Suggestions for teachers

The previous investigation provided a way of exploring a variety of Australian experiences of the war.

This investigation focuses on the role of the three fighting services — navy, army and air force — in the war, as well as the treatment of the wounded through the medical system.

The investigation includes three examples of infantry battles — at Kapyong, Maryang San and The Hook. Each was a different type of engagement — a fighting withdrawal, a fighting advance, and a defence of high ground.

As with Investigation 4 teachers might distribute the six case studies to small groups, and have them report back to the whole class on their specific case study.

For each case study the students can be set the same task — to present a brief account that addresses the five key questions in the Summary table.

Introduction

During the Korean War Australian troops of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment were involved at different times in a number of battles and other contacts with the enemy. The RAAF flew many sorties against enemy aircraft and ground targets, and the RAN patrolled and engaged the enemy in coastal, estuarine and riverine waters. Throughout the war wounded and ill men received medical treatment and the serious cases were evacuated to a military hospital in Japan.

A good way of understanding the nature of the Australian experience of the Korean War is through the six case studies below:

A  The Battle of Kapyong
B  The Battle of Maryang San
C  The Battle of The Hook
D  Roles of the RAAF
E  Roles of the RAN
F  The system of medical care.
How were Australian forces involved in the Korean War?

Summary table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A Kapyong</th>
<th>B Maryang San</th>
<th>C The Hook</th>
<th>D RAAF</th>
<th>E RAN</th>
<th>F Medical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Question 1:** What was the role played by Australians?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Question 2:** Why was it important?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Question 3:** What was the experience like for the Australians involved?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Question 4:** What personal qualities were needed in this role?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Question 5:** What does the case study help you understand about the nature of the Australian experience of the Korean War?

|   |   |   |   |   |   |
The Battle of Kapyong occurred on 24–25 April 1951. Kapyong is a small village near the 38th parallel, about 40 kilometres north-east of Seoul. It is in a valley, and has traditionally been a route for invaders of Seoul.

The area was being defended by troops of the 3rd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR); the 16th Field Regiment, Royal New Zealand Artillery (16RNZA); three platoons of A Company, 72nd US Tank Battalion (five tanks each); the 2nd Battalion of Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (2PPCLI); and the 1st Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment (1MX), a British infantry battalion.

There were South Korean forces further forward, to hold off the advancing Chinese troops. However, the South Korean troops broke and retreated, together with a stream of civilian refugees, and the Chinese advanced towards the defending UN force.

1. Look at these two images of the area and describe the terrain.

Source 5A.1 A view of the Kapyong valley seen from the position held at the start of the battle by 3 RAR

Source 5A.2 A painting of the area

2. What advantages and disadvantages would the United Nations defenders have against the attacking Chinese?
Participants remember Kapyong

Here are some accounts by participants of the battle. Read these and add information to your summary table.

**Source 5A.3**

Sgt George Harris

The Chinese kept coming up on 1 Platoon and 1 Platoon kept knocking them back. Each time they knocked them back, the Chinese just disappeared for a while. The bugles would start again and 1 Platoon would cop it again. In between assaults the wounded and dead were brought back and fit men were repositioned by section commanders into forward positions. Groups of Chinese also began to attack CHQ [Company Headquarters] and 3 Platoon. With these fellas prowling around, the whole position was in danger of being overrun.


**Source 5A.4**

New Zealand artillery which continually pounded the Chinese attacking troops

**Source 5A.5**

4 Platoon, B Company, 3 RAR after the battle
**Source 5A.6  Sgt George Harris**

After one of the attacks early on 24 April, Roy called out to me that a group of Chinese were creeping around to the rear … He called out this warning and also stated that he was bringing in a badly wounded man. I called back and told him to bring the wounded man around a small spur to our position and to keep quiet or he would get himself shot. The battle restarted and I did not see him again until we drove the Chinese out … after dawn. Both of them were dead. Roy Ingram had his arm around his friend where he was half carrying him. Most of Roy’s hand was blown off and he had his handkerchief wrapped around it.

He had not told me that he also was wounded when he was helping his digger mate. I wished he had because I would have got to him and helped. He may have died through loss of blood or was hit again bringing his friend out. He did not think of himself. He warned us that the Chinese had got around to our rear so we could engage them. He died helping a mate and warning his friends.


**Source 5A.7  Maj Ben O’Dowd**

At Kapyong A Company fought off wave after wave of fanatical attacks all through one night. They fought from half-made weapon pits. They removed their dead and wounded, and occupied their weapon pits to await the next onslaught — with a good chance of a similar fate as the previous occupant — fully aware of the chance of survival if seriously wounded. They knew they were cut off with what looked a poor chance of escape. In these circumstances any panic or break in morale would have been disastrous. I don’t believe that this possibility existed. They gave as good as they got, fought it out and won.


**Source 5A.8  Capt Reg Saunders**

At last I felt like an Anzac and I imagine there were 600 others like me.


You can also see veterans interviewed and the reconstructions of aspects of the battle in the documentary film *Kapyong: the forgotten battle of the forgotten war*, Arcimedia Pty Ltd, 2011.

Thirty-two Australians died during the Battle of Kapyong. The action stopped the Chinese advance towards Seoul. The American, Australian and Canadian units involved were awarded the high honour of a United States Presidential Citation for their ‘heroic and courageous’ behaviour.

Look at the Australian War Memorial diorama on the next page.
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this representation in helping you understand what happened, and what the fighting was like for the soldiers involved?

Source 5A.9 An Australian War Memorial diorama

Set in the Kapyong Valley in South Korea, the diorama represents a specific moment and location from the Battle of Kapyong that took place on 23–24 April 1951. The night time scene shows four Australian soldiers gallantly protecting the rear of their company, which is stretched out on an island feature as part of the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade’s attempt to secure the Kapyong valley.

In 2007 the artists travelled to Kapyong with Ray Parry, one of the four soldiers depicted in the diorama. The time spent with Parry was invaluable not only in locating the exact area depicted in the diorama but also giving them an intimate and firsthand account of his experience. Inspired by his humour and humility Parry’s voice recordings were used as the primary feature of the diorama’s soundscape. Woven together with the sounds of battle as well as the sounds of bird and insect life local to the area, Parry’s recollections help evoke a sense of what it would have been like for the men in Korea that night.

A contemporary lighting display is also combined with the soundtrack to further develop a sense of a live battle scene. For instance, various flashes of light merge with the sounds of explosions and gunshots to indicate the blasts of guns, grenades and artillery. The lighting also identifies the positions of other companies from 3RAR that were part of the battle. A cool blue light that suggests moonlight dominates the diorama and provides a sense of cold night air.

4. How would the way the diorama is presented help viewers better understand what the battle was like for these soldiers?

5. Add information about Kapyong to your summary table on page 52.

You can find more information about the role of the army in the historian’s essay on page 15.
Case Study B  The Battle of Maryang San

The Battle of Maryang San was an attack by the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, with support from British battalions between 3–7 October 1951. It was designed to gain control of an area of high ground from Chinese defenders, about 80 kilometres north-east of Seoul.

Look at this painting of the area.

1. Describe the area.

2. What advantages would this terrain give the defenders on the heights?

3. What problems would it give the attackers?

4. The attack was spread over five days. What problems would that cause for the attackers?

Here is a map of the battle:

5. The map shows the progress of the four Australian Companies of 3 RAR: A, B, C and D. Describe what each company did.

Now look at this evidence from some participants to test some of your answers above, and to understand what the fighting was like for the men involved.
Evidence from participants

Source 5B.3 Lt Col Frank Hassett

It was a nightmarish situation: pitch dark at the beginning, blanketed by river fog from first light to about 1100 hours; broken, rough country — a maze of hills, ridges and re-entrants, thickly timbered and with heavy undergrowth.

