

THE VOICE

October 2009 Edition

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Evered's Odyssey

KVAA Inc. Secretary, Alan Evered, with his interest in fossils, gems, and matters archeological, is the Indiana Jones of Korea War veterans. From July to early September he and wife, Nicole, ventured into that deep, dark and mysterious territory known as...Queensland. Along the way, Alan dropped his rock hound's hammer long enough to don his official KVAA Inc. name tag and pay unofficial calls on as many KVAA members in the region as time and digging for sapphires allowed.

This included stops at Parkes in NSW where they met Gordon and Eula Dickson and Margaret Newham; Bill Boswell and John Baxter at Hervey Bay, and Robert and Trish Winton at Glass House Mountains (north of Brisbane and on the Glass House Mountains National Park). East of Glass House Mountains is Bribie Island and Graham Rutledge, who the Evereds met. Ted and Corinne Parkinson from just across the water at Deception Bay, and Bill and Doreen Bailey from Ferney Hills (an outer Brisbane suburb) also caught up with the Evereds on Bribie Island. Ted is President of the KVA Sunshine Coast Inc.

Harry Pooley, our Queensland delegate, was also on the list, as was Lt. Col. Sa Hyun (Paul) Kim, President of the Korean Veterans Association of Australia (Qld. Branch). Throw in Jim Blake, the new president of the AQKV Inc., Paul Shimmen of Tocumwal, and Tex and Bev Cornell, already known to readers of *The Voice*, and you have a very busy Secretary.

This brings me to Kilcoy, south of the mountain of the same name and on the northern edge of Lake Somerset. For a small town it apparently boasts an impressive RSL. Local resident and KVAA member, Kelly Frawley, introduced the Evereds to the President of the RSL club and the Evereds were overwhelmed by the amount and quality of the memorabilia.

Everyone the Evereds met sends their regards to their friends down south and cannot understand why we do not move NORTH (and given the weather down here lately and the weather up there, given the odd dust storm or two, I'm wondering that as well).

A selection of the pictures taken by Alan and Nicole can be found on page 5 in the *Out & About* section.

Associate Member

International Federation of Korean War Veterans
Korea & South East Asia Forces Association of Australia
Sister with Korean War Veterans Association Australian Chapter
Twinned with the South London Branch British Korean Veterans Associations
Twinned with the Korea Veterans Association of Canada

Affiliated Associations

Association of Queensland Korea Veterans Inc.
Australia & Korea Veterans Assoc. Sunshine Coast Inc.
Korea War Veterans Association of NSW

Allied Associations

Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemaker Veterans' Association Inc.



THE VOICE

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Bill Campbell†
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Athol Egeberg
Mick Everett†
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Stan Gallop
Olwyn Green OAM (Hon)
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Editorial Disclaimer

Articles in *The Voice* are printed on the understanding that, unless stated, they are the original works of the contributors or authors. The editor reserves the right to reject, edit, abbreviate, rewrite or rearrange, any item submitted for publication. The view of the contributing authors are not necessarily those of the Association, the editor or publishers of *The Voice*.

President's Report

On Sunday, 23 August, St. Georges Church East St. Kilda held their annual *Healing the Wounds of War* ceremony in which all conflicts from pre-Federation to the present day are remembered. Bill Youngs lit the candle in memory of Korea War Veterans and I had the privilege of reciting the Ode. Guest speaker was Mr Matt Burke OAM, Past President of the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers Veterans Association (Vic).

Two important ceremonies attended by our Association in the past two months took place at the same location: the Repatriation Hospital Heidelberg. On 2 August, the National Service Association held a Memorial Ceremony there, followed on 14 September by the Australian Peacekeepers and Peacemakers. Both ceremonies were very well attended and Korea War Veterans warmly received. It was indeed a pleasure to be invited to be part of both Services. These two organizations are tireless in their work for the ex-service community.

The proposed *Turn Toward Busan* on 11-11-09 is apparently creating some opposition both here in Australia and internationally, the reason for which I cannot comprehend. I believe that the decision is up to each organization and individual; we are not encroaching on any specific service, just remembering our own on Remembrance Day.

