

# KOREAN WAR TIMELINE PART I

## 1392: KINGDOM OF JOSEON ESTABLISHED

It unites the **Korean peninsula** under one rule that lasts over 500 years. It resists Japanese and Chinese control but at various times is forced to pay tribute to either countries. By the 19th century, Korea is considered a tributary state of China.

## 1894-1895: FIRST SINO-JAPANESE WAR

Fought between **China** and **Japan** over control of Korea, among other things, it ends with a Japanese victory and weakens Chinese hold over the region.

## 1905: RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR ENDS

Fought between **Russia** and **Japan** for control over the region, it ends with a Japanese victory. Korea is made a protected state under the Japanese Empire.

## 1910: KOREA ANNEXED BY JAPAN

**Korea** is formally made a **colony** of Japan. A Korean independence movement grows during this time and a provisional government in exile is established by political leader Syngman Rhee in China.

## 1937-1945: SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR

The second war between **China** and **Japan** is fought as Japan attempts to annex China. Many Koreans had fled to China after 1910 and fight alongside Chinese forces against Japan, including Kim Il-Sung.

## DECEMBER 8, 1941: US DECLARES WAR ON JAPAN

After the Japanese attack on the naval base at Pearl Harbor, the **U.S.** enters World War II by declaring war against Japan. An estimated 5 ½ million Koreans will be mobilized to serve or support Japan's war efforts.

## AUGUST 8, 1945: SOVIET UNION DECLARES WAR ON JAPAN

The **Soviet Union**, which had previously signed a non-aggression agreement with Japan, declares war and quickly occupies most of the major cities in the northern half of the Korean Peninsula.

## AUGUST 15, 1945: JAPAN SURRENDERS

**Japan** surrenders to the Allied forces after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the declaration of war by the Soviet Union. **Korea** is declared liberated. US soldiers arrive a few weeks later to occupy the southern half of the peninsula.

## SEPTEMBER 7, 1945: KOREA DIVIDED AT 38<sup>TH</sup> PARALLEL

By order of the US State Department, a declaration is made that Korea will be divided in half at the **38<sup>th</sup> Parallel** into two occupation zones until the country is recovered. **America** occupies the **southern** half and the **Soviet Union** occupies the **northern** half of the Korean peninsula. The division is supposed to last five years.

## 1948: NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA OFFICIALLY ESTABLISHED

The **Republic of Korea (South Korea)** and the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)** are officially established. **Syngman Rhee** is elected to leadership in the south. **Kim Il-Sung** is established as leader in the communist north. Both express the desire to conquer the other and unite Korea under their leadership.

## 1950: CHINA AGREES TO AID NORTH KOREA

The **Chinese Civil War**, which had been fought before and after WWII, ends and communist forces take control of the country with North Korea's aid in 1949. China comes to an agreement with the Soviet Union to aid North Korea in any future conflicts. A communist rebellion breaks out in South Korea and fighting occurs along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.

## JUNE 25, 1950: NORTH KOREA INVADES SOUTH KOREA

With support promised by the Soviet Union and China, **North Korea invades South Korea** in a mass attack across the border in an attempt to take control over the entire peninsula. South Korean forces are quickly overrun.

# KOREAN WAR TIMELINE PART II

## JUNE 27, 1950: UN VOTES TO AID KOREA

The **United Nations** Security Council, which two days prior had condemned North Korea's attack, votes to send aid to South Korea to help repel the invasion. The U.S. sends air and naval forces. On July 8<sup>th</sup>, **General Douglas MacArthur** is named commander of the UN forces in Korea.

## JULY 16, 1950: BATTLE OF TAEJON

Fought between the **UN and North Korean** forces, the UN loses the major transportation hub at the city of **Taejon**, but buys time for a massive defensive perimeter to be established around the large port of **Pusan** on the southern tip of the peninsula.

## SEPTEMBER 15, 1950: BATTLE OF INCHON

General MacArthur orders a risky **amphibious landing** at the coastal town of **Inchon**, outside the capital of Seoul, to relieve the Pusan Perimeter defenders. The landing behind enemy lines takes the North Koreans by surprise and gives the UN a major advantage that will eventually push the invading forces back over the border.

## OCTOBER 25, 1950: CHINA ENTERS WAR

After warnings that UN forces will be attacked if they cross the border into **China**, a massive Chinese force attacks UN troops along the North Korean border. The attack halts the UN advance north and represents a major turning point in the war.

## JANUARY 25–MARCH 7, 1951: OPERATIONS THUNDERBOLT, KILLER, AND RIPPER

UN forces regroup and launch a mass **reconnaissance** operation that determines the strength and location of the Chinese and North Korean militaries. This allows them to launch mass **counterattacks** that push them north of Seoul and retake the capital.

