kill as many KPA and PVA troops as possible. *Operation Killer* concluded with I Corps re-occupying the territory south of the Han River, and IX Corps capturing Hoengseong. On 7 March 1951, the Eighth Army attacked with *Operation Ripper*, expelling the PVA and the KPA from Seoul on 14 March 1951. This was the city's fourth conquest in a years' time, leaving it a ruin; the 1.5 million pre-war population was down to 200,000, and the people were suffering from severe food shortages.

On 11 April 1951, Commander-in-Chief Truman relieved the controversial General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander in Korea, of duty. There were several reasons for the dismissal. MacArthur had crossed the 38th parallel in the mistaken belief that the Chinese would not enter the war, leading to major losses. He believed that whether or not to use nuclear weapons should be his own decision, not the President's. MacArthur threatened to destroy China unless it surrendered. MacArthur was the subject of congressional hearings in May and June 1951, which determined that he had defied the orders of the President and thus had violated the US Constitution. MacArthur never spent a night in Korea and directed the war from Tokyo.

General Ridgway was appointed Supreme Commander, Korea; he regrouped the UN forces for successful counterattacks, while General James Van Fleet assumed command of the US Eighth Army. Further attacks slowly repelled the PVA and KPA forces; Operations *Courageous* (23-28



March 1951) and *Tomahawk* (23 March 1951) were a joint ground and air assault meant to trap Chinese forces between Kaesong and Seoul. UN forces advanced to "Line Kansas", north of the 38th parallel.

The Chinese counterattacked in April 1951, with the **Fifth Phase Offensive** (also known as the "Chinese Spring Offensive") with three field armies (approximately 700,000 men). The offensive's first thrust fell upon I Corps, which fiercely resisted in the Battle of the Imjin River (22–25 April 1951) and the Battle of Kapyong (22–25 April 1951), blunting the impetus of the offensive, which was halted at the "No-name Line" north of Seoul. On 15 May 1951, the Chinese commenced the second impulse of the Spring Offensive and attacked the ROK Army and the US X Corps in the east, and initially were successful, yet were halted by 20 May. At month's end, the US Eighth Army counterattacked and regained "Line Kansas", just north of the 38th parallel. The UN's "Line Kansas" halt and subsequent offensive action stand-down began the stalemate that lasted until the armistice of 1953.

### **Stalemate (July 1951 – July 1953)**

For the remainder of the Korean War the UN Command and the PVA fought, but exchanged little territory; the stalemate held. Large-scale bombing of North Korea continued, and protracted armistice negotiations began 10 July 1951 at Kaesong. Combat continued while the belligerents negotiated; the ROK–UN Command forces' goal was to recapture all of South Korea, to avoid losing territory. The PVA and the KPA attempted similar operations, and later, they effected military and psychological operations in order to test the UN Command's resolve to continue the war. The principal battles of the stalemate include the Battle of Bloody Ridge (18 August – 15 September 1951), the Battle of Heartbreak Ridge (13 September – 15 October 1951), the Battle of Old Baldy (26 June – 4 August 1952), the Battle of White Horse (6–15 October 1952), the Battle of Triangle Hill (14 October – 25 November 1952), the Battle of Hill Eerie (21 March – 21 June 1952), the sieges of Outpost Harry (10–18 June 1953), the Battle of the Hook (28–29 May 1953) and the Battle of Pork Chop Hill (23 March – 16 July 1953).

### **Armistice (July 1953 – November 1954)**

The armistice negotiations continued for two years; first at Kaesong (southern North Korea), then at Panmunjom (bordering the Koreas). A major, negotiation issue was prisoner of war (POW) repatriation. The PVA, KPA and UN Command could not agree on a system of repatriation because many PVA and KPA soldiers refused to be repatriated back to the north, which was unacceptable to the Chinese and North Koreans. In the final armistice agreement, a Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission was set up to handle the matter.

In 1952 the U.S. elected a new president, and on 29 November 1952, the president-elect, Dwight D. Eisenhower, went to Korea to learn what might end the Korean War. With the United Nations' acceptance of India's proposed Korean War armistice, the KPA, the PVA, and the UN Command ceased fire on 27 July 1953, with the battle line approximately at the 38th parallel.

Upon agreeing to the armistice, the belligerents established the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), which has since been defended by the KPA and ROKA, USA and UN Command. The Demilitarized Zone runs northeast of the 38th parallel; to the south, it travels west. The old Korean capital city of Kaesong, site of the armistice negotiations, originally lay in the pre-war ROK, but now is in the DPRK. The United Nations Command, supported by the United States, the North Korean People's Army, and the Chinese People's Volunteers, signed the Armistice

Agreement; ROK President Syngman Rhee refused to sign. Thus the Republic of Korea never participated in the armistice.

After the war, *Operation Glory* (July–November 1954) was conducted to allow combatant countries to exchange their dead. The remains of 4,167 US Army and US Marine Corps dead were exchanged for 13,528 KPA and PVA dead, and 546 civilians dead in UN prisoner-of-war camps were delivered to the ROK government.<sup>[92]</sup> After *Operation Glory*, 416 Korean War unknown soldiers were buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl), Hawaii. Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) records indicate that the PRC and the DPRK transmitted 1,394 names, of which 858 were correct. From 4,167 containers of returned remains, forensic examination identified 4,219 individuals. Of these, 2,944 were identified as American, and all but 416 were identified by name. From 1996 to 2006, the DPRK recovered 220 remains near the Sino-Korean border.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. A collection of local press articles regarding the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean Conflict

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## Forgotten War stays vivid, alive for many who sacrificed

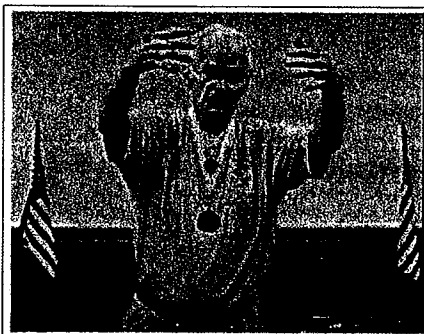
By **MARK KLAAS**

Auburn Reporter Editor  
May 17 2008

It is often called The Forgotten War or The Unknown War, but many veterans remember it all too well.

