

Historical background

1. Read the text and be prepared to explain the context of the photo and the map below to your partner (highlight relevant passages, take notes).
2. Once you have exchanged your information find connections between the two texts.

The Korean War (1950-1953)



15 US Corsair fighter planes over a US warship during the Korean War. Sept 4 1951.

World War II divided Korea into a Communist northern half and an American-occupied southern half, divided at the 38th parallel. The Korean War (1950-1953) began when the North Korean Communist army crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded non-Communist South Korea. As the North Korean army, armed with Soviet tanks, quickly overran South Korea, the United States came to South Korea's aid. General Douglas MacArthur, who had been overseeing the post-WWII occupation of Japan, commanded the US forces, which now began to hold off the North Koreans at Busan, at the southernmost tip of Korea. Although Korea was not strategically essential to the United

States, the political environment of the Cold War at this stage was such that policymakers did not want to appear "soft on Communism." Officially, the US intervened as part of a "police action" run by a UN (United Nations) international peace-keeping force; in actuality, the UN was simply being
20 manipulated by US and NATO anti-Communist interests.

In 1953, an "armistice agreement" was signed at Panmunjom that effectively – if not actually technically – ended the Korean War, returning Korea to a divided status which was essentially the same as before the war. Furthermore, neither the war nor its outcome did much to lessen the era's Cold War tension.



June 25, 1950



Sept. 14, 1950



Nov. 25, 1950



July 27, 1953

Historical background

1. Read the text and be prepared to explain the link between the photo and the map below to your partner (highlight relevant passages, take notes).
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The Hmong and the "Secret War" (1964–1973)



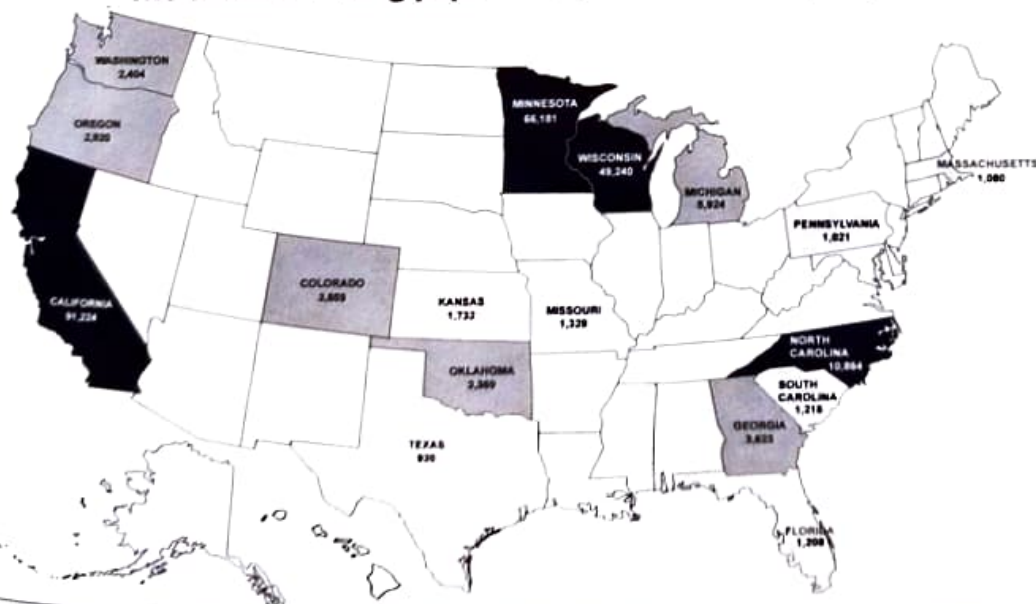
Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington DC.

The Secret War began around the time the US became officially involved in the Vietnam War. In the early 1960s, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) began to recruit, train and lead the indigenous Hmong people in Laos to join fighting the Vietnam War. The Hmong ([mǎŋ]), are an Asian ethnic group from the mountainous regions of China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. About 60% of all Hmong men in Laos joined the "Secret War". Hmong soldiers put their lives at risk in the front line, fighting for the US to block the supply line and to rescue downed American pilots. From 1967–1971, 3,772 Hmong soldiers were killed in the war, 5,426 injured or disabled.

Following the US withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975, the Lao kingdom was overthrown by the communists and the Hmong people became targets of retaliation and persecution. While some Hmong people returned to their villages and attempted to resume life under the new regime, thousands more fled to Thailand, often under attack. This marked the beginning of a mass exodus of Hmong people from Laos. Those who did make it to Thailand generally were held in squalid United Nations refugee camps.

Many Hmong refugees were resettled in the United States after the Vietnam War. Beginning in December 1975, the first of them arrived in the U.S., mainly from refugee camps in Thailand; however, only 3,466 were granted asylum. In May 1976, another 11,000 were allowed to enter the United States, and by 1978 some 30,000 Hmong people had immigrated. It was not until the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980 that families were able to enter the US, becoming the second wave of Hmong immigrants. Today, about 210,000 Hmong people reside in the United States. The majority of these live in three federal states: California (ca 66,000), Minnesota (46,000) and Wisconsin (32,000).

The 17 most Hmong populated states in the US (2010)



supply line - Versorgungszufuhr, 12 retaliation - revenge, 15 squalid - dirty, neglected