## MARCH 6, 1951: MACARTHUR PREDICTS WAR MAY STALEMATE

General MacArthur gives press conference where he predicts the war will come to a **stalemate** if left to continue as it has. The UN begins to consider pursuing a **cease-fire**. MacArthur disapproves of an armistice and advocates strongly for a **military victory** that reunites the peninsula under South Korean leadership.

## APRIL 11, 1951: MACARTHUR RELIEVED OF DUTY

General MacArthur is **relieved of duty** after prolonged disagreements over how to end the war with President Harry S. Truman. **General Matthew Ridgway** takes over as UN commander in Korea.

## AUGUST–SEPTEMBER, 1950: BATTLE OF THE PUSAN PERIMETER

UN troops make a successful stand against North Korean attacks at the defensive perimeter around **Pusan**, despite earlier defeats and overwhelming enemy forces. It allows time for more military aid to arrive in the country. By September, UN forces are double that of the North Korean military.

## OCTOBER 1, 1950: NORTH KOREAN FORCES DRIVEN OVER BORDER

By October, North Korean forces are driven back over the border at the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. A few days prior, MacArthur was given orders to destroy the North Korean army. UN forces soon cross the border and will take over the country almost up to the border with China.

## NOVEMBER 27, 1950: BATTLE OF THE CHOSIN RESERVOIR

Chinese forces attempt to surround US forces at the Chosin Reservoir. US soldiers are routed but manage to make a tactical withdrawal. The UN successfully **evacuates** 193 ships full of soldiers, supplies, and civilians.

## FEBRUARY 11, 1951: BATTLE OF HOENGSAN

"The Gettysburg of the Korean War." An estimated 5,600 UN troops make a **successful stand** against a surrounding force of 25,000 Chinese soldiers.

## MARCH 23, 1951: OPERATIONS COURAGEOUS AND TOMAHAWK

UN forces **take over** the peninsula just above the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel.

# KOREAN WAR TIMELINE PART III

## APRIL 22, 1951: BATTLES OF THE IMJIN RIVER AND KAPYONG

UN forces successfully stop **Chinese** troops from attempting to break through and advance south to recapture Seoul.

## JULY 10, 1951: ARMISTICE NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN

The war begins to **stalemate**, with neither sides able to advance further into enemy territory though fighting continues along the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel. Fighting will continue as **cease-fire** talks are drawn out for the next two years.

## AUGUST–OCTOBER 1951: BATTLES OF BLOODY RIDGE, THE PUNCHBOWL, AND HEARTBREAK RIDGE

North Korean and Chinese attempts to **break through** the UN forces fail. Large offensive operations by the UN are halted.

## MAY 12, 1952: MATTHEW RIDGWAY REPLACED BY MARK CLARK

General Matthew Ridgway is replaced by **General Mark Clark** as UN commander for the rest of the fighting.

## MARCH 5, 1953: STALIN DIES

**Joseph Stalin**, leader of the Soviet Union, dies, and new leadership begins to withdraw aid from China and North Korea while encouraging them to end hostilities in Korea. Continued fighting is impossible without Soviet support and more serious **armistice** talks begin.

## JULY 27, 1953: ARMISTICE SIGNED

A **cease-fire agreement** is signed by China, North Korea, and the UN. South Korea refuses to sign. The agreement establishes the border at the **38<sup>th</sup> Parallel** and a **Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)** between the two Koreas. It is one of the most watched borders in the world. Attempted talks for a **peace treaty fail** over the next decades.

## OCTOBER 1, 1953: MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY SIGNED

The United States and South Korea sign a **treaty** promising to provide aid if either are attacked by an outside enemy. North Korea and Russia eventually sign a similar agreement.

## AUGUST 18, 1976: AXE MURDER INCIDENT

A group of UN soldiers are killed by North Korean troops while pruning a tree in the DMZ that blocked their view from an outpost outside Panmunjom. A few days later, the UN launches **Operation Paul Bunyan**, sending a massive force to finish the job. North Korean troops observe but don't interfere.

## 2010: ROKS CHEONAN AND YEONPYEONGDO INCIDENTS

In March, the South Korean ship **Cheonan** is sunk off the coast of Incheon. A South Korean investigation concludes a North Korean submarine is responsible but this is questioned. In November, South Korean forces conduct a military exercise by the disputed island of **Yeonpyeongdo**. North Korea responds with an artillery strike that kills four.

## MARCH 11, 2013: NORTH KOREA DECLARES ARMISTICE INVALID

After new UN sanctions are put into effect, North Korea claims the 1953 armistice is now **invalid** and declares it has now entered a state of war that will resolve the situation in Korea once and for all. South Korea, Japan, and the US are threatened with **nuclear strikes**.