The soldiers weighed down with equipment — unable to see any distance ahead, not knowing when they would hit the enemy and listening to the crash of shells and sounds of battle.

It was a navigational nightmare but a tactical Godsend.


Source 5B.4 Lt Jim Hughes

A shortage of ammunition prevailed — despite good fire control — and we were plagued with the problem of evacuating casualties …

During the night the Chinese attacked three times on our front and flanks. We were ably supported by our artillery, mortars and [machine guns]. Defensive [artillery bombardments] were frequently fired and walked in towards our perimeter. The enemy was tenacious and crawled to within feet of our trenches to throw stick grenades — which were quickly thrown back. Grenades were the only answer to those who got so close, as they were able to get under the fire of our light machine guns, because of the lie of the land. That said, I am convinced that our [machine guns] saved us with their effective fire. Our machine gunners learned to fire a burst and then duck for cover as the Chinese attempted to knock them out.

Ibid.

Source 5B.5 Lt Col Frank Hassett

There was a weary voice on the other set. Nicholls seemed unclear about the task, though to me it seemed straightforward enough. As we talked I began to appreciate fully that Nicholls and his Company had been on the go for some 60 [hours], fighting and moving, for the most part in the van [the vanguard or forward troops of an advance], and had very little rest in the 48 hours preceding that. There was no question of Nicholl’s keenness to fight, he already had one MC [Military Cross] from World War II and was to win another. I thought he was temporarily bushed. There is a limit to human endurance. The signs are there when good men begin to do the wrong thing or fail to react effectively.

Bob Breen, The Battle of Maryang San, 3rd Battalion, the Royal Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment Korea, 2–8 October 1951, Headquarters Training Command, Australian Army, Canberra, ACT, 2nd edition, 1994, p. 45.

Source 5B.6 The official historian of Australia in the Korea War

In this action 3RAR had won one of the most impressive victories achieved by any Australian battalion. In five days of heavy fighting 3RAR dislodged a numerically superior enemy from a position of great strength … The victory of Maryang San is probably the greatest single feat of the Australian Army during the Korean War.


6. Add any information to your summary table on page 52.

You can find more information about the role of the army in the historian’s essay on page 15.
Case Study  The Battle of The Hook

The Hook, also known as the Battle of Samichon, was a battle fought just before the armistice of July 1953.

It was fought in an area 60 km north of Seoul, and was in that part of the UN Command front line across the Korean peninsula at the 38th parallel that was being manned by the British Commonwealth Division. This included 2 RAR and 3 RAR, and the US 1st Marine Division.

Source 5C.1 The front line at 27 July 1953 extending 250 kms across the Korean peninsula

The British Commonwealth Division troops were located in the hills overlooking the river flats from which the enemy forces would attack.
Source 5C.2
Area in front of Australian defensive position at The Hook after attacks had been repulsed

Source 5C.3
Chinese evacuating the bodies of their dead after attacks on The Hook

Source 5C.4
Trench lines at The Hook (1)
The attack on The Hook was part of a last-ditch effort by the Chinese to occupy strategically valuable high ground. Whoever controlled The Hook had a dominating view towards the Imjin River 4 kilometres to the south, providing observation and fields of fire over this route towards Seoul. If it had been lost the UN Command would have been forced to retreat 8 kilometres to the next defendable line. With a ceasefire imminent, whoever held The Hook held a valuable position.

The Chinese sent mass waves of attackers forward into both the Australian and American defences. New Zealand and British artillery and British tanks rained shells on them, and the defending soldiers poured mortars, rifle and machine-gun fire into them. Many attackers made it to the Australians’ trenches, and there was fierce close-quarter fighting.

Despite their strategic position and supporting artillery, as always the fight was determined partly by the extraordinary bravery of individuals. Here are some outstanding examples:

Source 5C.6 Cpl Maguire and Pte Kent

_That night 3 Company sent out a four-man reconnaissance patrol to Green Finger Ridge, immediately to the north. The Chinese ambushed the patrol, killing Private F.C. McDonell. Next night another D Company patrol was ambushed in the same area. The patrol commander, Corporal T.W. Maguire was seriously wounded, but his Bren gunner, Private G.E. Kent, counter-attacked. Kent charged into the Chinese, and although they responded with grenades and small arms fire, he put them to rout. He killed two and wounded another two, firing until his ammunition ran out. While Kent was reloading, the Chinese fired back, hitting him in several places. The Chinese, however, had already decided to withdraw and did not attempt to press home any attack. Maguire directed artillery fire onto the Chinese withdrawal route and then organised the evacuation of his group. Both Maguire and Kent, who had also been together in the patrol clash of the previous night, were awarded the Military Medal for their bravery._

2 RAR casualties were 5 killed and 24 wounded during the final assaults at The Hook. An estimated 2000–3000 Chinese were killed, mainly by artillery.

One day after the end of the battle the ceasefire came into effect.

4. Add any information to your summary table on page 52.

You can find more information about the role of the army in the historian’s essay on page 15.

---

**Source 5C.7 Pte McAuliffe**

Private J.M. McAuliffe, who had been a member of a D Company forward patrol that night, was awarded the Military Medal for his bravery in taking command of a patrol under enemy attack while the patrol commander, Lance Corporal L. Hayden, organised the evacuation of five men wounded by a Chinese patrol. Hayden covered their movement by running forward, firing on the Chinese with his Owen gun. When they were out of immediate danger, he ran, under fire and exposed to the full view of the enemy by the light of many flares, to a nearby knoll and shouted back to his company for stretcher bearers to take the wounded further back. Once they had been evacuated, Hayden and three others held their forward position for another seven hours, despite continuous mortar and artillery fire. Hayden was mentioned in dispatches for leadership, determination and utter disregard for his own safety.

McAuliffe was seriously wounded later that night but throughout the action played a major part in holding off the Chinese and distracting their attention from Hayden.

Ibid., p. 278.

---

**Source 5C.8 Cpl Slater and Cpl Youngman**

During the Chinese bombardment of C Company, Corporal J.B. Slater, the company signals NCO, worked continuously in the open, at great risk, to restore broken telephone lines, enabling vital communications to be maintained between command posts and forward observation posts. He was mentioned in dispatches, together with a cook, Corporal D.A.W. Youngman, who kept his kitchen in operation all night, maintaining a supply of sustenance to the defenders, despite damage from intense shelling. Youngman slept for only four hours in forty-eight during this phase of the battle.

Ibid., p. 279.
Case Study D

Roles of the Royal Australian Air Force

The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was part of the Australian war effort in the Korean War.

1. What roles would you expect an air force to play in the war? List them.

2. An air force obviously needs pilots to fly the planes, but what other occupations would be needed to support the pilots and the planes? List those you can think of.

3. Now look at these images of the RAAF in the Korean War. Identify which roles and occupations they illustrate.

Source 5D.1

Source 5D.2
4. Add any information to your summary table on page 52.

You can find more information about the role of the RAAF in the historian’s essay on page 15.
Case Study  Roles of the Royal Australian Navy

There were nine different ships, but three different types of ships of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), that served in the Korean War.

There was an aircraft carrier:
HMAS Sydney

HMAS Sydney, c.1953
There were destroyers:  
HMAS Warramunga  HMAS Bataan  
HMAS Anzac  HMAS Tobruk  

There were frigates:  
HMAS Culgoa  HMAS Shoalhaven  
HMAS Condamine  HMAS Murchison

1. Look at the three examples of these ships above. What are the main differences between them?
2. What roles do you think these ships would play in a war?

Look at the descriptions of the war history of three of these ships and answer the questions that follow.

