The Korean War

America’s Forgotten war

Causes leading to war

- During the 1940’s, political tensions were building in Korea
- Japan had ruled Korea from 1910-1945
- In 1945 the Allies divided Korea into two zones
- The Soviets occupied the northern zone and US occupied the southern zone

Korean Prewar Boundary

Divided Korea

- North Korea was led by communist leader Kim Il Sung and called itself “The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”
- South Korea was led by Syngman Rhee and called itself “The Republic of Korea”
U.S. Involvement

- South Korea was unstable economically
- The United States feared that South Korea would fall to communism
- The US government helped to build a small military in South Korea
- The Soviet Union supported North Korea by helping create a strong military and industrial economy
- Both the US and the Soviets removed their troops from Korea in 1949

Fighting Begins

- North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950
- The UN became involved and asked for an immediate cease fire
- The Soviets were boycotting the U.N. due to the denial of admittance of China to the world governing body so their veto power was absent

Support for South Korea

- June 27th: The U.N. Security Council labels North Korea as an aggressor and offered support to South Korea
- The US sponsored this resolution
- US forces entered South Korea under the direction of General MacArthur
- 15 other countries gave military and monetary support, however no other country gave the same support that the United States did. (US about 80%)
The Inchon Landing
- September 15, 1950
  MacArthur instruments the Inchon Landing
- US X Corps cut off the N. Korean Troops at the Pusan Perimeter limiting supplies
- By September 26, 1950
  S. Korean and US forces recapture Seoul

Capture Pyongyang on October 19, 1950
- Troops head for Yalu River
- China warns S. Korea and the US to stop
- Be home for Christmas
- US and Chinese clash on October 25, 1950
- By November 25, 1950
  S. Korea and the US are in a retreat

Chinese Offensive
- By January 1951
  The Chinese have pushed troops back across the 38th parallel
- At this point
  A stalemate begins and movement is limited

Due to China’s involvement, General MacArthur called for a major expansion of the war. His proposal included:
- Blockading China’s coast
- Invading the interior of China
Conflict Regarding the Plan

- Supporters of MacArthur’s plan said it would overthrow the Communist regime in China
- Opponents argued that blockading China could entice the Soviets to become involved

Truman’s Response

- President Truman opposed MacArthur’s plan
- Truman relieved MacArthur from his position in April 1951
- The war had reached a stalemate by the summer of 1951.
- The war became a hot button issue in the election of 1952

Election of 1952

- Republican candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower
- Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson
- Eisenhower promised to end the Korean war yet still resist the spread of Communism
- Eisenhower won the electoral college 442-89

The War Ends

- Eisenhower stayed true to his word to end the war
- Bombing raids increased by the US in North Korea in May of 1953
- July 27th, 1953 an armistice was agreed upon.
- The outcome of the war was the same dividing line that was present before the start of the war, approximately around the 38th parallel
Conclusions about the War

- No significant territory is gained or lost by either side
- No Peace Treaty has EVER been signed
- Korea is still divided today as communist North Korea and democratic South Korea
- Poisoned relations with communist China

Conclusions about the War

- American Soldiers are still present in Korea today
- Military spending increased significantly
- A Military-Industrial complex was developed in the US
- Showed the US would go to great lengths to help prevent the spread of communism