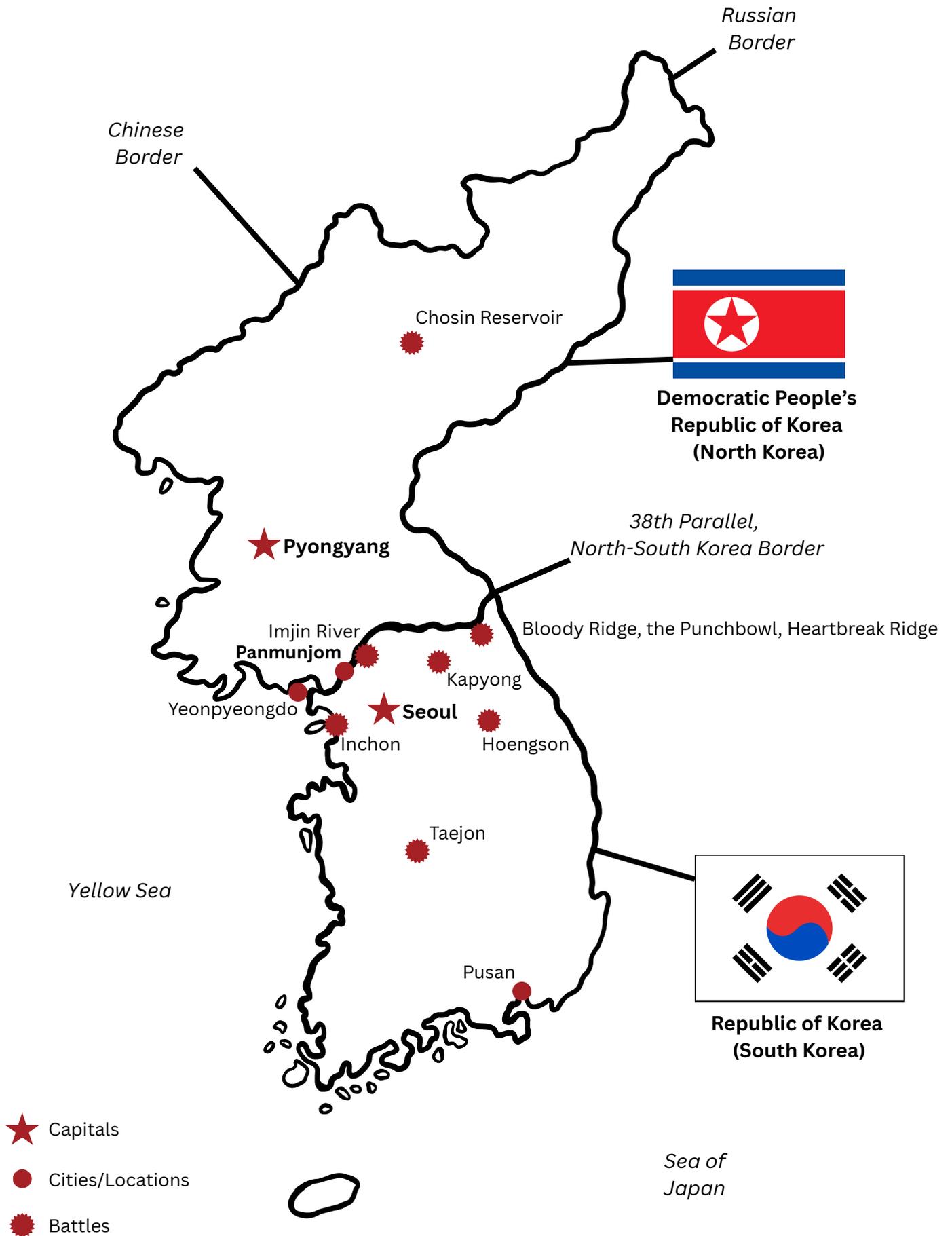
## APRIL 27, 2018: PANMUNJOM DECLARATION SIGNED

North and South Korean leaders sign a declaration at the North Korean city of **Panmunjom**, where the 1953 armistice was signed. They agree to cooperate to end the hostilities of the war for good and establish **peaceful relations** between them, including a commitment to eventually remove all nuclear weapons from the peninsula.

## 2023–2024: PANMUNJOM DECLARATION DECLARED VOID

In 2023, new leadership in South Korea is elected. North Korea claims there is South Korean military build up at the border, which **voids** the 2018 declaration. In 2024, South Korea also declares the Panmunjom declaration to be void.

# Korean War Map



# Leadership During the Korean War



**General Douglas  
MacArthur,  
United Nations**



**Syngman Rhee,  
South Korea**



**General Matthew  
Ridgway,  
United Nations**



**Kim Il-Sung,  
North Korean**



**General Mark Clark,  
United Nations**



**Mao Zedong,  
China**



**Harry S. Truman,  
United States**



**Joseph Stalin,  
Soviet Union**