

Korean War Memorial Fact Sheet, 2016

Korean War Memorial

Quick Facts

- The N. and S. Korean border was at the 38th parallel
- Statues are over 7 feet tall
- The 19 statues are reflected on the wall to make 38 images.
- Statues are made of stainless steel in a ghostly hue
- You walk uphill representing the mountains
- Ground cover represents the rough terrain
- Granite slabs represent the rice paddies and order in the chaos
- The Mural Wall wavy appearance evokes mountainous ranges
- Soldiers were equipped like WWII soldiers
- Etched on the wall with no identification are 2400 photos of men, women, and a dog who served in Korea
- Was a U.N. action against the invasion of S. Korea by N. Korea
- The mural wall measures 164 feet long and eight inches thick, and from an aerial view, the memorial appears as an isosceles triangle, with the soldiers spearheading the tip which intersects a circle over the Pool of Remembrance.

History

Korea had been occupied by Japan from 1910 to the end of WWII. After the defeat of Japan in 1945, the Soviet Union took control of the area north of the 38th parallel and the United States took control of the area south. Because of the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, Korea had separate governments in the north and south. Both parts claimed to be the legitimate government of all of Korea, and neither accepted the border as permanent.

The conflict turned into open warfare when North Korean forces, supported by the Soviet Union and China, invaded the south on June 25, 1950. On June 27, 1950, the UN Security Council dispatched UN forces to repel the North Korean invasion of the South. While 17 countries contributed troops, the United States supplied 88% of the UN's military personnel.

After 3 years of warfare, an armistice was signed on July 27, 1953, ending the fighting. This agreement created the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to separate North and South Korea and allowed for the exchange of prisoners. However, because no peace treaty was ever signed, the two Koreas are technically still at war.

In 1986, the U.S. Congress authorized the construction of a memorial to honor Korean War veterans.

In 1995, President Bill Clinton and South Korean President Kim Young Sam dedicated the memorial.

Statues

The 19 statues represent a patrol who are walking uphill. The soldiers all wear ponchos over their equipment, signifying the bitter, cold winds. The juniper ground cover represents the rough terrain while the granite slabs represent water and rice paddies. Each branch of the armed services is represented as follows: 15 U.S. Army, 2 Marines, 1 Navy Hospital Corpsman, and 1 Air Force Forward Air Observer. The concept was to show 38 soldiers in full combat gear, representing the 38th parallel, but because of lack of space, only 19 statues were made. However, with their reflections on the mural wall, the total is 38 soldiers. The reflections also have a mountainous feel. The granite slabs represent order in chaos and the uphill grade symbolizes the mountainous terrain. Looking at the soldiers from the flagpole, you can see three of the soldiers emerging from the woods. It creates the feeling that there could be many more soldiers, maybe even hundreds or thousands more, in the woods.

The sculptor, Frank C. Gaylord II, of Vermont wanted to show the ethnic diversity of the troops, so he referred to books for pictures. All statues are based on real men who actually fought in WWII or Korea. The statues range from 7'3" to 7'6" and weigh 1000 pounds each. Weapons include semi-automatic Carbines and Garand rifles, a 30 caliber machine gun and a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR).

The United Nation's Curb, running along the northern side of the statues, contains a listing of the 22 nations who participated in the Korean War.

Mural Wall

The Mural Wall is made of Black California Academy Granite. The muralist was Louis Nelson Associates.

On the wall are over 2400 photos of men, women, and a dog who served during the war. There is no identification of anyone but all the photos were taken from the National Archives.

These support forces include the Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps. Many of those people would have seen combat but not intensive or close up.

13 feet separates support personnel on the wall from the troops (statues) but you see them together on the wall as reflections, representing a oneness of the military. You also see the visitors reflected, representing the citizenry of the country who depend upon the military. The mural wall unifies different services and citizens of the USA.

From the tip of the triangle, the following personnel are represented: Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines. The incline of the granite represents mountains. The Rose of Sharon Hibiscus found behind the Mural Wall is the National Flower of South Korea.

Pool of Remembrance

The pool goes around the wall and point of the triangle because Korea is a peninsula. By the pool are benches and Linden trees to create a peaceful area of reflection. The message, "Freedom is not Free" is inscribed on the wall. Across from it we see the casualties of the US and UN forces.

The dedication stone, located at the point of the triangle and the American Flag, reads: "Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met" 1950- 1953.