Some remain haunted by its horrors.

We don't forget it, but I think a lot of people, especially younger people, have no idea of what it was like, said Auburn's John Pepper, who served in the 4th Battalion of the 11th Marine Regiment during the Korean War. We don't forget.



Don Chadwick, a Marine veteran of the Korean War, talks about being surrounded by the enemy at a presentation at the Auburn Senior Activity Center about 'The Forgotten War.' Gary Kisset/Reporter Buy Photo Reprints

Pepper, 79, wiped away the tears, reflecting on a horrible war between nations waged on a remote peninsula in Asia. Pepper lost friends, his youth and innocence as a well-trained soldier fighting for freedom on rugged, unforgiving terrain, punished by bitter cold and extreme heat.

He was not alone.

Don Chadwick and other veterans know the Korean War was much more than a hard and unfortunate three-year conflict played out above and below the 38th parallel. It was pure hell, a barbaric war filled with atrocities, fought in difficult circumstances. To them, it was a battle of survival, courage and soul as Americans confronted a relentless, savage enemy with superior numbers more than 50 years ago.

Still, the Korean Conflict gets lost between World War II, a major event of the 20th century, and the Vietnam War, a controversial struggle that fractured the U.S.

To help bring attention to the significance of the Korean War, several veterans assembled this week at the Auburn Senior Activity Center to share their experiences, however painful they might have been. They came to remind others of how great the sacrifice was to protect the sovereignty of South Korea from the hostile Communist North. The war led to a bitter military stalemate. It remains divided in many ways today.

The war came and went at a huge cost.

Chadwick, a decorated Marine veteran who served honorably in the combat theater in late 1950, still suffers from the wounds.

There are the physical ones. The 77-year-old Chadwick, who grew up in Seattle and lives in SeaTac today, no longer can feel his arms and feet, a result of frozen weather-related injuries he sustained during combat. He took three bullets, two to the helmet and another through the neck. He also took shrapnel in his back.

Doctors considered amputating his badly injured legs after his combat duty. Chadwick managed to hang onto them through a fortuitous break the stateside doctor who offered a second opinion was his mother's cousin.

Then there are the emotional wounds. He continues to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. He nearly drowned during an amphibious landing. He nearly was killed by an enemy prowler at night. He was MIA for 10 days.

If not for the help of his friend, fellow Marine Tasi Alo, he would not be here today. They had each other's back. They saved each other's life. They remain close today.

Chadwick is 70 percent disabled but able to get around today through family and VA support.

And, when asked, he is willing to talk about his time in the Korean War for those who wish to listen. Talking about the horrific ordeal is a way to therapeutically tackle his psychological fears.

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□War is war, and tough is tough, but the talks have helped,□ said Chadwick, who served as a corporal assigned to demolition and anti-tank duty in the weapons company for the 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division. □If you hold it in, you end up hurting yourself and your family.

□You won□t survive unless you talk about it,□ Chadwick added. □If you don□t get it out of your system, it is going to fester.□

Chadwick and his fellow Marines were part of one of the most daunting and bloodiest chapters in the Korean War. He was part of the Battle of Inchon, which led to the liberation of Seoul. He was part of the subsequent invasion of North Korea and weathered the massive wave of Chinese intervention.

He also fought and survived the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. The fight involved a 30,000-man unit from the U.S. 7th Infantry Division and Marine Corps. Unprepared for Chinese tactics, the American units were soon surrounded. They eventually managed to escape the encirclement but sustained more than 15,000 casualties after inflicting heavy casualties on six Chinese divisions.

Chadwick scrambled out alive. He is one of the 2,500 Chosin Few survivors alive today. The dwindling alumni will have a reunion this summer.

He went on to fulfill a good life. He and his wife raised four children. He attended the University of Washington. He spent 43 years in the electrical industry. He survived.

□The Forgotten War□ remains an everyday flashback to him. He has learned to cope with it, with courage and honor.

□We won□t forget,□ Chadwick said of the war. □We will never let it be forgotten.□

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Auburn Reporter Editor Mark Klaas can be reached at [mklaas@auburn-reporter.com](mailto:mklaas@auburn-reporter.com) or 253-833-0218, ext. 5050.

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Saturday, June 12, 2010 - Page updated at 11:16 PM

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## 60 years on, ex-GIs remember their 'forgotten' war

By CHARLES J. HANLEY  
AP Special Correspondent

The old soldier stood erect on the riverbank, his cane at his side, a baseball cap emblazoned "2nd Infantry Division" square above his brow. He looked out, then turned away from the slow, silty Naktong.

"I've seen this river before," Carroll Garland said. "I don't want to remember. Too many memories."

The war that began in Korea 60 years ago, on June 25, 1950, a ghastly conflict that killed millions and left the peninsula in ruins, became "The Forgotten War" in many American minds.

To a shrinking corps of aging men, however, the soldiers of Korea 1950-53, it can never be forgotten. It damaged many physically, scarred many mentally, and left men questioning their commanders' and their nation's wisdom.

They fought many enemies - not just the North Koreans and Chinese, but also the heat, the killing cold and the cursed hills, the thirst, hunger and filth, the incompetence and hubris of their own army, and the indifference of an American homeland still fixed on the "good" war, World War II, that had ended five years earlier.

Remembering Korea today may be painful, as ex-sergeant Garland, 81, of Oxon Hill, Maryland, can attest. But when such men get together, the freeze frames of war's horrors and miseries, of lost comrades and paralyzing dread, inevitably emerge in sharp focus.

"At the reunions, they talk about it," said Lucille Macek, 76, wife of Shawnee, Kansas, veteran Victor Macek. "And then they break down."

In a wartime arc of desperation, triumph, retreat and final stalemate in Korea, no U.S. division sacrificed as much as the 2nd Infantry Division, losing more than 7,000 killed, one-fifth of total U.S. dead. And it is the 2nd Infantry Division that still stands guard over South Korea today.

