



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Special 60th anniversary Korean War presentations during June at Lincoln Presidential Museum

SPRINGFIELD – The “Forgotten War” is being remembered at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum during June with a series of presentations about the Korean War during the conflict’s 60th anniversary. The presentations are free and open to the public.

“Korean War POWs: A Tragedy in Three Acts” will be presented on four successive Thursday evenings, June 3, 10, 17 and 24 at 7 p.m. in the Museum’s Union Theater. Three Power Point presentations will document the harrowing experiences of Korean War POWs, and will be led by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library’s Oral Historian, Dr. Mark R. DePue, who has conducted nearly 40 interviews with Korean War veterans, including several with POWs. In addition, the film *Pork Chop Hill* starring Gregory Peck, about a key Korean War battle, will be shown in the Museum at 7 p.m. on June 24.

The three presentations include:

- June 3, Act 1: From Catastrophe to Triumph, and Back Again – The War’s First Year
- June 10, Act 2: Brutal Captivity – US & UN Prisoners Endure Cruelty and Indoctrination
- June 17, Act 3: No Middle Ground – The War within the UN-run Camps, and the Talks at Panmunjom.

If there is one aspect of the Korean War that is usually overlooked, it’s the war that raged in the respective prison camps, both north and south. Prisoners were forced to choose either collaboration or resistance, with their lives hanging in the balance. Why? Because of the UN’s (President Truman’s) refusal to repatriate thousands of North Korean and Chinese prisoners against their will. Peace talks began in July 1951, and continued in fits and starts for two more bloody years while the war dragged on at the front. The talks finally ended at Panmunjom in July 1953, resulting not in peace, but in a shaky armistice. The border that divides North and South Korea remains to this day the most heavily fortified border in the world.

Ultimately, the war fought in the POW compounds, both north and south, is the perfect microcosm of what the Cold War was about, a war between the world's two superpowers and two diametrically opposed ideologies – with the prisoners serving as the pawns.

The film *Pork Chop Hill* dramatizes the battle that occurred late in the Korean War and does an excellent job of portraying the type of combat that occurred when the peace talks dragged on. The 1959 film starring Gregory Peck will be shown free of charge in the Presidential Museum's Union Theater on Thursday, June 24 at 7 p.m.

The presentations at the Presidential Museum are part of "Illinois Remembers the Forgotten War: Korea 1950 – 1953," a statewide effort designed to remind the state's residents of the 1,754 Illinoisans and 54,246 United States citizens who lost their lives during the war, as well as many more who served in the armed forces. The observance is sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, Illinois Korean Memorial Association, Korean War National Museum, and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum along with media partners the Illinois Press Association and the Illinois Broadcasters Association.

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