CHAPTER 5

# Korea and the Cold War

*We have won an armistice on a single battleground, not peace in the world.*

**~ Dwight D. Eisenhower ~**

In 1950, world crisis struck when communist troops from North Korea invaded the south, engaging our Nation in one of the bloodiest engagements in its history. The killing didn't stop until a truce was signed on July 27, 1953, by which time 5.7 million Americans served during the Korean War; over 36,000 died, and another 103,000 came home wounded. Even now, the war is not officially over, and hostilities still erupt in the Korean Demilitarized Zone.

Following the Korean War, Americans fought in a silent Cold War to protect freedom and democracy against communism and repression. Men and women were called on to sacrifice during a war that was and still is mostly unknown. It was left to the DAV to ensure that the sacrifices of this war's soldiers did not go unnoticed—or their needs go unfulfilled.

The early 1950's saw the total population of veterans in the United States grow to 19.8 million, approximately 12 percent of the Nation's population as a whole. This meant a workload that the founders of the DAV could never have foreseen, a caseload that intensified daily.

*The Returning Soldier*—1944 by N. C. Wyeth

In 1950, delegates to the DAV's National Convention elected Boniface R. Maile, an attorney from Michigan, to the organization's highest office. Wounded in World War II, Maile was destined to play a major role in the DAV's leadership for a half century to come.

General Melvin J. Maas

From 1943 to 1953, Congress enacted some 500 laws affecting veterans' benefits and services. If it was a great financial problem for the government to meet the needs of so many veterans, it was also a challenge for the DAV. While membership dues covered several DAV programs, the vast bulk of the organization's expenses were paid with funds raised from the general public.

At the 1955 National Convention, General Melvin J. Maas was elected National Commander while he was still on active duty.

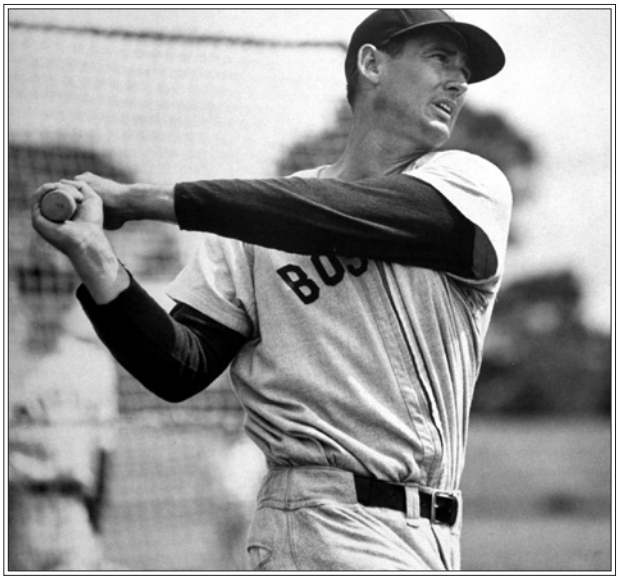
**Denvel D. Adams**

Wounded in combat on Okinawa, General Maas was stationed for two years at the Pentagon, where he was known as "the blind general."

For a time, he also chaired the President's Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped, with which the DAV has been associated since its earliest years.

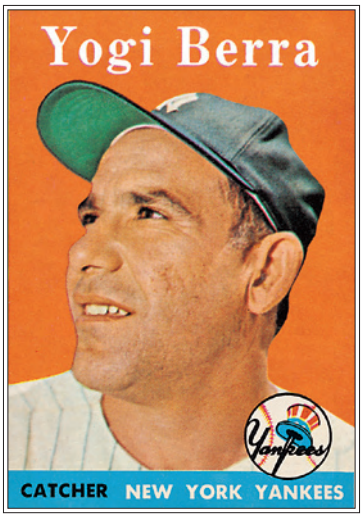
General Maas cited the committee's work during his acceptance speech as National Commander, bringing employment of disabled veterans back to center stage as an issue of concern for the DAV. Educating the public about the plight of disabled veterans was important, he said, but educating industry should be the DAV's top priority. The slogan adopted was: "It is good business to hire the handicapped."

From 1925 to 1958, through good years and bad, a single individual sat in the National Adjutant's chair. But at the 1958 National Convention, Crab Corbly told the delegates it was time to retire.



Ted Williams

New York delegation meets with Yogi Berra




Yogi Berra

Following Corbly as National Adjutant was John E. Feighner, who had served as National 4th Junior Vice Commander before Corbly hired him in 1945 as Assistant National Adjutant. Feighner took over the DAV's reins in troubled times.

"We conducted a meeting in St. Louis in 1959, and it was a do-or-die meeting," said Dale Adams. "We knew the organization was in trouble and we formed a committee from a group of National Service Officers. I was the chairman of it and we wrote a manifesto which I presented to the Executive Committee. It laid down certain stipulations that had to be done for the organization. They adopted the report."

The organization was working hard to provide services to disabled veterans, but serious financial problems hampered its efforts. Though the DAV was in decline, new leadership was coming to the fore. When Hogan retired as Director of Claims, his replacement was Dale Adams, who came to the job with 15 years of experience as a DAV National Service Officer. It was a difficult time for the DAV and forced everyone to sacrifice. "I missed the service work, that's where the pleasure was—doing something that was a challenge for me," said Adams. "The world changed for me when I became National Service Director because then I was in a management position rather than on the frontline. I made an attempt to preserve what we had, but I had to cut the cost in Washington by 80 percent."