Two days spent with a "2nd ID" group on a 60th-anniversary visit to old battlefields opened a window on the men and events of a lifetime ago, when what happened here, on the Naktong, on the Chungchon River of North Korea, in places like Kunu-ri and Heartbreak Ridge, neglected stories though they may be in today's textbooks, was nothing less than a pivotal turn in 20th-century history, when a cold war grew hot in America's confrontation with communism.

"We didn't have enough men," Henry Reed recalled of the division's ordeal on the Naktong.

"There were so many holes in the line, the North Koreans didn't have to try too hard. The enemy would get behind us, and we'd be fighting on all sides. Things were desperate."

It was called the Pusan Perimeter, a southeastern corner of Korea—running 85 miles north to south along the Naktong, and 60 miles east to west. Here in mid-1950, in one of the most perilous U.S. military operations ever, outmanned U.S. and South Korean troops mounted a last-ditch defense against a closing North Korean vise.

It wasn't supposed to be that way. After the communist-led northerners struck south in their surprise invasion on June 25, two years after U.S. combat units withdrew from South Korea, U.S. commanders believed the simple reappearance of American troops would deter the North Koreans.

"At our base in Hawaii, we thought the war would be over and we wouldn't get our Combat Infantryman's Badges," said Marvin House, 79, a veteran of the 5th Regimental Combat Team (RCT). "Boy, were we fooled."

The northern army battered the first-arriving U.S. units and shattered the South Korean divisions. It simply was better trained and better equipped, with Soviet-made T-34 tanks.

The U.S. government had shrunk the Army drastically after World War II, and training and equipment upgrades were neglected.

As the 2nd Division sailed from Ft. Lewis, Washington, toward Korea in late July 1950, "we wound up training our soldiers to fire their weapons at tin cans thrown into the Pacific," said retired Col. Ralph M. Hockley, 84, of Houston, then a young artillery officer.

"Twenty percent of our vehicles had to be towed to the embarkation point," Walter Wallis of Palo Alto, Calif., recalled of the 2nd Division deployment. "We had some real crap, four-year-old C-rations and stuff like that."

Not long after, on the Naktong, the 18-year-old radioman Wallis watched helplessly from a hilltop as a U.S. river-crossing patrol was slaughtered by the North Koreans. His batteries had failed; he couldn't call for help.

For House, a 57mm-recoilless rifleman, it wasn't quality but the quantity: none. For a month after his 5th RCT took up position on the perimeter, he had no ammunition for his gun, leaving him to help mortar and other gun crews fight off the enemy.

The North Koreans, crossing the shallow Naktong at night on barges or over underwater "bridges" built of rice bags filled with rocks, hammered again and again at the U.S. and South Korean lines in August and early September 1950.

The "lines" were more a series of hills, road junctions and other points manned by under-strength units, sometimes a mile apart. Commanders would rush up reserves to fill the gaps as the North Koreans attacked.

For the GI, in the 100-plus-degree heat, amid tropical downpours and malarial mosquitoes, with water supplies scarce, soldiering became misery. "Those weeks seemed like a lifetime," said House, of Bonne Terre, Missouri.

Time and again, the 2nd and other U.S. and South Korean divisions held the North Koreans off, sometimes fighting hand-to-hand, at great cost to the defenders and even greater cost to the North Koreans. Finally, on

Sept. 15, 1950, U.S. amphibious forces landed at Inchon, far to the North Koreans' rear, cutting them off from their supplies and recapturing Seoul from the invaders.

That set off a race north by the Pusan Perimeter divisions, a "breakout" whose momentum carried them by November to the Yalu River and the North Korean-Chinese border, as overall commander Gen. Douglas MacArthur and the U.S. leadership sought to conquer North Korea.

"We did what we had to do. We kept them out," twice-wounded ex-rifleman Reed, 78, of Butte, Montana, said of the Naktong campaign. "But we suffered plenty. In the first month, my company" - A Company, 23rd Infantry Regiment - "went down to 78 men from 200."

More suffering lay ahead. The lunge north had been ill-conceived, putting the American army on a collision course with the might of China deep inside North Korea.

Retired Lt. Col. Lynn A. Freeman, then a lieutenant at 23rd Infantry headquarters, remembered the night in late November 1950 when a Chinese attack materialized from nowhere, "blowing bugles and whistles and making a lot of noise," and penetrating into the regimental command post at the Chungchon River.

The regiment's 1st Battalion beat them back. "The bodies of wounded Chinese were frozen in the river's ice the next morning," recalled the quiet-spoken Freeman, 87, of Concord, Calif. Meanwhile, young Wallis had an image frozen in his memory, of panicked U.S. soldiers trapped in sleeping bags and hopping down a hillside to escape the Chinese.

"The next day we went up there and saw a couple that didn't make it," he said.

But Chinese attacks all along the front forced the longest retreat in U.S. military history, a withdrawal by the entire U.S. Eighth Army some 160 miles back into South Korea.

For the 2nd Division, the pullback through Kunu-ri and the valley remembered as "The Gauntlet" was a descent into a wintry hell.

"It was sleepwalking, day and night marching, when the Chinese came in," remembered Rudy Ruiz, 77, of Las Vegas, a 38th Infantry Regiment rifleman.

Miles-long convoys of trucks, tanks and men pushed south under heavy fire from Chinese dug into the hills on both sides, fire that crippled vehicles, blocked the narrow roadway, stranded knots of doomed men. In a single day, the division lost 3,000 killed, wounded or missing.

Even for those who escaped, the frigid temperatures and biting Siberian wind of an early winter could be as deadly an enemy. Wounded men froze to death while waiting for help. Hundreds suffered frozen feet and fingertips, noses and ears. The Army had failed to deliver winter clothing to tens of thousands of troops.

"The worst was the cold. I've never been so cold," said Ruiz. "You'd dig a hole in the snow and you'd all huddle together."

