



KOREAN WAR

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ONLINE RESOURCES

The following is a list of bilingual research resources to support educators and students in their research.



A collection of firsthand accounts and photographs from Canadian veterans.



A database showcasing thematic learning tools for educators.



An online resource covering a wide range of topics in Canadian history. Search for articles by title or keyword.



Educational videos produced by the Memory Project including veterans' accounts and more.

MESSAGE TO TEACHERS

This resource includes a collection of Korean War veterans' testimonies grouped by theme. This guide does not present a comprehensive overview of the conflict but offers a selection of stories and perspectives that explore a range of veterans' experiences. This resource is best suited for students who have some contextual knowledge of the time periods and conflicts discussed and is meant to be incorporated into lesson plans and activities.

The Korean War resource was produced by the Memory Project, a program of Historica Canada, with the generous support of the Government of Canada. The Memory Project is a volunteer speakers bureau that arranges for veteran and active members of the Canadian Forces to share their stories of military service at schools and community events across the country. Book a speaker at thememoryproject.com/book-a-speaker.

Historica Canada offers free, bilingual programs you can use to explore, learn, and reflect on our history, and what it means to be Canadian. Find us online at HistoricaCanada.ca.

This resource provides brief contextual information on the history and major battles of the Korean War. For a more detailed description of the unfolding of the war, please see the following resources on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*:

- [Korean War Timeline](#)
- [Korean War article](#)

CONTENT WARNING

Please note that the following veterans' testimonies include descriptions of war, which some may find offensive or disturbing. Educators are encouraged to review profiles ahead of time.

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INTRODUCTION

Near the end of the Second World War, the Korean peninsula was liberated from the Japanese occupying forces by American and Soviet forces. There was no agreement between the Americans, Russians, and Koreans on what sort of government Korea should have. The United Nations (UN) Temporary Commission on Korea oversaw democratic elections in 1948, but Russia blocked these in the north. Shortly after, the Republic of Korea (ROK) was founded in the south and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) was founded in the north. Both forces wanted to unify the country. In 1949, the newly communist Chinese government helped Russia to supply the DPRK with weapons for a June 1950 invasion of the ROK. The United Nations condemned the invasion and encouraged members to lend assistance to the ROK.



TIMELINE: LEAD - UP TO WAR

JUNE 1950

Lester B. Pearson encouraged Canada to get involved through the UN under the leadership of the United States.

7 AUGUST 1950

Creation of 25th Canadian Infantry Brigade to serve in Korea.

18 DECEMBER 1950

The first Canadian regiment deployed arrives in Korea.



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DAY - TO - DAY

In mid-1951, the front lines became static near the 38th parallel, where they remained until the end of the war. The fighting consisted mostly of patrols and raids against hilltop trench positions across the area in between UN forces and enemy lines, known as "No Man's Land."

The following profiles present accounts of the experiences of Canadian soldiers deployed to Korea, sorted by branch of service.

ON THE GROUND - ARMY



JAN VAN DER RASSEL



JEAN PAQUET



ART ROBILLARD



BERNARD CHARLAND



ROGER BEAUREGARD



Paul Tomelin

"My experience during the Second World War convinced me that war was hell. And when I was in Korea, I think that's what I tried to get out with my photographs, that war was hell."

[READ MORE>>](#)

AT SEA - NAVY



ANDY BARBER



PHILIP BISSELL



DAVID CAMPBELL

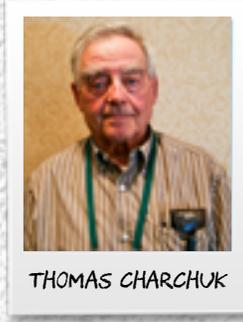


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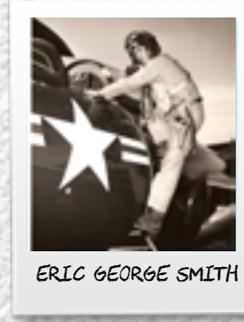
IN THE SKY - AIR FORCE



MORT LIGHTSTONE



THOMAS CHARCHUK



ERIC GEORGE SMITH

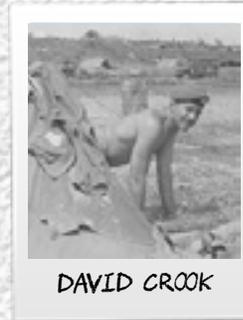
MAJOR BATTLES

BATTLE OF KAPYONG

22-25 APRIL 1951

Canadian troops fought at the Battle of Kapyong, which began when Communist forces launched a major offensive on 22 April. The battle was composed of Australian and Canadian forces on one side, protecting a withdrawing ROK force. The other side was composed largely of Chinese forces. For two days and through the night, a battalion of roughly 700 Canadian troops (2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry) defended a crucial hill against a force of about 5,000 Chinese soldiers. The Canadians held their position until the attacking force had been halted and the Canadians could be relieved.

For more information on this battle, see [this article](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.



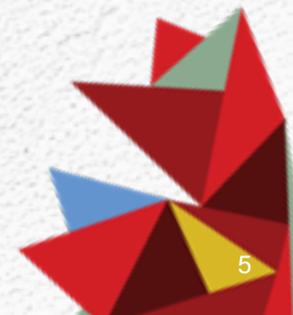
DAVID CROOK



HARLEY WELSH



GWYLYM WHITE



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Mark Jameson Smith, Chrismar Mapping Services Inc./
Deadlock in Korea: Canadians at War, 1950-1953, Ted Barris.

BATTLES AT HILL 355

Hill 355 (also called Kowang-San or Little Gibraltar), so named because it was 355 meters above sea level, was a very strategic location because it was the highest point in the area. It was also the site of several fierce battles as both sides wanted the advantages it could provide. At some point during the war, every Canadian battalion that served in Korea spent time defending Hill 355.



