



Korean War Veterans Memorial Washington, D.C.

Introduction and Instructions

Declared in June 1950, the Korean War was never actually settled and remains, to this day, a “frozen war.” After being liberated from the Japanese Empire at the end of WWII, the Korean Peninsula was subsequently divided between the United Nations (UN) in the south and the Soviet Union in the north. Negotiations between the two sides failed to produce an agreement, and in 1953, North Korea invaded the South. What do you know about the history, significance, and symbolism of the Korean War Memorial? In addition to any prior knowledge you may have, use your research skills and the resources provided here to answer the questions below.



What was the Korean War all about? Check out this link for a brief history of the war.
READ: https://www.ducksters.com/history/cold_war/korean_war.php

1. How did the United States get involved in the Korean War?

Answer: After WWII, Korea, which was previously part of Japan, was divided up. The Northern half went under the control of the Soviet Union and the southern half under the control of the United States. The two sides were divided at the 38th parallel. North Korea invaded South Korea, and the forces from the United Nations came to help. The majority of the forces were from the US.

2. What was the original intent of the United Nations? How did that change?

Answer: At first, the United Nations was only trying to defend South Korea. However, after the first summer of fighting, President Truman decided to go on the offensive. He said the war was now about liberating North Korea from communism.

3. How did the war end? What changed as a result?

Answer: In 1953, a treaty was signed that ended the war. Few things had changed as a result of the war. Both countries would remain independent and the border would remain at the 38th parallel. However, between the two countries a two-mile demilitarized zone was placed to act as a buffer in hopes to prevent future wars.

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Learn more about the the story behind the Korean War Veterans Memorial.
WATCH: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byGdY4F4Xzc>

4. How would you describe the memorial based on what you've learned?

Answer: It is on the National Mall. There is the Field of Service (19 statues); United Nations Curb; Pool of Remembrance; Granite Wall - Freedom Is Not Free; Mural Wall

5. What do the pictures on the etched mural represent?

Answer: They represent the support of the American people during the Korean War.



Learn about some of the symbolism used in the Korean War Veterans Memorial.
READ: <https://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Missions/Military-Programs/Korean-War-Veterans-Memorial/>

6. Choose three examples of symbolism used and explain their meaning.

Answer: Answers will vary. Some examples include:

- The juniper bushes are meant to be symbolic of the rough terrain encountered in Korea and the granite strips, the obstacles overcome in war.
- Three of the statues are in the woods, so if you are at the flagpole looking through the troops, you can't tell how many there are.
- The blowing ponchos give motion to the column, so you can feel them walking up the hill with the cold winter wind at their backs, talking to one another.
- On the mural wall the images appear to be overlooking the statues of the men they supported.
- The wall is made from Academy Black Granite polished to reflect the statues. The reflection creates an appearance of 38 statues, symbolic of the 38th parallel - the boundary between North and South Korea.
- To the south of the Memorial are three beds of Rose of Sharon hibiscus plants. This plant is the national flower of South Korea.
- Honoring the dead, the missing, the POW's and the wounded from the United States and United Nations Forces ... statistics engraved in stone ... walk out into the pool area on a peninsula symbolic of the Republic of Korea, which is a peninsula.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK? *This is your chance to share your opinions, make connections, and apply what you've learned!*

1. Inlaid in silver, a granite wall at the Korean Memorial reads, "Freedom Is Not Free." Explain what is meant by this statement.

Answers will vary.

2. Korean War? Korean Conflict? Police Action? Congress never officially declared war on North Korea. Do you think it should still be considered a war? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.



CONSIDER: The United Nations was created during WWII. It is an international organization of major world leaders whose goal is to monitor and mediate conflicts between nations, provide humanitarian aid, and provide security for the countries involved from hostile actions that threatened their way of life. The Korean conflict was labeled as UN-led "police action" where the United States provided most of the UN forces.

3. Do you think that the United States should be involved and send troops to fight or support other countries who are at war?

Answers will vary.