The "Big Bugout" retreat left the Eighth Army holding a line below the 38th Parallel, the North-South divide.

In February 1951, the Chinese mounted an all-out offensive, but were turned back at Chipyeong-ni by the 2nd Division, ushering in a final long phase of the Korean War, the "war of the ridgelines," as the two sides jockeyed for advantage, winning hills, losing them, winning them back, while truce talks went on.

It was at Heartbreak Ridge, in September 1951, that "we got into trouble, when we tried to move north," recalled Ed Reeg, ex-machine gunner with the 23rd Infantry. "The night of 19 September, Love Company was under real heavy attack, and Lt. Monfore called for a machine gun."

Reeg climbed to Love's position, set up his .30-caliber gun, and suddenly the North Koreans were charging out of the darkness along the ridgeline. Reeg's team tried to hold them off, dodged their grenades, but finally "they found the mark," a bullet hitting him above the hip, sending him rolling in pain.

As Love beat back the attack, at the cost of Lt. Monfore's life, Reeg was carried to a spot on the hillside, injected with morphine, roughly bandaged, and left lying there, as the sun rose, peaked and began to set.

"Here I'm thinking, it's over. What's my mom going to think?" In late afternoon, passing GIs realized he wasn't dead and sent him off to a medical station. The war was over for Ed Reeg, who would be awarded a Silver Star for bravery.

---

Too many memories.

This May 31, Reeg, 82, of Dubuque, Iowa, stood with his wife and son atop a ridgeline south of Korea's dividing Demilitarized Zone, and looked out toward Heartbreak.

"To think we were so close to where I lay dying 59 years ago," he reflected later. "I never thought I'd get back here."

It wasn't the only pilgrimage this old soldier has made. In 2003, he found Lt. Peter Monfore's grave in Springfield, South Dakota, and met with his family. "It seemed like my duty to go find him."

Duty and doubts, flashbacks and nightmares, pride and uncertainties - veterans of killing fields, in Korea or elsewhere, are often torn by conflicting feelings. Many Korea vets are open about the psychic legacy of their war.

"I had night sweats for years," Ruiz said. "Whatever, it's still blocked out." Reeg believes a nervous breakdown he suffered in 1960 may have stemmed from his time in Korea.

In their foxholes 60 years ago, many questioned why their lives were being risked in a far-off civil war. "As a young fellow, I did wonder what we were doing here," said the big Montanan and ex-rifleman Reed.

Their anniversary tour supplied an answer for some, as they gazed upon a prosperous and - in recent decades - democratic South Korea, whose government subsidizes such veterans' visits.

"This makes me feel it was worth it," said Reeg. "To see this country built up. It's amazing."

They recognize the picture is incomplete, however, since the peninsula remains divided. "That's one thing I'm sorry for," said Reed.

In fact, John Manly long thought he would wait for Korean reunification before returning. Finally, at age 80, the old 23rd Infantry rifleman came, despite obvious misgivings about his war and its results - "I am almost a pacifist," he told a reporter.

Equally obvious, as he spoke of a wartime friend killed in action, was his love for his fellow soldiers.



"Isn't a day goes by I don't think about him," said Manly, of Saratoga Springs, N.Y. "I'm glad to be alive. A lot of the guys in there tonight are happy to be alive," he said, nodding toward a banquet hall filled with fellow veterans.

That evening it was Manly's tenor voice that silenced the hall, drawing the gray heads of old soldiers together in thoughts only they could share, as he sang, to the tune of the World War II favorite "Lili Marlene," lyrics someone had improvised in 1952 as their own war dragged on:

"When the war is over and the world is free,

We'll relive proud memories of bloody Kunu-ri.

Sayong and Heartbreak will be retold,

And Bloody Ridge will make us bold.

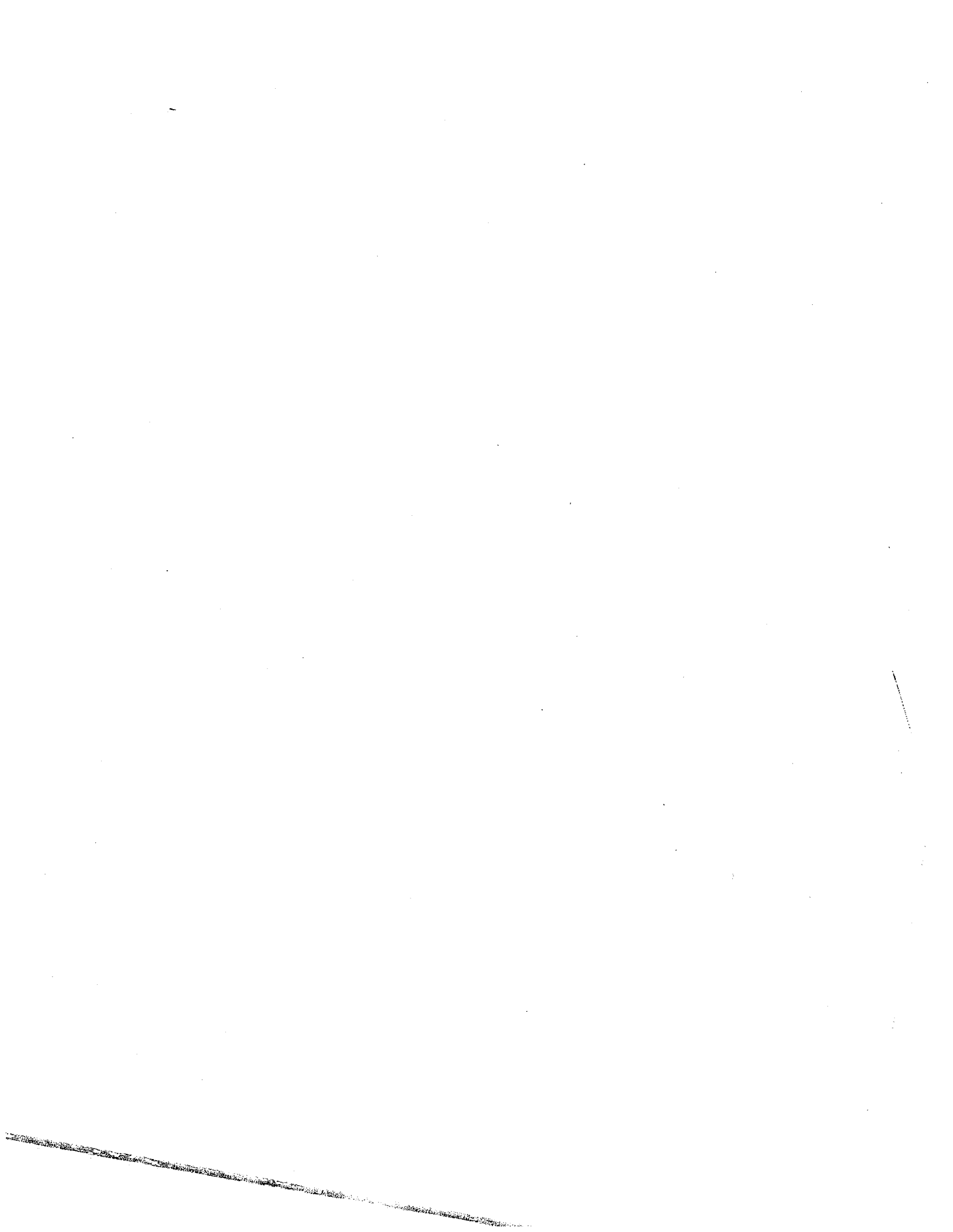
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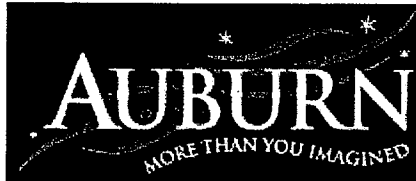
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## Forgotten War stays alive, clear for area veterans

