

The Korean War

By Sharon Fabian

The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union got its name because it was not a war in the usual sense of the word. The United States and the Soviet Union did not fight each other on the battlefield. They did not attack each other with guns, tanks, or missiles.

According to one definition, a Cold War is one fought with words and threats, not with guns. It is not a military conflict.

A closer look at history during the Cold War years, however, will show that this is not entirely true. It is true that the United States and the Soviet Union never declared war on each other, but the two sides in the Cold War, the democratic countries and the communist countries, did meet on more than one battlefield during the Cold War years.

One of those battlefields was Korea. The Korean War was a conflict between communist countries and democratic countries.

The conflict that led to the Korean War started at the end of World War II. At the end of the war, the Soviet Union occupied the northern half of Korea, and the United States occupied the southern half.

The plan was for Korea to eventually become one independent country again. But, it wasn't working out that way. The United Nations stepped in and tried to help, but Korea remained divided. North Korea remained a Communist country. South Korea operated under a separate government set up by the United Nations.

Many members of the United Nations, including the United States, supported the South Korean government.

The Soviet Union and China supported North Korea.

Then on June 25, 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. North Korea received military support from the Soviet Union and China. South Korea fought back with support from the United States and its allies.

The dividing line between North and South Korea became the front line in the war. The line was pushed south as North Korea invaded. Then the line was pushed north as South Korea fought back. The Communist countries were trying to unify Korea as a communist country. The United States and its allies were trying to unify Korea under the government of South Korea. Eventually, the line ended up back in the center of Korea when the war ended on July 27, 1953.

The communist countries and the democratic countries had not declared war on each other. Neither the United States nor the Soviet Union had been invaded. Neither country had had to fight battles to defend its own soil. So, in one way, the Korean War was a part of the Cold War.

In another way, it was not a Cold War at all. Much of Korea had become a bloody battlefield. Millions of soldiers and civilians had been killed. Millions of other Koreans were homeless by the end of the war. Many had lost their old way of life forever. Much of Korea needed to be rebuilt after the war.

The Korean War may have been a part of the Cold War to the superpowers of the world, but to the soldiers and the people of Korea, it was not a Cold War at all.



Name _____



Date _____

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Questions

- _____ 1. The Korean War lasted for about _____ years.
 - A. 4
 - B. 2
 - C. 14
 - D. 3

- _____ 2. The Cold War took place _____.
 - A. after the Vietnam War
 - B. between World War I and World War II
 - C. after World War II
 - D. before World War I

- _____ 3. The Korean War started when _____.
 - A. The Soviet union invaded South Korea
 - B. China invaded South Korea
 - C. North Korea invaded South Korea
 - D. The United Nations invaded South Korea

- _____ 4. The number of casualties in the Korean War was _____.
 - A. in the millions
 - B. 1,000,000
 - C. very few
 - D. zero

- _____ 5. North Korea's allies were _____.
 - A. the Soviet Union and China
 - B. The Soviet Union and Germany
 - C. The United States and the Soviet Union
 - D. the United States and other members of the United Nations

- _____ 6. South Korea's allies were _____.
 - A. the United States and other members of the United Nations
 - B. the Soviet Union and China
 - C. The Soviet Union and Germany
 - D. The United States and the Soviet Union

- _____ 7. The Korean War was _____.
 - A. a part of the Cold War
 - B. an actual war
 - C. a conflict between communist countries and democratic countries
 - D. all of the above

- _____ 8. Which of the following countries were not considered superpowers?
 - A. the United States
 - B. the Soviet Union
 - C. Korea
 - D. All of the above

