

## **U.S. Enters Korean War**

*While the end of World War II brought peace and prosperity to most Americans, it also created a heightened state of tension between the Soviet Union and the United States. Fearing that the Soviet Union intended to "export" communism to other nations, America centered its foreign policy on the "containment" of communism, both at home and abroad. Although formulation of the Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan, and the Berlin Airlift suggested that the United States had a particular concern with the spread of communism in Europe, America's policy of containment extended to Asia as well. Indeed, Asia proved to be the site of the first major battle waged in the name of containment: the Korean War.*

*In 1950 the Korea Peninsula was divided between a Soviet-backed government in the north and an American-backed government in the south. The division of Korea into two halves had come at the end of World War II. In August of 1945 the Soviet Union invaded Korea, which had been under Japan's control since 1910. Fearing that the Soviets intended to seize the entire peninsula from their position in the north, the United States quickly moved its own troops into southern Korea. Japanese troops surrendered to the Russians in the north and to the Americans in the south. In an effort to avoid a long-term decision regarding Korea's future, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to divide Korea temporarily along the 38th parallel, a latitudinal line that bisected the country. This line became more rigid after 1946, when Kim Il Sung organized a communist government in the north---the Democratic People's Republic. Shortly after, nationalist exile Syngman Rhee returned to Korea and set up a rival government in the south---the Republic of Korea (ROK). Each government hoped to reunify the country under its own rule.*

*War broke out along the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950. On that day, North Korean troops coordinated an attack at several strategic points along the parallel and headed south toward Seoul. The United Nations Security Council responded to the attack by adopting (by a 9-0 vote) a resolution that condemned the invasion as a "breach of the peace." The Council did not have a Soviet delegate, since 6 months prior, the Soviet Union had left to protest the United Nation's refusal to seat a delegate from China. President Harry S. Truman quickly committed American forces to a combined United Nations military effort and named Gen. Douglas MacArthur Commander of the U.N. forces. Fifteen other nations also sent troops under the U.N. command. Truman did not seek a formal declaration of war from Congress; officially, America's presence in Korea amounted to no more than a "police action."*

*However, the entry of the United States into the conflict signaled a reversal of policy toward Korea. Although it backed the government of Syngman Rhee, the United States had begun withdrawing its troops from South Korea in 1948. As late as January of 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson had implied that the Korea Peninsula lay outside the all-important "defense perimeter" of the United States, a statement that some took to mean that the United States would not defend the ROK from communist attack.*

*So why did the United States become involved in the Korean conflict?*

*The decision to intervene in Korea grew out of the tense atmosphere that characterized Cold War politics. On the eve of the North Korean invasion, a number of events had made Truman anxious. The Soviet Union exploded an atomic bomb in 1949, ending the United States' monopoly on the weapon. In Europe, Soviet intervention in Greece and Turkey had given rise to the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan, which funneled aid to war-torn Europe in the hopes of warding off communist political victories. In early 1950, President Truman directed the National Security Council (NSC) to conduct an analysis of Soviet and American military capabilities. In its report, known as "NSC 68," the Council recommended heavy increases in military funding to help contain the Soviets.*

*Events in Asia also contributed to an increased sense of insecurity. In 1949 China underwent a revolution that brought Mao Zedong and his Communist party into power. The nationalists, led by Chiang Kai-Shek, had retreated to the island of Formosa (Taiwan) while they continued their war with mainland China. Mao quickly moved to ally himself with the Soviet Union and signed a treaty with the Soviets in 1950. The Truman administration faced criticism from Republicans who claimed he had "lost" China. They criticized him for not providing enough aid to the Chinese nationalists. The suggestion by Secretary of State Dean Acheson that the administration recognize the communist government of China only gave them more ammunition for their attacks.*

– *Social Education*, the Journal of the National Council for the Social Studies

**FCCPA has created** a database of the Fairfax County Korean veterans who died during the war, 25 June 1950 – 27 July 1953. Most of these men have been memorialized on the plaque at the Fairfax County Courthouse.

The database identifies 23 veterans. Where possible a biography, of each veteran's military life and a photograph of their gravestone is also included.

If you have any additions or corrections please contact the Fairfax County Cemetery Preservation Association ( FCCPA). To submit the information, please contact FCCPA through our website [www.honorfairfaxcemeteries.org](http://www.honorfairfaxcemeteries.org).

We would appreciate source information and/or documentation for any additions or corrections.

## **Acknowledgments**

A historical compilation like this could not have been done without valuable resources and the contributions of many people.

Foremost, Fairfax County Cemetery Preservation Association is indebted to:

The resources of the **Virginia Room** located at the City of Fairfax Regional Library Fairfax, Virginia.

The military records located at **www.fold3.com** and **ancestry.com**.

The contributors to **www.findagrave.com** for providing valuable online reference information and documentation of many of our area cemeteries and gravesites.

Members of our **database research committee** including Jamie Callender, Jack and Diane Dellomo, Mary Lipsey, and Ruth and Don Williams.

#### Disclaimer:

FCCPA volunteers have contributed countless hours and extraordinary effort to create this database. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. It is accurate to the best of our knowledge. We do not claim that this database is complete. We would appreciate any corrections or suggested additions. Please contact FCCPA at <http://www.honorfairfaxcemeteries.org/>

#### Contact Us:

If you have any questions, corrections, or additions, please contact FCCPA through our website: [www.honorfairfaxcemeteries.org](http://www.honorfairfaxcemeteries.org). We would appreciate source information and/or documentation for any additions or corrections.