By **MARK KLAAS**

Auburn Reporter Editor

Jun 23 2010, 5:21 PM · **UPDATED**

For many veterans, the Forgotten War remains unforgettable.

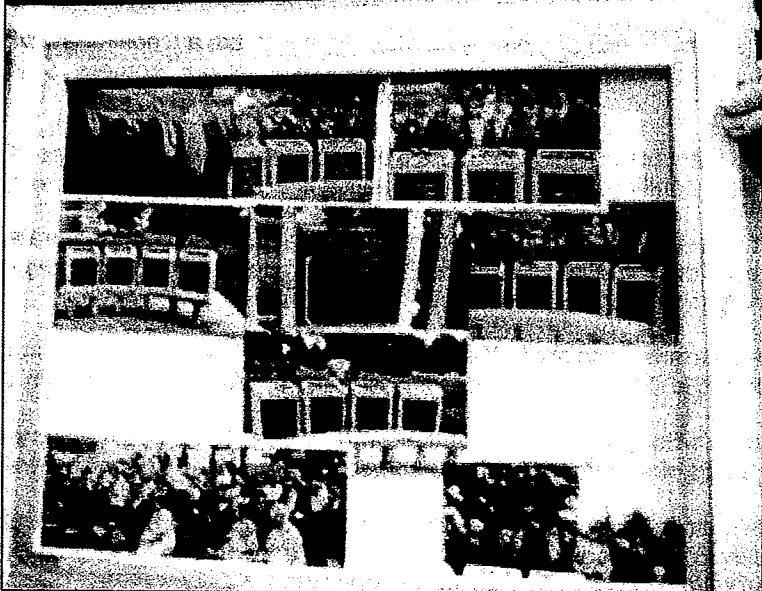
For Don Chadwick, it was a horrific experience played out on a remote, rugged peninsula in Asia 60 years ago.

Chadwick was among the first Marine divisions to land in Korea in 1950, rifle and orders in hand. He and his infantrymen quickly engaged an irrepressible enemy in brutal combat on unforgiving terrain.

"We were prepared to take on this tank, and all of a sudden, the Chinese made a run at us. Here they come ... 7-foot tall, 250-pound Mongolian Chinese," Chadwick vividly recalled. "One came after us, so I emptied an M1 Garand (.30-caliber semiautomatic rifle) right into the guy. But he still kept coming after me.

"My Samoan friend, Tasi (Alo), stuck a knife into him, and he still came up the hill," Chadwick said. "That only made Tasi angrier."

In the ensuing savage struggle, Chadwick's assistant gunner eventually subdued the foe.



Jack Coleman, a Chosin Few Marine, displays photos of a Korean War memorial established on the East Coast. Coleman belongs to veterans organizations and participates in various memorial events each year that honor his fellow soldiers.

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"I said right there, 'I'm sure glad you're on my side,'" Chadwick told his friend.

For Chadwick, 79, of SeaTac, and other veterans, the Korean War was much more than a hard-fought, three-year conflict. It was a barbaric battle, a struggle for survival in extreme conditions as Americans confronted a relentless enemy with superior numbers.

The war, which led to a bitter military stalemate in 1953, never officially ended. Sovereign South Korea and Communist North Korea remain divided in many ways as tensions persist today.

Waged between World War II and Vietnam, the Korean War is often referred to as The Forgotten War because it garners much less attention than its historical bookends.

For Chadwick and local Korean War veterans, the war will never be forgotten. Stories need to be told, the war's fallen soldiers remembered.

Members of the local veterans group often gather to relive their experiences, however difficult they might be, and reflect on a significant chapter in their lives. Though dwindling in numbers, the local chapter of veterans has met regularly for 25 years. The group includes a special band of Marines, the "Chosin Few", named for those who fought and survived the war's bloodiest engagement, the Battle of Chosin Reservoir.

The fight involved a 30,000-man unit from the U.S. 7th Infantry Division and Marine Corps. Unprepared for Chinese tactics, the American units were soon surrounded. They eventually managed to escape the encirclement but sustained more than 15,000 casualties after inflicting heavy losses on six Chinese divisions.