To me it is another opportunity to bring before the government and the general public that we collectively always remember our own. If it is physically impossible to turn toward Busan then do as I have done for decades, turn your thoughts and prayers towards our comrades in Busan, they fully deserve our thoughts and prayers. This way we are not interfering in any way shape or form.

Spring is here and there is a hint of warmth in the air here in Victoria. May your winter aches and pains ease.

Vic Dey OAM
National President

The Christmas Tree Banner

Editor's note: Many, many years ago when I was actually young and I first saw the photograph of the banner featured below and in the last issue of The Voice, I good-naturedly chided my ex-soldier, ex-police sergeant father of being a closet peacenik. He told me something of the history of the banner, most of which I had forgotten until prompted by a recent e-mail. The following info comes via Olwyn Green via Ernie Holden who, during research for his book, Mates Mortars and Minefields, interviewed Bob Hipworth, one of the soldiers in the photograph, who told him how 1 RAR obtained the banner.

Bob Hipworth: "Christmas Eve 1952, the Chinese let it be known that they would give us an amnesty for 48 hours commencing midnight on 24th. Christmas Day they broadcast that they had erected a Christmas tree and called us to come and get our presents. By this time the snow had covered the whole area about one foot deep. At 9.00 p.m. the Platoon Commander and a captain from Intelligence arrived and I was told to escort the Captain to the tree. It did not take long to find the tree, a well known position on Hill 227. After a safety check of several deloused mines, the placard *Demand Peace - Stop the War* was [found] rolled up, some Christmas cards and two watches were taken from the tree and we made our way home. All this was done while a hidden loud speaker played a record of Deanna Durbin singing *The Lights of Home* and *Harbour Lights*. I admit I shed a few tears in the snow before we returned safely our own line, much to my relief."

A propaganda exercise or humane gesture? Perhaps both, and the 48 hours respite was undoubtedly welcome by the soldiers on both sides. The photograph, taken at Camp Casey in March 1953, is important, and not only as a photographic reminder of the Hill 227 Christmas tree story.



Left, kneeling: Corporal John (Jack) Ashe; centre, kneeling: Lt. Patrick Forbes; right, kneeling: Bob Hipworth. Standing, left to right, H. Cookson, G. Robinson, W. McCutcheon, John Dawes, D. Guilfoyle, P. Sims.

Corporal Jack Ashe was MIA two months after the photo was taken and Private John Dawes was killed on 26 July, a day before the ceasefire. Bob Hipworth was a WIA.

(Ernie Holden's *Mates Mortars and Minefields* is available directly from the author on 02 9623 9392).

Book Questionnaire

The authors of *Aussie Soldier: Up Close and Personal* and *Aussie Soldier: Prisoners of War* are now working on a book about peacekeepers, peace enforcers, observers, and soldiers on humanitarian and reconstruction operations. Since our first Peacekeeping operation in 1947 until now, more than 40,000 servicemen and women have served from Korea to Afghanistan to keep the peace. The authors are asking Australian soldiers who served in any of these operations to complete a questionnaire on their activities. Whilst they cannot guarantee that your story will be published, they will try wherever possible to include as many stories, quotes and anecdotes as possible. At a minimum, all those who do complete the questionnaire will have their names published in the acknowledgments to thank them for their assistance.

If you have any further questions or wish to assist in other way please contact one of the authors:

Denny Neave

Email: denny@bigskypublishing.com.au

Craig Smith

Email: craighedwinsmith@yahoo.com

Questionnaires should be returned no later than 30th January 2010 to either of the above emails, or hard copies can be sent to: Aussie Soldier, Big Sky Publishing, PO Box 303, Newport NSW 2106 (Ph: 02 99182168 / Fax: 02 99182396)

Privacy Policy: Big Sky Publishing will not disclose any personal details or information provided by you to any other organization nor will it be used for any other purpose other than for potential inclusion in the new book.

