

## 2. The Korean War: 'The Forgotten War'

The Korean War (1950-1953) was the first military action of the Cold War, though it's often overshadowed by the victory of the Allies in World War II, earning it the nickname "the Forgotten War." It began when soldiers from the communist North Korean People's Army crossed the 38 parallel into the pro-Western Republic of Korea (today's South Korea). American troops were sent to support the South and by the time a ceasefire was proclaimed in 1953, over five million soldiers and civilians had died. To this day, a formal peace treaty has not been signed.

Sheila Miyoshi Jager, professor of East Asian Studies at Oberlin and author of *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea*, writes, "Most histories of the Korean War stop with the armistice; the fact that no peace treaty was ever signed is presented in most history books as an unusual fact and that is all. However, the absence of a final conclusion to the Korean War has kept it alive as a major influence on Asian affairs."