Chadwick scrambled out alive. He is one of about 2,000 Chosin Few survivors alive today. The diminishing alumni hold regular reunions.

"It's an organization of attrition," Chadwick said.

"It's a great bunch of guys," said Max Diamond, 84, a Chosin Few Marine who grew up and worked in Auburn and lives today in Federal Way. "They are our brothers ... and I'm just a lucky son of a gun to be here."

Local veterans will join the South Korean community to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the start of the Korean Conflict on Saturday. The service is at 11 a.m. at the Korean War Memorial in Olympia.

Local veterans plan to meet there again in late July to commemorate the war's armistice and honor those local soldiers lost in the conflict. Of the estimated 122,000 Washington state soldiers and Marines who served in Korea, 532 were killed.

The veterans have made the trip to Olympia each year since the memorial was dedicated on the capital grounds in 1993. The monument was built from funds raised by the Chosin Few veteran's group.

Auburn's Bob Newman, a member of VFW Post 1741, has made many trips to memorials. He is honored to be a part of the group and to be someone who played a small but important role in the war.

Newman helped transport troops ashore and spent his tour of Korea handling munitions aboard the USS Valley Forge aircraft carrier. He went on to a rewarding military career, having sailed around the world in his time with the Navy.

"It was the best thing that ever happened to me," said Newman, who enlisted in the service as a 17-year-old kid out of high school. "I wanted to do it. It was a good thing to do. ... It was an honor to serve."

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As for what makes his fellow Korean War veterans special, Newman concluded, "because they are all heroes."

And they are survivors, men and women who did their part.

"We turned back communism by our participation in the Korean War," said Jack Coleman, a Chosin Few Marine. "China, Russia and North Korea were looking to grab this little peninsula, and they would have controlled that section of Asia. By us being there, we short-stopped it."

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## Korea, war without end, casts a long shadow

By CHARLES J. HANLEY  
AP Special Correspondent

Distant thunder rattled the windows as Hong Il-sik, 14-year-old schoolboy, awoke that Sunday. It was the sound of artillery fire, the morning of June 25, 1950, the dawn of a war that never ended.

Looking back, "I couldn't even have imagined that - 60 years," says the gray-haired ex-university president.

Gen. Paik Sun-yup, on the contrary, is unsurprised by the endurance of Korea's endless standoff.

Knowing the enemy, North Korea's communists, "we sensed back in the 1950s it could be a very long conflict," the sturdy 90-year-old Paik, a legendary Korean War commander, told a visitor to his memento-filled office above Seoul's War Memorial, the huge museum he helped build.

The war without end began that long-ago Sunday when North Korea invaded the south to try to reunify the nation, a liberated Japanese colony sliced in two in 1945 by the U.S. and Soviet victors of World War II.

At first, the invaders almost drove a weak South Korean-U.S. force off the peninsula, but U.S. reinforcements poured in, rolled back the northerners and drove deep into North Korea. Then, in late 1950, communist China stepped in, its massed divisions throwing the Americans and South Koreans back to the peninsula's midsection, where the two sides waged a costly seesaw war over bits of ground for two years, ending with a stalemate, a July 1953 armistice - not a peace, but a war on hold.

The Pusan Perimeter and "Stand or Die." Walker and Ridgway and Syngman Rhee. The Bowling Alley and the Punchbowl. Unsan-ni and Heartbreak Ridge. Pork Chop Hill and Kunu-ri.

The headline names and places of a lifetime ago fade from memory. But this "forgotten" chapter of 20th-century history still casts a long shadow over today's world, as the root of unending crises on the peninsula and beyond, and as the war that turned America permanently into a dominant global military power.

The U.S. defense budget, slashed after World War II, quadrupled almost overnight as Washington decided to confront communism militarily. American armed forces ballooned to 3 million men, and U.S. bases spread worldwide. Three months after that June morning in 1950, U.S. President Harry Truman signed National Security Council paper No. 68, saying the nation must, "at whatever cost and sacrifice," defend democracy "at home or abroad." Within a few years, the U.S. Vietnam debacle began to unfold in southeast Asia.

It wasn't only America's place on the world stage that changed with Korea 1950-53.

"The Korean War thrust China onto the Cold War's front line," Shen Zhihua, a leading Chinese scholar of the war, told The Associated Press. "It encouraged Mao Tse-tung to lead Asia's and even the world's revolutions," and it "entrenched the enmity and hatred between China and the U.S."

The two Koreas, meanwhile, rebuilt industrial economies from the war's devastation, the north as an authoritarian one-party state obsessed with self-reliance, the south as a capitalist powerhouse under repressive military rule and, for the past two decades, a civilian democracy.

Across the heavily mined armistice line, a 4-kilometer-wide (2.5-mile-wide) demilitarized strip stretching 220 kilometers (135 miles) across the peninsula, almost 2 million troops face each other on ready alert for resumed war, some 27,000 of them U.S. military.

War scares have flared regularly, from the 1968 North Korean seizure of the U.S. Navy spy ship *Pueblo*, to the long-running duel over North Korea's nuclear-weapons program, to this year's sinking of the South Korean warship *Cheonan*, allegedly by North Korea. The north earned a reputation as an outlaw state through such brazen acts as blowing up a South Korean airliner or kidnapping Japanese men and women,

Why has this state of no war, no peace dragged on for 60 years?

South Korean scholar Hong believes four great powers - the U.S. and Japan on one side, China and Russia on the other - like it this way.

A unified Korea would align with one power or the other, upsetting the regional balance, said the former Korea University president, a prominent conservative commentator.

"By keeping Korea divided, they're in fact maintaining their own security," Hong said.

Korea as Cold War victim is a given of history: After the impromptu 1945 division, done for the convenience of the dual military occupation, the U.S.-Soviet superpower rivalry repeatedly foiled all efforts at reunification.

But that Cold War ended a generation ago, and Korea's cold war goes on.

Historian Park Myung-lim, a prolific chronicler of the war and author of a recent book on its consequences, said the North Korean leadership of the late Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il bears much of the blame because of its stark black-and-white worldview and bellicose "military first" policies.