A  **HMAS Sydney**

HMAS Sydney saw active service in Korean waters between October 1951 and January 1952, and again between November 1953 and January 1954.

It carried three types of aircraft:
- Sea Furies of 805 Squadron and 808 Squadron,
- Fireflies of 817 Squadron, and
- a Dragonfly helicopter on loan from the US Navy.

The 34 aeroplanes flew 2366 sorties, and 13 aircraft were lost to enemy fire, deck accidents and rough weather.

The sorties included reconnaissance, support of land troops, naval gunfire spotting, and combat air patrols. Most attacks were on enemy lines of communication — tunnels, bridges and buildings. This disruption helped confine the enemy’s supply movements to night-time, which made their task more difficult.

A carrier had few weapons for self-protection, so had to rely on a ‘screen’ of other warships ahead, behind and beside it to provide protection against enemy aircraft. For a carrier to launch its planes it always had to manoeuvre to be sailing into the wind. This meant that all the screening ships also had to be able to manoeuvre to maintain the four-sided protection.
HMAS Warramunga had two operational tours between 1950–51 and 1952.

The UN naval force had three great advantages in its Korea-related missions: the enemy did not have a fleet, nor submarines, and there were no enemy planes other than the fighter planes, which only operated over land.

Here is a summary of the roles played during the first tour of HMAS Warramunga from September 1950 to September 1951:

- Screening of aircraft carriers in their tasks of air strikes, spotting and reconnaissance, and bombardment of shore targets
- Participating in the amphibious landing of troops at Inchon
- Escorting an American dredger
- Enforcing a blockade off the north-west coast of Korea
- Evacuating UN forces from Chinnampo
- Bombarding enemy coastal positions
- Conducting coastal harassing fire

3. Look at these two images. What do they show of the difficulties that carrier-based aircraft faced?

Source 5E.1
Snow and ice on the deck of HMAS Sydney off Korea, January 1952

Source 5E.2
HMAS Sydney in Korean waters 1951–52

Source 5E.3
HMAS Warramunga firing at a coastal target

4. Add any information to your summary table.
• Attacking enemy troops that had captured a UN intelligence party
• Bombarding the coast
• Blockading restricted shipping
• Assisting Korean patrols
• Protecting minesweepers
• Patrolling the coast
• Conducting surveillance

5. Add any information to your summary table on page 52.

**C HMAS Murchison on the Han River**

HMAS *Murchison* was engaged in what was probably the most dangerous task of any of the Australian ships in the Korean War: the operations in the Han River estuary.

**Source 5E.4** HMAS *Murchison* in the Han River estuary, September 1951

- Bombardment of Yonan railway yards
- Engage in artillery and small arms fire with North Korean enemy forces

Three stages of the trip

- **stage 1** Bombardment of Yonan railway yards
- **stage 2** Engagement in artillery and small arms fire with North Korean enemy forces
- **stage 3** Bombardment of Yonan railway yards

The task of HMAS Murchison was to sail up the river and bombard the enemy forces near the coast.

The area was poorly charted, and was narrow and shallow, with shifting currents and sandbars, and many mud flats. All this meant that if the Murchison had to change direction it could only do so by dropping its anchor and letting the current swing it round. While it was doing this it was virtually a stationary target for any potential enemy fire.

The planners did not know that there were enemy artillery and infantry hidden on the west bank of the mouth of the Yesong River, and when Murchison reached its bombardment point, it came under heavy attack.

### Source 5E.5 Gunners aboard HMAS Murchison

6. Mark the location of the enemy on the map on the previous page.

The Murchison had to exercise the emergency manoeuvre, and was hit several times by enemy infantry fire, but fortunately not by the artillery, before escaping to safety.


7. Add any information to your summary table on page 52.

You can find more information about the role of the RAN in the historian’s essay on page 15.
Case Study F  The system of medical care

A key element in the war was the care of the wounded and ill.

Casualties had to be taken from the point of battle and sent through a process that would see them being treated in hospitals. For the Korean War these hospitals were in Japan.

Look at this series of photographs. There are six photographs showing different stages of the process of evacuating and treating the wounded.

1. Your task is to identify which different stage is shown in each photograph, and to draw connecting lines that show the sequence of events. In this way you are creating a flow chart of the medical process in the war.

2. Add any information to your summary table on page 52.
Among the bravest of people in the war were the members of the Field Ambulance who were stretcher bearers. They were often exposed to enemy fire as they helped bring in the wounded. You have read about some of these people in Investigations 4 and 5.

Another group of medical personnel in Korea was the nurses — from the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (RAANC), and the Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS). The Royal Australian Nursing Service (RAANS) became the RAANC in 1951. Most were in a military hospital in Japan, but several of them were periodically based in Seoul to oversee the transfer of the casualties from there to Japan by air.

Look at the following extracts from interviews with RAANC and RAAFNS nurses, and answer the questions that follow.

Source 5F.7 Extracts from accounts from Australian Korean War nurses

Nursing in difficult conditions
Sister Nellie Espie, RAANC
But we had some sick boys there. I always remember a Kiwi with malaria, had temperature of a hundred and seven. We didn’t think he’d survive and of course we didn’t have any air conditioning, it was summer time and we didn’t have any air conditioning or anything like that. And we had him on the bed on a macintosh, and stripped him off with a bath tub at the end with the macintosh down into it where the water can run and we’d just spray him with a watering can to cool him down and eventually we did. But there was nothing much we could do for him there with those facilities. A temperature of a hundred and seven, it’s a wonder he survived. But he did, he was a tough little fella.

Treating casualties
Sister Nellie Espie, RAANC
Well the ones that came from Korea a lot of them were broken legs and limbs, … gunshot wounds and chest wounds. There were a lot of chest wounds, and also a lot of burns cases. Because in the winter time there in Korea it is a wicked place, cold. The boys say the socks used to freeze on their feet in their boots … and of course they’d make these home made heating systems in their hootchies and their dug outs and … of course there’d be the odd accident where one would blow up and they’d get these dreadful burns. And so they were very painful things, burns.

Ibid., at 05:39:30–40:00.

Sister Betty Lawrence, RAANC
The sense of duty was overwhelming, and that meant more than politics. After a long twelve-hour shift you could be called back on duty, especially as a theatre sister. Nurses quickly became forthright, resilient people who could quickly bring calm to a chaotic situation by sorting out the wounded. And it’s not easy to sort out wounded – triage, as it’s called – because you cannot allow your personal feelings to come into it. You might think, ‘Oh, he’s a young soldier, he’s an older one, he hasn’t got very many wounds but that one’s got a lot of wounds.’ You have to make the decision on their physical state, not whether you like him or not.

Medical Air Evacuation
Sister Patricia Oliver, RAAFNS
A quick breakfast at the hospital, a Jeep ride to the strip, check the blankets and other equipment on the aircraft for take-off at 0430 hours, for say, on this occasion, Kimpo (K14). In winter the outside air temperature during the flight at 8000 feet or whatever would reach minus many degrees centigrade. The cabin temperature in these unlined Dakotas was freezing, to say the least … [On arrival in Korea] the wounded were brought down from the MASHs and were held in a hut by the strip. I would do a round with the US Army doctor. If fit enough, the patients were loaded aboard the aircraft for the return trip to Iwakuni. There were certain dangers in transporting wounded in freezing conditions in unpressurised aeroplanes; also questions such as secondary shock had to be considered. The condition of the patients was never ideal for evacuation but it was considered preferable to return them to Japan rather than have them remain in Korea any longer … In the normal course of events, with reasonable traffic conditions on the ground and in the air, we would arrive back at Iwakuni sometime early in the afternoon.