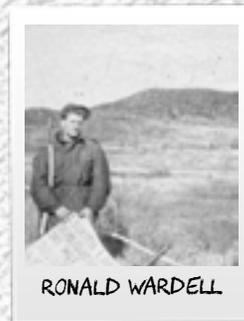
ALBERT GAGNON



ADRIEN BRISSON



CLAUDE PETIT



RONALD WARDELL



22 NOVEMBER 1951

The Royal Canadian Regiment, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, and Royal 22^e Régiment (also known as the Van Doos) defended the front lines between Hill 227 and Hill 355, pushing back heavy assaults for three days.

For more information on this battle, see [this article](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

KOJE-DO INCIDENT — 25 MAY 1952

North Korean and Chinese prisoners rebelled and seized an American prisoner of war camp (housing 160,000 prisoners) at Koje-Do (now Geojedo). At the request of the US military, Canadian troops helped recapture the prison. The deployment of Canadian troops without the Canadian government's consent resulted in a public diplomatic protest to the US government.

For more information on the Koje-Do Incident, see [this article](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

22 OCTOBER 1952

Less than a year later, the Canadians again found themselves under intense fire at Hill 355. In a battle that lasted 33 hours, the Royal Canadian Regiment held its position against an advancing Chinese force. As a result of the action at Kowang-San, soldiers of the Battalion were awarded three Military Crosses and four Military Medals for gallantry.

For more information on this battle, see [this article](#) on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.



DONALD DALKE



JOHN SADLER



HERB PITTS



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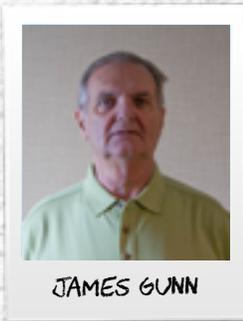
BATTLE OF HILL 187

The Canadian Army's last major battle of the Korean War was fought on Hill 187. The 3rd Battalion of the Royal Canadian Regiment endured constant enemy shellfire and wave upon wave of assaults on their positions. During the night, C Company was overrun by Chinese soldiers, and [Ed Hollyer](#), who commanded 7 Platoon, called artillery fire down on his own company's positions. Hollyer was awarded the Military Cross for his actions.

2 MAY 1953



Mark Jameson Smith, Chrismar Mapping Services Inc./*Deadlock in Korea: Canadians at War, 1950-1953*, Ted Barris. ▲



JAMES GUNN



DONOVAN REDKNAP



RALPH VERGE



HAROLD CURLEY

THE END OF THE WAR

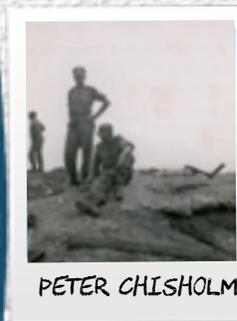
THE BEGINNING OF THE CEASEFIRE

After months of stagnated fighting along the 38th parallel, the two sides came to an armistice agreement. They agreed to a ceasefire, the repatriation of prisoners of war, and the maintenance of a demilitarized zone (DMZ) running along the parallel, splitting the two Koreas. The agreement was signed by representatives of the Chinese Army and the DPRK Army on one side, and UN representatives on the other. This armistice agreement endures today. During the two years that followed the 1953 armistice, Canadians continued to serve in Korea. Many were troops who guarded and patrolled the ROK's side of the DMZ, which separates North and South Korea to this day.

27 JULY 1953 – KOREAN ARMISTICE AGREEMENT

RETURN TO CANADA

Since there was little at stake for most of the Canadian public in the Korean War, it became easy for Canadians to forget their country was even at war once the initial drama of the conflict had settled into a stalemate. For many soldiers, the return to Canada was anticlimactic. There were no cheering crowds or parades to welcome them home as there had been in 1945. The Canadian military's focus had largely been on West Germany in anticipation of a Soviet attack that never materialized.



PETER CHISHOLM



FRANK SMYTH



HAROLD TOTH



HARRY SNAITH



SHERIDAN PATTERSON



ANDRE THERRIEN

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ARMISTICE TO THE HOMECOMING OF THE LAST CANADIAN SOLDIERS

In Panmunjom, delegates from both sides signed the Korean Armistice Agreement. It marked the end of the longest negotiated armistice in history: 158 meetings spread over two years and 17 days. The truce went into effect at 10 p.m. that evening.

Chinese and North Korean prisoners were returned to the Communist side, and UN prisoners, including 32 Canadians, were released from Chinese prison camps.

By the end of the year all battalions of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, Royal Canadian Regiment, and Royal 22^e Régiment had returned home.

The final unit, No. 33 Canadian Field Ambulance, were the last Canadian soldiers to leave South Korea.

27 JULY 1953

SEPTEMBER 1953

DECEMBER 1954

JUNE 1957



LEGACY OF THE KOREAN WAR

After the two world wars, Korea remains Canada's third-bloodiest overseas conflict, taking the lives of 516 Canadians and wounding more than 1,000. North and South Korea remain technically at war today. Following the armistice, the Korean War became known as the "Forgotten War." In Canada, the war was largely considered to be at most a footnote to Canadian military history, and for decades was referred to as a "police action" rather than a war. However, in South Korea, Canadian veterans who return to visit are treated in a similar manner to Second World War veterans who return to France and Holland, and to this day, Korean children regularly tend to the graves of the 378 Canadians soldiers buried at Daeyon-Dong, near Busan.



FRANÇOIS RICHARD



DOUGLAS FINNEY



GILLES MARTIN



RALPH MINTZ