Even more, however, it has been a U.S. failure, Park said.

Despite normalizing relations with Moscow, Beijing and Vietnam, the U.S. "has chosen containment over engagement and peaceful coexistence with North Korea," he said.

"I don't understand - Washington is much, much bigger and stronger than Pyongyang, but for 60 years they have failed to bring it into the international community, to invite them to the international community."

It's because "we've never known our enemy," said the University of Chicago's Bruce Cumings, whose new book, "The Korean War," encapsulates a career study of this pivotal 20th-century episode.

American policymakers down the generations wrongly viewed Pyongyang as a puppet of the Kremlin and Beijing, Cumings noted.

"When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, these deep suppositions about the nature of the regime led them to predict North Korea would collapse any day soon. Here we are 20 years later and North Korea is still standing," he said.



Cummings has long advocated for a better understanding of the North Koreans, a people bombed to near-oblivion by the U.S. Air Force in 1950-53. "We burned down every town in North Korea," U.S. bombing expert Gen. Curtis LeMay said afterward.

"Knowing that, you can understand how North Korea looks at us, the grievances they have," Cummings said.

Veteran Korea observer Selig A. Harrison, of the Washington research group Center for International Policy, sees "lots of missed opportunities for peace" over six decades of confrontation.

He attests personally to one, when he interviewed Kim Il Sung in 1972 and carried away an offer of a greater opening toward the U.S., only to be rebuffed by American officials.

"Kim Il Sung was a ruthless tyrant internally," Harrison said. But "he didn't want another Korean War and he did want normalization with the United States."

Park Myung-lim said chances for peace slipped by even a half-century ago: "When China withdrew its troops from the north in 1958, this was the proper time for a U.S. troop withdrawal from the Korean peninsula."

Cummings and others, including Donald Gregg, a former U.S. ambassador to Seoul, cite the abrupt change from President Bill Clinton to President George W. Bush in 2001 as the most recent lost opportunity to end the Korean paralysis.

When Kim Jong Il's envoy Jo Myung Rok lunched with Clinton officials in October 2000 in Washington, after months of diplomatic groundwork, "I heard things said by both sides that were the most hopeful things ever said since the end of the Korean War," Gregg recalled.

But incoming President Bush then scrapped the previous administration's approach and labeled Pyongyang part of an "axis of evil" with Iraq and Iran. "There was total discontinuity," Gregg said.

Others find fault elsewhere. Hong, a believer in the "collapse" theory, said the biggest recent missed opportunity occurred when South Korea's late liberal President Kim Dae-jung instituted his "sunshine policy" of peaceful coexistence, economic relations and humanitarian aid for North Korea.

"I strongly believe that in 1998 if Kim Dae-jung hadn't supported North Korea financially, they would have collapsed by themselves," Hong said.

Retired Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, a former U.S. chief of staff in Korea, sees blown opportunities in the war years themselves.

"The armistice, in essence, rewarded North Korea for invading South Korea. We had the opportunity from a military standpoint. We should have pushed north" - that is, pressed the offensive to subdue the north, said Singlaub, who in 1977 tangled with then-President Jimmy Carter over Carter's plan, later dropped, to withdraw U.S. troops from the peninsula.

North Korea's own views on the endless standoff emerge only in uncomplicated official statements, such as a recent one blaming a "background of hostile actions by South Korea and the USA."

Sixty years of crisis invites such an uncertain array of post-mortems and prescriptions for peace, just as the immediate consequences of the war itself remain uncertain in many ways.

Did 2.5 million people die, or as many as 4 million? The United Nations concluded Chinese military deaths alone reached almost 1 million. The official U.S. death toll stands at 36,516, and hundreds more died from 15 European and other allied nations that came to South Korea's defense. Tens of thousands were massacred in political executions on both sides. The physical devastation, both north and south, was almost complete: factories and schools, railroads and ports, bridges and dams, and hundreds of thousands of homes destroyed. Some 10 million South Koreans today are separated from family in the north.

For the 49 million South Koreans and 24 million North Koreans, that psychic legacy of the unending war, another kind of damage, remains invisible.

Boston psychologist Ramsay Liem, a Korean-American, tells of an emigre to America who as a schoolboy caught in the war, like Hong Il-sik, saw too much killing. "Happiness leaves the heart," is how that man described the burden, "and life cannot be lived fully."

It's a burden sensed even by younger generations, said Liem, who nonetheless believes that "the North Korean and South Korean people have the capacity to resolve this. The problem is, I don't think they've really had the opportunity."

From the hillside campus of Yonsei University, historian Park can look out over this throbbing steel-and-glass metropolis, 10 million people all within range of their brother North Koreans' big artillery. In his crowded office, its document shelves lined with details of the war's atrocities, Park can relive its horrors.

"The Korean people never imagined they could be separated. That was the beginning of the tragedy," Park said. "For North Koreans and South Koreans both, the thing now is to avoid a second Korean War at all costs. It would mean the death of all of us."

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## Student soldiers don't want Korean War forgotten

By KWANG-TAE KIM  
Associated Press Writer

The 15-year-old boy prayed silently beside a freshly dug grave as he and other prisoners waited to be shot by a North Korean firing squad.

Kim Man-kyu, barely taller than his M-1 rifle, had fought with other South Korean student volunteers in an 11-hour battle before being captured just weeks into the 1950-53 Korean War.

"Suddenly, a fighter jet appeared and bombed and fired machine guns at the area," recalled Kim, now a 75-year-old retired pastor. Under attack, the North Koreans abandoned the execution of the prisoners, including some American soldiers.

About 100,000 South Korean students volunteered to fight in the Korean War, which broke out 60 years ago Friday. More than 1,970 perished, according to the War Memorial of Korea, a national museum in Seoul.

Kim was one of 71 students whose story is told in a blockbuster, star-studded film, "71 - In to the Fire," which opened to huge audiences in South Korea last week. The distributor plans to release the movie in the United States and Japan too, though no dates have been set.