Destruction of war
Sister Grace Halstead, RAAFNS
And then the big day came when I was in Korea, actually resident in Korea and I was picked up by the RAF MO [medical officer] and taken through the streets of Seoul, which of course had had two battles through it and was rubble really more than anything else. Dreadful sights, little children without their legs and some of them shell-shocked and all the houses just you know, rubble again. Little shelters they built out of kerosene tins or anything they could get really. There were very few buildings standing.

3. What qualities might the nurses have needed to undertake their duties in Japan and Korea?

4. What were some of the challenges the nurses faced in Korea and Japan?

5. Why were there so many burns cases in Korea? Why might the nurses remember those in particular?

6. The casualties were evacuated by RAAF aircraft from Korea to the main hospital in Japan. What might the advantages of this process have been? What might some of the risks have been?

7. Betty Lawrence mentions that she and the other nurses were ‘continuing a tradition’. What was this tradition and why might this be important to her?

8. Betty Lawrence claims that people in Australia ‘were almost completely unaware of our existence’. Why might this have been the case?

9. Add any information to your summary table on page 52.

---

**Recognition**

**Sister Nathalie Oldham, RAAFNS**

*Five children later, while my husband was serving in Vietnam, I returned to nursing as an infant health sister in the ACT and was consulted by a young Korean couple with a baby. The husband was enrolled at the Australian National University. When he said that they came from Seoul, I remarked that I had served there as a nurse during the Korean War. He rose from his seat, bowed deeply and said – Thank you Ma’am – About a fortnight later, they visited again and he presented me with a small, exquisite, hand-woven trinket basket, which I treasure. Despite the passage of over four decades, the Koreans have not forgotten the service and sacrifice given by Australians.*

---

**Sister Betty Lawrence, RAANC**

*People at home in Australia were almost completely unaware of our existence. The nurses were continuing a tradition begun by a small group of Australian women during the Boer War, but like other Korean veterans returned home to a resounding silence. When I went to the dedication of the Nurses’ Memorial … I had my medals on, and John Howard said, ‘I was not aware there were women in Korea.’ But Her Majesty the Queen, when she came to South Australia in 1954 and I was in the reception that they gave at the Wayville Showgrounds – they had a big parade thing there – and there was a special section for the ex-service people and I was there, I was one of the people who had to represent nurses, and she came to me and she said, ‘It is very pleasing to see a lady wearing the Korean Medal’. It was the Commonwealth one that we got. She said, ‘I was not aware until quite recently that my very first medal would be worn by a woman’. It was the first medal she struck.*

---


What happened to Australian prisoners of war?

Suggestions for teachers

This investigation asks students to think about what they consider appropriate behaviour by and towards prisoners of war by their captors, and then see what happened in reality to a group of Australian prisoners during the Korean War.

It presents the experiences of five prisoners, each of whom was honoured after his release for his exemplary behaviour and resistance to brainwashing and interrogation during his imprisonment.

Students can be asked to explore all five experiences, or each of the five summaries can be allocated to a small group, who report back to the class on what they learn. Each student has a specific set of aspects on which to report.

Once students have learned about the experiences of all five prisoners they can re-visit their original ideas and decide if they would now change any.
What happened to Australian prisoners of war?

During the Korean War, twenty-four Australian soldiers and six Australian airmen were captured and made prisoners of war (POWs). One, Horace Madden, died in captivity, but the remainder all survived and were repatriated to Australia. You can see a list of their names on page 77.

Before the Korean War, the most recent Australian POW experience was during the Second World War, when more than 8000 Australians were prisoners of the Germans or Italians, and more than 22,000 were prisoners of the Japanese.

The experience of the prisoners of the Japanese was generally horrific. Most were treated brutally and harshly. Many were forced to work as slave labour for the Japanese war effort, including about 9500 who helped build the Burma–Thailand Railway. This project had a high death rate among Allied prisoners and also among Asians who were forced to work on the line. More than 2600 Australians died on the railway from malnutrition, beatings and disease. Over 8000 prisoners of the Japanese overall — nearly one in three — lost their lives in captivity.

This experience would have been in the minds of those captured in the Korean War. Australia was a signatory to the Geneva Convention of 1948, which regulated the treatment of prisoners of war, but North Korea and China were not. Would the Japanese experience be repeated?

The key focuses of this investigation are: ‘How were Australian POWs treated by their North Korean and Chinese captors?’ and ‘How did Australian POWs respond to their situations?’

1. Here are some statements about what expectations you might have, both of the prisoners, and also of their captors.

   Record what you think. You will be able to return to these answers at the end and see if you would make any changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prisoners of war</th>
<th>Their captors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement about POWs — they should:</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>————</td>
<td>————</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to escape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not do work that helps their captors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse to co-operate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do what is necessary to survive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set an example for others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to harm the enemy war effort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try to ‘convert’ the enemy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will be able to return to these ideas at the end of the unit and see if you would change anything.
Australian prisoners of war in the Korean War

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Date of capture</th>
<th>Date of release</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flying Officer</td>
<td>Bruce Lachlan Thomson</td>
<td>77 Sqn</td>
<td>December 1951</td>
<td>September 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Officer</td>
<td>Donald William Pinkstone</td>
<td>77 Sqn</td>
<td>June 1953</td>
<td>September 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wing Commander</td>
<td>Vance Drummond</td>
<td>77 Sqn</td>
<td>December 1951</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Captain</td>
<td>Gordon Ronald Harvey</td>
<td>77 Sqn</td>
<td>January 1951</td>
<td>August 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Thomas Henry John Hollis</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>21 January 1951</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>Donald Pattison Buck</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>21 January 1951</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>Lawrence Edward Buckland</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>21 January 1951</td>
<td>9 February 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Edward George Light</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>21 January 1951</td>
<td>9 February 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Angus Peter McDonald</td>
<td>3 RAR AAUK</td>
<td>21 January 1951</td>
<td>9 February 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>John Houston Mackay</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>25 January 1951</td>
<td>23 April 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Keith Roy Gwyther</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>24 April 1951</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Horace William Madden</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>24 April 1951</td>
<td>Died 9 November 1951 while POW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Robert Henry Parker</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>24 April 1951</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squadron Leader</td>
<td>Ronald David Guthrie</td>
<td>77 Sqn</td>
<td>August 1951</td>
<td>September 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flight Lieutenant</td>
<td>John Thomas Hannan</td>
<td>77 Sqn</td>
<td>February 1952</td>
<td>September 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Alfred Jacobs</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>14 August 1952</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brigadier</td>
<td>Phillip Jamieson Greville</td>
<td>1 RAR</td>
<td>23 August 1952</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Dennis Douglas Condon</td>
<td>1 RAR</td>
<td>23 August 1952</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>George Smith</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>14 January 1953</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Eric Donnelly</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>14 January 1953</td>
<td>23 April 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Glen Brown</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>25 January 1953</td>
<td>23 April 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>John Frederick Davis</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>25 January 1953</td>
<td>23 April 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Brian Thomas Davoren</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>25 January 1953</td>
<td>23 April 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>James McCulloch</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>25 January 1953</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Vivian Edward O’Brien</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>25 January 1953</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Anthony Poole</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>25 January 1953</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>Edward James Perks</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>26 May 1953</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
<td>Charles Peter Yacopetti</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>26 May 1953</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Fred Speed</td>
<td>2 RAR</td>
<td>7 June 1953</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Colin Montague Tesch</td>
<td>3 RAR</td>
<td>25 June 1953</td>
<td>Released on cessation of hostilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Five POW case studies