Questionnaire

1. Full Name & Date of Birth.
2. What year did you enlist and discharge?
3. What is your Regimental Number (for verification purposes only)
4. What Corps did you join?
5. What is your rank (or if discharged was your rank on discharge)?
6. What Peacekeeping/Enforcing, monitoring or observing were you involved in?
7. What is your brief military history (units served, rank, honours and awards etc.)?
8. Do you consent to having your story included in Aussie Soldier - Peacekeeper?

When answering these questions please provide as much detail as possible. Our aim is to provide readers with an insight into what soldiers on these deployments went through be it good, bad or ugly. We feel that your story needs to be told to the next generation of Australians. There are a lot of questions, you do not need to answer all of them, just those that have meaning/relevance to you.

- Q1. How do you feel you have contributed to world peace or stability in the countries you were deployed to?
- Q2. What was your role with whilst deployed, and do you have any specific actions relating to this role?
- Q3. Do you feel you achieved your mission within your deployment? Why/Why Not?
- Q4. Can you describe any actions of significance on your deployment? This could be incidents, contacts, close calls, hostilities etc
- Q5. What were the challenges faced in dealing with other defence forces, UN, Non Government Organisations and civilians?
- Q6. Can you describe actions/events that showed compassion or mateship where any person you observed demonstrated these attributes?
- Q7. Can you describe actions/events that showed brutality, war crimes or cruelty that you observed?
- Q8. Can you describe any direct action against the enemy where you were involved in fire fights or offensive/defensive actions even though on peace ops?
- Q9. What did you do to relieve stress/boredom/missing loved etc whilst on operations?
- Q10. Describe the cultural challenges faced in your theatre of operations; include food, religion, culture, personalities, language etc.
- Q11. Did the ROE/OFOF/UN Mandate in which you were operating effect your ability to achieve your role and tasks?
- Q12. Do you think you were adequately supported within the international community for the mission you were given? Why/why not.
- Q13. Were you involved in reconstruction tasks and what sense of satisfaction did you gain from this process?
- Q14. If you were an Observer, did you feel you were able to influence outcomes without the use of your conventional military training? Did you feel empowered enough to achieve your objectives?
- Q15. If involved in humanitarian efforts, what was your sense of pride in completing your task compared to other non-humanitarian operations you may have been involved in? What were the challenges and how was the reception/interaction with the local community?
- Q16. Were you involved in a training team and what issues were faced in regards to this role; include gender, culture, enthusiasm of forces being trained, etc?
- Q17. How were you treated when you were repatriated to Australia? Can you describe the support you received on arrival home?
- Q18. What issues do veterans from your deployment face?
- Q19. How have past diggers/wars influenced/inspired/impacted you?
- Q20. If you've deployed on warlike active service (not a peacekeeping mission) what is the most defined difference between this deployment and that of a peacekeeping deployment?
- Q21. In your opinion what is the greatest 'myth' related to being a peacekeeper?
- Q22. How did you/your family manage while you where away? Concerns, communication with each other etc?
- Q23. Any final reflection on being involved in peace operations; consider leadership, training, complexity, international law and media?

Out & About

Annual Korean War Ceasefire Commeration at the Shrine, 26th July 2009



Evered's Odyssey July-early September 2009



Trish & Rob Winton, Nicole Evered. Glass House Mountains.



Bill Boswell, Alan Evered, John Baxter. Hervey Bay.



Kelly Frawley, Kilcoy, prefers a discreet mode of transport.



Doreen & Bill Bailey (Ferny Hills) and Ted & Corrine Parkinson (Deception Bay). Bribie Island RSL.



Alan Evered and Kelly Frawley in front of the Honour Roll. Kilcoy RSL.

A sample of the tributes inside.