The time was August 1950. North Korean troops, who launched the war by invading on June 25, had overrun Seoul and pushed southward almost to the tip of the Korean peninsula.

In the southeastern city of Pohang, Kim said, South Korean troops ordered the students to defend a school-home to a divisional rear command post - as the soldiers retreated to other areas.

When the students ran out of ammunition, they fought hand-to-hand. Kim almost lost sight in his right eye and some of his fingers from shrapnel wounds. Forty-eight of the students died.

Son Joo-hyung was left for dead after being shot in the back. He heard a North Korean soldier tell others not to waste any more ammunition on him. South Korean soldiers later found Son alive and brought him to a hospital.

"My heart aches every August because my fellow student soldiers were killed," he said after visiting a national cemetery in Seoul where his 48 comrades are buried.

Kim, who had lied about his age to join the volunteer corps, was saved by a sudden heavy downpour that forced the North Koreans to abort a second execution attempt. In the pitch-black darkness, he and another student escaped as the prisoners were being moved from one mountain to another. Kim later heard that most of the others were executed.

In the six decades since, South Korea has risen from the devastation of war to become a vibrant democracy and the world's 15th largest economy. The capital, Seoul, is home to glistening skyscrapers. Hyundais hum along its boulevards.

North Korea initially recovered faster than the South, but the economy has struggled since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of its communist ally, the Soviet Union. In recent years, reports of food shortages and famines have trickled out of the isolationist country.

Friday's anniversary - known as "6/25" for the day the war started - means little to many younger South Koreans, raised in an era of relative prosperity.

A survey released by the government this week found more than half of junior and senior high school students and 36.3 percent of adults do not know what year the war broke out. The telephone poll of 1,000 adults and 1,000 students has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

"I don't have any interest in the war and I don't feel threatened by the North," said university student Hong Seung-hwa.

That kind of attitude worries the former student volunteers and other veterans, especially at a time of rising tensions between the Koreas.

South Korea and the United States have blamed the North for a torpedo attack that sunk a South Korean warship on March 26, killing 46.

In response, the South has cut trade with the North and set up loudspeakers at the border - though so far refrained from using them to broadcast propaganda into the North.

North Korea, which denies responsibility for the sinking, has threatened to open fire on the loudspeakers and revived an old threat to turn Seoul into a "sea of flame."

Hyun and Kim, the two former student soldiers, caution against complacency. Hyun notes that the fighting in the Korean War ended with only a cease-fire. The two countries have never signed a peace treaty.

"A new war could break out at any time," he said.

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Online:

"71 - In to the Fire" website: <http://remember-71.co.kr>

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## Divided Koreas remember start of Korean War

By **KELLY OLSEN**  
Associated Press Writer

The two Koreas commemorated the 60th anniversary Friday of the outbreak of the Korean War, promoting vastly different views of the origins of the conflict that still divides their peninsula.

The war started in the early hours of June 25, 1950, with an attack by North Korean troops. The Korean peninsula had been divided in 1945 after colonial ruler Japan's defeat in World War II.

The United States and 15 other countries sent troops to aid South Korea under the fledgling United Nations, while Chinese soldiers came in to fight with the North and the Soviet Union provided air support and advisers. Three years of combat devastated both sides. The fighting ended with an armistice, not a permanent peace treaty, leaving the peninsula in a technical state of war.

In Seoul, South Korea held an official ceremony to remember the war, widely known as "6/25" for the date it began. President Lee Myung-bak presented plaques of appreciation to representatives of countries that sent soldiers or supplies to aid the war effort.

"Sixty years ago today, North Korea's communists opened fire on all fronts of the 38th parallel on a weekend's dawn when all people were sleeping peacefully," Lee said in a speech. The gathering was attended by South Korean and foreign veterans of the conflict, foreign ambassadors and serving South Korean and U.S. soldiers. The U.S. stations about 28,500 troops in South Korea as a deterrent against North Korea.

North Korea's view of the conflict, which it calls the Fatherland Liberation War, is vastly different. Under the headline "U.S., Provoker of Korean War," the country's state news agency on Tuesday accused Washington of starting the war with a surprise attack.

"All the historical facts show that it is the U.S. imperialists who unleashed the war in Korea and that the United States can never escape from the responsibility," the Korean Central News Agency said.

On Thursday, KCNA followed up with a massive 4,300-word article listing damage done by the United States to North Korea since 1945.

KCNA cited the "Committee for Investigation into Damage Done by the U.S. to the Northern Half of Korea" as finding the total monetary cost for North Korean suffering came to a staggering \$65 trillion. That amount is five times the U.S. national debt of about \$13 trillion.

A commemorative rally was expected to take place Friday in Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung Square, named after North Korea's founder and wartime leader who died in 1994.

The mood surrounding the 60th anniversary is far different than during the 50th in June 2000, which came just days after the conclusion of the first-ever summit between the Koreas.

This time relations are tense following the sinking of a South Korean warship in March off the west coast of the peninsula near waters contested by the two countries.

South Korea and the United States accuse North Korea of firing a torpedo to sink the 1,200-ton Cheonan, killing 46 sailors. North Korea denies any role in the sinking and has vowed war if it is punished.

Lee used the occasion of the anniversary to urge Pyongyang to own up to the sinking.

"North Korea should clearly and frankly admit and apologize for its wrongdoing over its provocation," Lee said. He called on the country to assume a responsible attitude in the international community.

At a separate ceremony at the War Memorial of Korea in Seoul, the commander of U.S. and U.N. forces in South Korea issued a warning to Pyongyang.

"The North Korean leadership must know that further provocations will be dealt with swiftly and decisively," Gen. Walter Sharp said in a speech.

China, which remains North Korea's closest ally, called the war an event of the past and emphasized it maintains good relations with both Koreas.

"History is already history," Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told reporters Thursday, adding the war "has taught us to cherish the hard-won peace and tranquility and stability."

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Associated Press writers Kwang-tae Kim and Claire Lee in Seoul and Anita Chang in Beijing contributed to this report.

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