2. Look at the summaries on pages 79 and 80 of the official experiences of five Australian POWs of the Korean War. They are taken from the reports of investigators who had to decide whether to recommend these men for bravery awards. Read them and summarise what you learn from them about the men’s experience. (You can see two of these men in the photograph on page 76.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Charles Yacopetti</th>
<th>Donald Buck</th>
<th>Thomas Hollis</th>
<th>Robert Parker</th>
<th>Keith Gwyther</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The conditions in which the man was held</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The ways in which the man was treated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The man’s attitudes towards the enemy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The man’s behaviour during captivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The qualities the man showed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the summaries of the experiences of the prisoners of war on the following pages are taken from official documents in the National Archives of Australia File NAA:A816, 66/301/483 Awards for operational service in Korea — special awards for services in prisoner of war camps in Korea. This file has been digitised and is available from the National Archives of Australia (NAA) website at www.naa.gov.au. Search the collection, Record search, Basic search, Awards for operational service in Korea, 66/301/483 digital copy.
**Source 6.1** Lieutenant Charles Yacopetti 3 RAR

- During an attack he was hit in the arms and legs by enemy fire.
- He was last seen sitting in a small hole, with his Owen gun loaded and bayonet fixed, ready to fight it out, but was taken prisoner when he lost consciousness.
- When Chinese soldiers realised he was an officer, he was interrogated, and later left in an open trench. His interrogators also twisted his wounded ankle.
- Later when the camp was being shelled he crawled out and helped drag in POWs who were wounded during the attack.
- When the enemy arranged an armistice celebration he gave orders that no POW would take part, but that they could drink a glass of ‘peace wine’. When that was served he proposed a toast to ‘His Majesty’. All POWs complied.
- Investigator’s evaluation: ‘Through his leadership and courage Lt Yacopetti achieved a high standard of cohesion amongst the POWs with whom he was associated and allowed no liaison with the enemy except through himself’.

(You can see an interview with Charles Yacopetti at Australians at War Film Archive, UNSW, www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au, archive number 578, accessed 30 June 2016.)

**Source 6.2** Private Thomas Henry John Hollis 3 RAR

- He was captured as part of a five-man patrol.
- He was then forced to march over several weeks on a long and arduous march to a camp.
- He was held there for over a month under very primitive conditions, with a totally inadequate diet of beans and bean powder supplemented only by weeds and grass.
- Conditions were chaotic and he recognised the necessity for discipline to maintain health and morale, and tried to improve matters.
- He was moved again, and many of his fellow POWs died of exposure during this move.
- He was active in organising resistance to Communist indoctrination and suffered considerable maltreatment as a result.
- He exercised considerable initiative in avoiding Communist efforts to use him for propaganda.
- Investigator’s evaluation: ‘His courageous spirit and open hostility to Communism was an inspiring example to his fellow prisoners of war. He contributed valuable information on Communist methods of indoctrination and treatment’.

**Source 6.3** Corporal Donald Pattison Buck 3 RAR

- He was forced on long and arduous marches after capture.
- He was then held in camp for over a month in very primitive conditions.
- He was interrogated nearly 300 times during his captivity, on occasion from 0900 hours to 2000 hours.
- He became a leader in organising resistance to indoctrination and collaboration and in planning escapes.
- He was beaten frequently over one period of two weeks for suspicion of having organised an escape.
- He organised another escape, was recaptured, and sent to the ‘sweat box’ [a small punishment cell] to suffer ill-treatment.
- Investigator’s evaluation: ‘He recorded valuable information on Communist methods of interrogation, together with information concerning escape methods. His indomitable courage in the face of terrible hardship, and steadfast refusal to give in to his captors is an inspiring example of loyalty and devotion to duty’.
3. These five men were all given awards for their behaviour as prisoners. What parts of their behaviour do you think were valued?

4. Most Australian POWs were not given awards. Can we conclude that they were not treated as badly as those who were given awards?

5. Can we conclude that they did not behave well as POWs? Explain your ideas.

6. Why do you think the communists tried to brainwash their prisoners?

7. What do you think were the worst aspects of being a POW?

8. Look at this assessment of the experience of the POWs:

   The Australian prisoners of war in Korea missed a great portion of the active service of their units but, while in captivity, fought battles of their own with great honour and individual courage unsurpassed by any unit operation. Not many of us have experienced the terror and pain of interrogation while wounded and separated from our comrades. The battle honour, ‘Prisoner of War Korea’, is carried by the regiment not on the Colours but in the hearts of our serving soldiers.

   Out in the Cold: Australia’s Involvement in the Korean War, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Canberra, ACT, 2000, p. 82.

   Based on what you have read, do you agree with this comment? Explain your views.

9. The Anzac tradition is built on the qualities of Australian troops as fighting soldiers. Can POWs be part of the Anzac tradition? Explain your views.

10. Look back at your initial ideas about the behaviour of POWs and their captors. Would you now change any of these?
Private Horace Madden was the only Australian POW who died in captivity during the Korean War. He was awarded the George Cross, the second highest military award, posthumously. Here are two photographs of Private Madden, and a portrait of him by an Official War Artist.

**Source 6.6 Three images of Private Madden**

![Private Horace Madden, 1941.](AWM 118147)

![Private Horace Madden, 1947.](AWM P02580.001)

Bruce Batch, *Private Horace Madden* (1968, oil on hardboard, 76.2 x 63.5 cm, AWM ART40730)
Suggestions for teachers

This investigation asks students to consider the extent to which the Australian people were actually engaged and involved with the Korean War.

This is explored through evidence and information about four aspects of the home front experience:

- **personal involvement**
  - through direct contact with the soldiers and nurses who were in Korea,

- **economic involvement**
  - through changes to the economy and their impacts on people’s own lives,

- **the nature and reporting of the war**
  - through the way the war was being fought and reported, and

- **opposition to the war**
  - which might have acted as a way of organising people to protest.

Students can work through all the evidence individually, or they could be allocated the set of evidence for one of the four aspects above, and be asked to report on that to the class.

At the end of the investigation students will be able to make their own informed judgement about the impact of the war on the home front.
Did the Korean War have an impact on the Australian home front?

An important aspect of investigating any war is discovering what happened on the ‘home front’ — that is, the degree to which the war affected and engaged people in Australia.

If you have studied the Australian experience of the First World War (1914–1918) you will know that the country was very divided — many people placed winning the war as their main priority, and much else had to be sacrificed to achieve that. Others believed that the war was undermining their standard of living and rights, and that these were more important to protect than giving so much to the war effort. People became particularly bitterly divided when they were asked on two occasions, in 1916 and 1917, to vote on whether or not the government should be able to conscript men to fight overseas.

The Second World War (1939–1945) was different. In this war, especially after the entry of the Japanese in December 1941, the war was closer to Australia, and people on the home front were willing to give an ‘all in’ effort in a way that was not true for the First World War.

What about Korea? How did people react to the war? Did people believe that Australians should be involved, or not? Did the war unite the community, as in the Second World War, or did it divide it, as in the First World War? Or was there a different type of reaction?

Your task is to look at four aspects of society during the Korean War, and decide what they are telling you about people’s involvement in and engagement with the Korean War.

The four aspects to explore are:

• **personal involvement** — through direct contact with the soldiers and nurses who were in Korea,
• **economic involvement** — through changes to the economy and their impacts on people’s own lives,
• **the nature and reporting of the war** — through the way the war was being fought and reported, and
• **opposition to the war** — which might have acted as a way of organising people to protest.

At the end of the investigation you will be able to describe and explain what the Korean War meant for the Australian home front.

**Personal involvement**

During the three years 1950–1953 of the Korean War, more than 17,000 Australians served in some way in Korea, resulting in 340 deaths and 30 men becoming POWs. Over 1200 men became casualties. Australia’s population was just over eight million.

1. Most Australians would have had no direct contact with anyone who was involved in the war in Korea. What impact would you expect that to have on people’s involvement with the war?

