Korean War (1950-1953)
You mean America became involved in a civil war in Korea?

Who Fought?
Prior to World War II, Korea was taken over by Japan. After the war, the victorious Allied nations divided Korea into two nations at the 38th Parallel line. American military forces occupied South Korea and created a capitalist economy while Soviet forces in the North established a communist society. North Korean forces invaded South Korea in June 1950 in an attempt to unify the country under communism. The United States led a United Nations military force to help South Korea fight against the North. About twenty countries provided soldiers and aid to South Korea. China and the Soviet Union supported and fought with the North Koreans.

Why Did the United States Enter the War?
U.S. President Harry Truman had issued his Truman Doctrine in 1947 outlining America’s policy of containment of communism. When the North Korean army invaded South Korea, America wanted to protect nearby Japan and prevent communism from spreading into the rest of Asia from the Soviet Union and China. America called on the United Nations to use force against North Korea and the United Nations Joint Command agreed to provide troops.

In September 1950, American General Douglas MacArthur led a coalition of UN troops that landed at Inchon in South Korea and advanced into North Korea. This resulted in communist Chinese forces coming to the aid of North Korea and driving UN troops back across the 38th Parallel to South Korea. Eventually the Soviet Union, another communist country, provided military aid to the North Korean army as well.

General MacArthur disagreed with President Truman on how to handle the war and was relieved of his command in April, 1951. UN forces counterattacked and the war went back and forth with each side gaining and losing territory before the war eventually came to a stalemate. The cease-fire was signed on July 27, 1953, and has never been replaced by a formal peace treaty. It set up a 4-kilometer demilitarized zone along the 38th parallel. It was signed by North Korean and Chinese military leaders on one side, and by the U.S.-led United Nations command on the other. No South Korean representatives signed the agreement.” Officially the war has never ended, but rather is in a “paused” condition.

What Were the Results of the War?
The ceasefire produced no clear winning side of the Korean War. The border between North and South Korea was restored to the 38th Parallel, the same it had been before the war started. This area became a demilitarized zone (DMZ) and exists to this day. Today, South Korea is known as the Republic of South Korea and is a successful democracy with a healthy economy. North Korea is a totalitarian dictatorship named the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and is known for human rights abuses and militarization. As a result of the Korean war, racial integration efforts in the U.S. military increased. African Americans fought in integrated units for the first time. Among the 1.8 million American soldiers who fought in the Korean War there were more than 100,000 African Americans. Also, for the short duration of the war, casualty numbers were very high. The Korean War was the first major war of the Cold War era.
U.S., UN, and North Korean Casualties in the Korean War

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>United Nations</th>
<th>North Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>54,246</td>
<td>628,833</td>
<td>Between 215,000 - 350,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>103,824</td>
<td>1.1 million</td>
<td>303,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Captured</td>
<td>7,140</td>
<td>92,970</td>
<td>Combined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>8,177</td>
<td>470,267</td>
<td>120,000</td>
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Source: American Battlefield Monuments Commission

Quick Review

1. What is the best choice to complete the graphic?
   A. Defeat the Soviet Union
   B. Protect Japan
   C. Show off its military strength
   D. Unite Korea under communism

2. Why did China give aid to North Korea?
   A. It wanted to take over Korea.
   B. It was a long-time enemy of America.
   C. Both were communist countries.
   D. Both wanted to conquer America.

3. Today, the demilitarized zone shows that:
   A. There is still tension between the North and South.
   B. Korea is a united country
   C. The North and South will soon be united
   D. America has abandoned helping South Korea.