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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Korean War originated in the division of Korea into South Korea and North Korea after World War II (1939-1945). Efforts to reunify the peninsula after the war failed, and in 1948 the South proclaimed the Republic of Korea and the North established the People's Republic of Korea. In 1949, border fighting broke out between the North and the South. On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces crossed the dividing line and invaded the South. Soon, in defense of the South, the United States joined the fighting under the banner of the United Nations (UN), along with small contingents of British, Canadian, Australian, and Turkish troops.

In October 1950, China joined the war on the North's side. By the time a cease-fire agreement was signed on July 27, 1953, millions of soldiers and civilians had perished. The armistice ended the fighting, but Korea has remained divided for decades since and subject to the possibility of a new war at any time. The Korean War was one of the most destructive of the 20th century. Perhaps as many as 4 million Koreans died throughout the peninsula, two-thirds of them civilians. China lost up to 1 million soldiers, and the United States suffered 54,246 dead and 103,284 wounded.

All together, North and South Korea covers an area of 85,246 square miles, and only fifteen percent of that can be considered plains - these are mostly in the southern coastal regions. The United States could not allow its interests in East Asia, particularly Japan, to be placed in jeopardy. It was not the nation of Korea but its geographical location that prompted America to intervene in the war.

(Sommers, 3-10) The United Nations was greatly concerned with the war in Korea, but it did not have an army to send. Thus, the United States Army made up four fifths of the actual forces sent to Korea. The bulk of the forces sent were placed under the command of General MacArthur from the United States. One of the first attempts to drive the North Koreans back was a wise plan devised by MacArthur. He landed his forces from the sea at Inchon and worked his way up the coast. His gamble paid off when his army retook the South Korean capital of Seoul. After this victory the United States questioned whether they should stop at the 38th parallel or go beyond it and try to recapture North Korea. They decided to go on.

After the 38th was crossed putting the US and South Korean forces in the North, China threatened to send troops in to defend North Korea. After many deliberations the United States decided to continue on. As they said they would, China stepped into the war and drove the Southerners back sixty miles below the 38th parallel, recapturing Seoul. (Boorstin and Kelley, 723-726) The war was a stalemate. No one side could get the upper hand. Some people questioned whether this would evolve into World War III. Peace negotiations seemed hopeless because the North refused to compromise and so they closed the negotiations. The United States had no choice but to use their last alternative.

They threatened to bomb China and to use atomic bombs on Korea. These threats reopened the peace negotiations. Three years, one month, and two days later the war ended. Cease-fire came at 10: 00 P. M., and an armistice was signed by North Korea and the United Nations on July 27, 1953.

(Boorstin and Kelley, 723-726) The Korean War was the first American war ever waged that was not fought for national survival, for territory, for Manifest Destiny, or for hegemony. This was also an ideological war. For the first time in the nations history Americans were asked to fight and die to contain an idea. The Korea War ended in an ambiguous victory, that was purchased dearly. The United States spent sixty-seven billion dollars on this one war. With that amount of money we could have traveled to the moon and back two and a half times. (At the cost of our first excursion to the moon.

) The war was also purchased with the blood of millions. Soldiers and civilians alike on both sides of the battle gave their lives for what they believed in and some had no idea what was going