Here is an example of the impact of the war on one individual:

**Source 7.1 The impact of the war on June White**

*Korea was little publicised in day-to-day living. I can remember being at a party at my sister’s house and a woman asked me where my husband was that night. When I told her he was in Korea she asked me what he was doing in that country!*

*The worst part of the time was the loneliness and lack of knowledge of what was happening to my man on the other side of the world. There was no contact with the Army or other Army wives. All I could find out was from the daily newspapers.*

*June White in Out in the Cold: Australia’s Involvement in the Korean War, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Canberra, ACT, 2000, p. 75.*

2. Does this confirm or challenge your answer to question 1?
At the end of the Second World War the decision was made to disband the Australian Women’s Auxiliary Services. Only a few years later, in July 1950 – with the emerging threat of the Cold War – Cabinet approved the reformation of women’s services. The creation of the Women’s Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC), and the Women’s Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) and the Women’s Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF) marked a new era in the history of Australian women’s military service.

While these organisations provided the opportunity for women to pursue a career in the military, this was limited by certain restrictions and conditions. Women did not receive equal pay and until the late 1960s married women were not permitted to remain in the services. The types of jobs deemed ‘suitable’ for women were also restricted. In the WRAAF, for instance, typists, office workers, cooks and drivers were not allowed to fly. Members of the WRRAF and WRAAC were not permitted to serve overseas and the WRANS were not allowed to serve at sea. The exception to this restriction within the women’s services was the nurses of the Royal Australian Army Nursing Corps (RAANC), and the Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS).

During the Korean War and in the post-armistice period, more than 200 members of the RAANC and the RAAFNS cared for casualties in British Commonwealth Hospitals in Japan. Around fifty of those women also served in Korea. The RAAFNS sisters played an important role in the medical evacuation of casualties from Korea to Japan, while the RAANC sisters stabilised casualties at the hospital in Seoul in preparation for their evacuation.

3. In the Second World War, enlistment in the women’s military services offered a new role to over 60,000 women, creating links with much of the total population. How would the small number of women engaged in military service during the Korean War influence popular involvement with the war?

National Service was introduced in Australia in 1951. In this, Australian men aged eighteen had to register for service, and were committed to ninety-eight days of continuous training followed by seventy-eight days in the Citizen Military Forces. National Servicemen could not be sent overseas to fight. The scheme was generally accepted by the public, but put a great strain on the regular forces, which were required to provide training. Military officials believed that it therefore weakened the combat readiness of those services, and it was abandoned in 1959.

4. Do you think the number of men involved in the military was extensive enough to create engagement with the war on the home front? Explain your reasons.

5. What is happening in this cartoon?
6. The newspaper headline for the cartoon ‘Beach Scene’ reads: MUST AUSTRALIANS FREEZE IN KOREA. What is the irony of this headline?

7. What point is the cartoonist making about Australians’ awareness of and empathy for Australian soldiers in Korea?

8. From the evidence of personal involvement, would you say the Korean War had a large, moderate or small personal impact on the Australian home front?

**Economic involvement**

In 1950, the United States bought as much wool as it could from Australia to use in manufacturing winter clothes for its troops. This demand did not immediately lead to an increase in the production of wool, because farmers needed a long lead-time to raise more sheep. What the purchase did, however, was to increase the price of wool. The price of Australian wool rose 143 per cent between July 1950 and March 1951, and nearly all was exported.

Increased exports from a country influence that country’s terms of trade. If a country’s terms of trade are greater than 100, then there is more money coming into the country than leaving it. The situation is one of capital accumulating.

9. What happened to Australia’s terms of trade during the Korean War?

10. How might increased income to wool growers benefit other people in rural and metropolitan communities?


12. From this evidence, would you say the war had a large, moderate or small economic impact on the Australian home front?
The nature and reporting of the war

A major international war can be expected to have a significant impact on society if it is a focus of daily interest and concern.

The initial period of the war involved the loss of most of South Korea’s territory and then spectacular gains that took United Nations forces almost to North Korea’s frontier with China. The situation soon changed to being a war of stalemate rather than of movement. You can see an outline of the progress of the war over time in Fact file 2 and the essay on the war in Fact file 6.

Look at this summary of some of the features of the Australian reporting of the war.

Source 7.4 The reporting of the Korean War in Australia

- Almost all Australian daily newspapers supported the war.
- Initially there were many journalists reporting the war.
- Newspaper editors wanted to send their own journalists and their own photographers, but the Australian Government imposed a ‘group system’ of limiting the number of journalists authorised to report on the war. The editors resented this. They also had to rely mainly on official military photographers.
- The journalists who were there found that communications equipment was almost non-existent, making it difficult to get their stories home in a timely manner.
- Journalists’ reports were often subject to United States censors, who often censored criticisms of the Americans and South Koreans.
- By mid-1951 there were few journalists, because editors decided that the static war was not sufficiently exciting for readers, and gave preference in the newspapers to local news.
- Newspaper owners were under economic pressure to reduce expenditure at a time of inflation, and the cost of sending and maintaining journalists in Korea was considered too great. Even when the Australian Government developed a scheme to pay part of the cost there were few editors who took advantage of it.


13. What impact would these factors have on people’s knowledge and awareness of the Australian war effort in Korea?

14. From this evidence, would you say the war engaged people on the home front to a large, moderate or small degree?
Opposition to the war

Other ways in which a war can have an impact on society are if it comes to involve large segments of the population, if it becomes controversial, or both, as happened with the First World War and the Vietnam War.

The main potential sources of active opposition to the Korean War were the Communist Party of Australia, the more left-wing trade unions, and the peace movement.

The Communist Party of Australia opposed the war. In 1950, Prime Minister Robert Menzies had made membership of the party illegal. This was challenged in the High Court as unconstitutional, and the government’s decision was overturned. Menzies then called a referendum in 1951 to authorise changes to the Australian Constitution that would allow the government to legally ban the party. The referendum was defeated, but the focus of the Communist Party was on fighting for its survival rather than leading anti-war movements.

Officials of individual trade unions, including the seamen’s union, the waterside workers, and miners, all opposed the war, but did little to try to interrupt supplies going to it from Australia. Many individual members did not agree with their leaders, and supported the war. The main union body, the Australian Council of Trade Unions, passed a motion early in the war that ‘the attack on South Korea was to be condemned and North Korea … classed as an aggressor nation’.


The organised peace movement in Australia was small in size, had few followers, and had little influence. It was also closely associated with communist organisations, so had little broad appeal to the ordinary person. One of the peace movement’s major organisers, the activist Jessie Street, was living in Britain from 1950 to 1956, so there was no dynamic leadership.

15. From this evidence would you say that the Korean War divided Australia, united it, or had little impact on it?

16. The Korean War has been called ‘the forgotten war’. Create a short set of questions about the main facts and features of the war that you have learned through your work with this resource and conduct a survey to test what your family and friends know about it.

Bringing it together

17. You now have a good knowledge and understanding of the impact of the Korean War on the Australian home front. Write a paragraph for a Year 10 textbook that summarises what you have discovered.
What impacts did the war have on returning soldiers?

Suggestions to teachers

This investigation considers two major impacts of the Korean War on those Australians who served: the frequently-held attitude that their service has been forgotten or undervalued, and the health effects of their service.

This is a short investigation that all students can explore to understand more about the men and women in their community who were part of the Korean War.
What impacts did the war have on returning soldiers?

Soon after the armistice was signed, most men and women serving in Korea were repatriated to Australia.

Many books and articles, films and interviews refer to Korea as the ‘forgotten war’, meaning that there is a sense in which the participants feel that their service has not been acknowledged or valued by Australian society.

We also know that service in wars can affect the surviving troops physically and emotionally, not only at the time of war, but afterwards.

This investigation looks at ways in which veterans feel that they may have been forgotten or undervalued by society, and the ways in which their service has affected their health.

Were the soldiers ‘forgotten’?

Look at this cartoon.

1. Who are the two characters?
2. What is the message of the cartoon?

There were many public parades on the return of units from Korea.

3. Why would there be parades of returning soldiers?
Read the following extract from historian Richard Trembath:

**Source 8.3  3 RAR and returning to Australia**

It appears that the men of 3 RAR, who were replaced on an individual rather than unit basis, were a special case, missing out on the sense of unity and celebration which other formations enjoyed when they marched from the docks upon their return. In another way too they were often the victims of improved technology and transport. Just as we have seen that many members of 3 RAR had enjoyed the novelty of flying to war, so they often enjoyed the pleasures of air travel upon their return. Finally, even if they ended up returning in large groups, departure from the war zone could commence with small formations, leaving at different times.


4. Richard Trembath gives two main reasons why some members of 3 RAR did not take part in a march on their return to Australia. What are the reasons?

5. How might this have influenced the veterans’ perception of recognition by the Australian public?

6. List any other reasons why participation in the Korean War may have been less well known in Australia than other wars?

7. Why might a parade be emotionally important to some veterans?

Veterans who had served in the war were eligible to wear a United Nations medal, and a British Commonwealth medal, but no specifically Australian medal. It was not until 1997 that the government authorised the wearing of the Australian Active Service Medal with the clasp ‘Korea’.

**Source 8.4  Australian Active Service Medal for Korea**

8. What does a medal symbolise? What may the absence of a medal symbolise to soldiers who have taken part in a war, conflict or peace-keeping operation?

9. Do you think that veterans of the Korean War have reason to feel that their service was undervalued in the past? Explain your reasons. In doing so you should also take into account what you have discovered in Investigation 7 on the home front.
What happened to the health of many Korean War veterans?

There have been three significant studies of the health of Australian Korean War veterans. Look at the three studies and their findings.

Source 8.5 2003 Korean veterans cancer study

This study looked at the incidence of cancer among Korean War veterans between 1982 and 1999, and compared this over the same period for male members of the population of the same age who had not served.

The main finding was that Korean War veterans experienced a significantly greater overall cancer risk than the Australian community, with an excess of between 13% and 23%.

Source 8.6 Korean veterans mortality study

The main finding of this study was that Korean War veterans experienced a 21% higher mortality rate than an equivalent Australian male population that had not served in Korea. For some causes of death, the incidence was over 30% higher.
10. What do these three studies all show about the current health of the group of men who served in Korea compared with their peers who did not serve?

11. Are the differences significant? Explain your answer.

12. Suggest reasons why service in war would lead to long-term damage to a veteran’s health.

13. Australian veterans of all wars are entitled to a range of government-supplied medical and other benefits. Do you agree with the philosophy that the nation owes a duty to those who have served in wars? Explain your views.
What was the impact of the war on Korea and Koreans?

**Suggestions to teachers**

The greatest impact of the Korean War was on Korea and the Koreans.

In this investigation students can explore some of those impacts.

Students understand that the Korean War was a Cold War conflict, so it is appropriate that they discover the outcome of the war for the two competing ideologies.

Students will discover that while the fighting stopped over sixty years ago there has been no formal peace treaty between the two Koreas. They are still technically in a state of war, and tensions remain high between them.
What was the impact of the war on Korea and Koreans?

This resource is mainly about the Australian experience of the Korean War. However, the greatest impact of the war was on the people of Korea, both North and South.

Here is a modern Korean artist’s painting of his family before the Korean War.

1. Describe the family.

2. Imagine a similar gathering of your family today. Identify who you think would be there.

3. How might the gathering be both similar and different to the Korean family gathering above?

This is the artist’s comment on the impact of the Korean War on his family.

4. How many fewer people are now in the family group?

5. Identify the type of people who are missing.

6. What lasting impacts could you expect this to have on the family?

These paintings illustrate the fact that war has personal impacts on families, and consequently on society. There are also other impacts — economic, environmental, social, political and ideological.
7. Look at the following information about the impacts of the war on the Koreas. Identify what type of impact each piece of information provides, write that heading in column A of this table, and then summarise what the information tells you about that type of impact on South and North Korea. For example, with Military casualties you might decide that its impact is clearly personal, but also social — the loss of so many men must have a huge impact on local communities and the wider society.

**Impact of war on the two Koreas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Type of impact</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>North Korea</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>South Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Military casualties
Statistics in textbooks for the number of combat casualties from the Korean War — deaths, injuries and missing — often differ greatly. The UN and South Korea kept official records, but the North Koreans did not, or have not released them, and the official Chinese figures have been questioned by the United States. Regardless of the precise numbers, it is clear that the greatest number of deaths during the war was of Koreans. The following figures of the approximate number of combat deaths show this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>figures vary between 60,000 and 200,000 killed or missing.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>figures vary between 300,000 and 440,000 killed or missing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The loss of so many men from a population of 30 million (21 million in the South, 9 million in the North) was devastating for both nations.

Civilian casualties
Millions of civilians were caught in the ebb and flow of the war. Again there are no definite figures. Estimates vary from:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Korea</th>
<th>500,000–1,000,000+ civilian casualties.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Korea</td>
<td>1,000,000+ civilian casualties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ibid.

 Civilians in the cross-fire
The topography of Korea meant that much of the population was located in valleys that were also the communication routes used by troops to attack and retreat, and were, therefore, battlefields. Seoul was attacked or counter-attacked four times, Pyongyang twice. Civilians were caught in the cross-fire, or were in buildings that were

▼ Korean refugees on the road.
attacked by ground forces, or hit by artillery or air strikes. Many became refugees, having lost almost everything except what they could carry.

There was massive destruction of homes, factories, roads, railways, bridges, dams and farms during the course of the war. Food was often seized by troops, and animals were killed for food or destroyed in bombardments.

Some of this occurred during fighting, when artillery and aerial bombing were among the munitions being used. There was also a policy of destroying much of the North, when the United States/UN/ROK forces were retreating from Chinese attacks back to the 38th parallel.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

In 2005, South Korea set up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

One of its main aims was to establish the facts, so as to inform the community of what had happened, to apologise to the families of victims, to enable memorial services — and to thereby lay the ‘ghosts’ of the dead to rest. In South Korea there is a strong cultural tradition of respect for the dead, and a strong family connection to ancestors. There was often no known burial place, as well as no proper keeping of family records and no rituals for the dead. Thus, the dead could not properly be honoured. There are entire towns that today perform their ancestral remembrance rituals all on the same day because that is the day the village was destroyed.

Associated with this pain was the permanent separation of families. The border between the two Koreas at the end of the Second World War was an arbitrary one — it was just a line selected by the United States and accepted by the USSR to separate the two areas of responsibility. Many families had members in both North and South. These families were now permanently separated.

In recent years a ‘Sunshine Policy’ of greater contact between North and South saw the reuniting of some family members after more than fifty years of separation, but this has again been limited because of tensions between the two nations.
Economic reconstruction

The economic impacts of the Korean War on the two Koreas were immense. We have seen above the loss of life, destruction of property and infrastructure, and the devastation to industries. With many power plants destroyed the resumption of manufacturing was difficult. Korea’s trade was ruined due to the destruction of factories and fields. The reduction in food supplies meant inflation, hunger and even starvation among the population.

After the war, Russia contributed money and industrial machinery to North Korea. The North quickly began to recover, but became dependent on Russian foreign aid to support its politically controlled economy. The South Korean economy, initially much smaller than that of the north, took a different direction and started to produce more consumer-oriented goods. By the mid-1970s it had a Gross Domestic Product greater than that of North Korea, and kept expanding into the economic giant it is today.

The contrast today

South Korea is today a democratic and prosperous nation with a high standard of living. It continues to have strong military ties with the United States due to the fact that the war between North and South has never officially ended. North Korea remains a military dictatorship with a very low standard of living.

8. Add relevant information to your table showing the Impact of war on the two Koreas.

9. What would you say was the greatest impact of the Korean War on Korea?

10. The phrase ‘Cold War’ gives an impression of conflict that does not involve open warfare and suffering. What has this study of the Korean War helped you understand about the reality of the Cold War?
Look at these two evaluations of the involvement of Australia in the Korean War.

**Source 9.3** Official Korean War historian Robert O'Neill

Although this purpose was probably far from the thoughts of many of the Australian soldiers, airmen and sailors who fought in Korea or provided support from Japan, the quality of their service helped … to strengthen Australia’s reputation as a valuable ally. These were not inconsiderable achievements for a relatively small contingent, but most importantly they helped to demonstrate firmly and clearly in the 1950s, as other Australians had done in two world wars, that aggressors ultimately would not be tolerated by the international community.

*Out in the Cold: Australia’s Involvement in the Korean War, Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Canberra, ACT, 2000, p. 84.*

**Source 9.4** 3 RAR veteran John Lewis on his return to Korea in 1995

[He commented on] how the southern half of that country has progressed in the last forty years and the high living standards of the South Koreans, as against the obvious poverty of the north. ‘We definitely achieved our goal of preventing North Korean Premier Kim Il Sung and Gen. Nam Il from taking over the south with their Communist forces and making them slaves’.


11. Do you think other veterans and South Koreans would agree with these assessments? Explain your views.
Suggestions to teachers

This investigation asks students to analyse the way the Korean War has been commemorated in Australia through the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial, and the National Australian Korean War Memorial on Anzac Parade. Both of these are located in Canberra.

Students can be challenged to use the knowledge, understanding and empathy they have developed in this resource to outline or explain what they would see as an appropriate way of commemorating the Australian involvement in the war. They should consider what information their own commemoration would include: what ideas, values and messages it would present to the audience, and what physical means they would use to communicate those ideas, values and messages.

They can then compare their version with the one actually created, and can critically analyse what they see as its strengths and weaknesses as a form of commemoration.

Finally, students can investigate the way the Korean War has been commemorated in their local community, region or state.
How has Australia commemorated the Korean War?

A ‘commemoration’ is a public acknowledgment intended to remember or honour a significant event. It is a way of expressing information, ideas, values and messages about that event.

There are many ways in which the Korean War has been commemorated in Australia — including national and state memorials, a gallery at the Australian War Memorial, hundreds of local war memorials, and by displays in many RSL branches.

Two significant ways in which the war has been commemorated nationally are through the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial, and the Australian National Korean War Memorial on Anzac Parade, Canberra.

This unit investigates both these public commemorations.

Roll of Honour

The Roll of Honour consists of panels of names of those service men and women who have died during or as a result of their service, within a defined time during or after a military conflict or operation.

The panels are located at the Australian War Memorial. They are organised chronologically by conflict, and the names are listed alphabetically by unit. The names do not include rank or honours and decorations. There are 340 names for the Korean War for the period of combat from 27 June 1950 up to the armistice of 27 July 1953, and sixteen for the period between the armistice and 1957 when Australians were part of a UN ceasefire monitoring process.

1. Why do you think the names do not include any rank or honours? What message does this give people?

2. The Roll of Honour includes those who died from non-combat causes, such as in a road accident in Australia, but who were part of a unit at the time that was serving in Korea. Do you think that is appropriate?

3. Do you think it is important to acknowledge those who have died during their service in war? Explain your reasons.

4. Many visitors to the Roll of Honour place red poppies beside the names of relatives, or of people whom they do not know. What do you think is the purpose of this?
National Australian Korean War Memorial

In April 2000, the Australian National Korean War Memorial was dedicated in Canberra.

5. Imagine that you had been asked to design this national war memorial for the Australian experience of the Korean War. From what you know about the Korean War, what would you want to show and tell people about that experience through the memorial?

Think about the elements you might include:

- Words
- Symbols
- Shapes
- Textures
- Light and shade
- Surfaces
- Statements
- Space
- Sounds
- Images

Think about the style you might prefer:

- Realistic — such as a statue
- Impressionistic — where a statue might be recognisable but not photographically perfect
- Abstract — where a shape might suggest an object or idea, such as a piece of aluminium representing an aeroplane wing
- Symbolic — where a recognisable shape or object actually stands for something else, such as a heart shape representing love.

Think about the messages, meanings and values that you might want to portray through the memorial, including information about the war.

6. Sketch or describe the memorial that you would create, indicating all the features that you would include.

7. On the next pages there are photographs of the elements of the design that was selected for the Australian National Korean War Memorial in Canberra. Comment on why each element might have been included, and what it is meant to convey to the viewer. Some elements might be informative; some might be symbolic; some might be emotive; some might be presenting a message. Decide what you think they are doing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of the design</th>
<th>Your comments on it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wall with twenty-one country names</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three sculptured figures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several large boulders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stainless steel panels with photographs and newspaper articles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>339 stainless steel poles*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colours of grey, white and silver</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three main flagpoles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A low building</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four insignia or plaques</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A large pyramid-shaped obelisk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An inclined plinth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An oval-shaped roof</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text explaining the course of the war, and the roles of the RAN, RAAF and Australian Army</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Since the Memorial was dedicated a 340th Australian name has been added to the Roll of Honour for the Korean War.

Source 10.2
Front view of the memorial from Anzac Parade

Source 10.3
Three figures — navy, army and air force

Source 10.4
Words on the obelisk

THIS OBEISK IS
IN MEMORY OF THE MEN FROM AUSTRALIA
WHO FELL IN THE KOREAN WAR
AND HAVE NO KNOWN GRAVE
THEY DIED WITH MEN FROM OTHER COUNTRIES
FIGHTING TO UPHOLD THE IDEALS
OF THE UNITED NATIONS
Source 10.5 Some of the aluminium poles

Source 10.6 Scrolls on the main structure

Source 10.7 Plaques on the main structure
Source 10.8  Parts of the information panels inside the main structure

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN ARMY

THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
One of the requirements set out in the design competition for a national memorial for the Korean War, was that the memorial ‘should communicate a message that is inspirational in content, relatively timeless in meaning, and representative of noble, heroic and patriotic virtues’. Do you think it succeeds in this? Explain your reasons.
It shows part of the improvised system, set up by Sergeant Thomas Murray, using scaling ladders and lines to lower wounded men from a damaged bridge to where a jeep ambulance would take them to a dressing station. Thomas was awarded the George Medal, the second highest award possible at that time. What sort of images do you think the designers would have chosen for inclusion in the memorial? Why do you think this particular image would have been one of those selected by the designers?

9. One of the etched photographs in Source 10.8 is this one:

10. Are there any aspects of the Australian experience of the Korean War that you think were not included in the memorial, and which should have been? If so, explain what elements are missing, and why you think they should have been incorporated in the design.

11. There are many local, state and international memorials to the Korean War. Either investigate how your local community has commemorated the war, or investigate a state or international one. You should present an analysis of it, using your investigation of the Australian National Korean War Memorial as your model.

Bringing it together

12. In Introductory concept 2 you imagined that a number of volunteers for Korea were coming to your class. There are many Korean War veterans who could talk to you about their experiences. Contact your local Returned and Services League (RSL) to arrange for these men and women to talk to your class, and to share what you now understand about the war, and its meaning for young Australians today.