Harry Pooley and Alan Evered. Beenleigh RSL



Notices

KVAA Inc. 2009 Certificate of Service List

10 Year Certificates

John L. Brookes
Mervyn P. Campbell
Peter M. Cerda-Pavia
Douglas E. Charman
George H. Colley
Raymond C. Duckett
Douglas G. Franklin
John P. Gerdson
Albert W. Gosch
John W. Hazelton
Edward D. McMahon
Arthur J. Parsons
Desmond J Pope
Bernard Shrubsole
Ellis M. Smith
Bernard T. A. Smith
Robert W. G. Stephenson
Edward Stirling
John E Suttie
Donald A Tyler
George E Watson

James C. Weston
Terry Wickens

15 Year Certificates

Maxwell J. Airey
Victor A. Anderson
Gordon J. Andrews
Ronald Atrill
Leslie J. Baxter
Edward G. Black
Tony F. A. Brennan
William R. Bush
William J. J. Casey
William L. Cass
Peter H. Cox
Ernest L. Cutts
Bernard J. Day
William F. Douglass
John R. Duffey
Donald Duncan
Jack Edlington
Malcolm B. Elliott
Frederick W. Ford

Peter Ford

John P. Gerdson
Robert J. Grant
Anthony J. Guest
Ian M. Haverfield
Brian G. Heweston
George D. Hutchinson
Maurice Jennings
Stanley R. Johns
Lyle M. Johnston
Ronald H. Joyce
Francis J. Kenny
Harold E. Knaggs
George A. Leech
Robert J. Maddigan
John K. McCaig
John F. McConville
Bruce H. Meehan
Thomas A. O'Dea
John A. O'Meara
Edward R. Payne
Kenneth C. Phillips

William H. Prentice
James E. Prouse
Joseph P. J. Richards
Ronald C. Ridley
John E. Suttie
Brian E. Wallace
Laurence N. Walsh
John M. Walter
Richard O. Welsby
John D. G. Whitmore
Edmond R. Williams
Richard A. Woodhams
Frederick C. Wilson

20 Year Certificates

Gordon J. Andrews
Ben S. O'Dowd

25 Year Certificates

Noel B. Riley
Francis R. Thurston

Veteran Assist

Veteran Assist is a private local company that is contracted to the Department of Veteran Affairs. We conduct HomeFront assessments on all Gold, White & War Widows that have a gold card regardless of health status, age & accommodation.

We make an appointment to see the veteran in their own home. We show the veteran the products on offer this calendar year up to the value of \$196. The veteran chooses the products and we order these for them. The items are used for the home and come under the 'falls prevention program'. Items chosen are to prevent falls such as retractable hose reels, sensor light, night light, non slip mats, cordless telephones just to name a few.

The assessment takes approx. 30 minutes. It is at no cost to the veteran. The items are posted to the veteran and takes approx. 4 weeks to arrive from Melbourne at no cost to the veteran.

The uptake rate of HomeFront is only 4%. Our mission is to increase awareness of HomeFront and to service the veteran community Australia Wide!

We have a 1800 telephone number which is free for all veterans calling from Australia.

Contact Ceri & Rhian Lewis on 1800 257788.

25 January 1953 Patrol

Tony Blake, the Secretary of the RAR Association NSW Branch, as part of a project to return home the remains of Aussie MIAs, is seeking information on the following soldiers: Tony Poole, Glen Brown, J. F. Davis, J. McCulloch, V. E. O'Brien, Brian Davoren, T. J. Whiting, D. M. Murray, C. (Snowy) Gale. These men plus Hodgkisson, Saunders, Scurry and Smith (all MIAs) formed the 'base group' of a 25 January 1953 patrol into No Man's Land. Are you one of the men listed above or a relative or have information about them? If so, let the Editor know on (03) 9546 5979 and I'll pass on your details to Tony Blake.

60th Anniversary Appointment

The Prime Minister of Korea, His Excellency, Han Seung-soo, has appointed Vincent Courtenay of Canada as an Advisory Councillor to the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee. This committee was founded earlier this year by executive order of Lee Myung Bak, President of the Republic of Korea.

Vince Courtenay is one of two non-Koreans to serve on the eight-member Advisory Council, which provides advice and assistance to the Commemoration Committee's representatives at all levels. The Commemoration Committee is chaired by Prime Minister Han Seung-soo, who is assisted by 15 Cabinet Ministers and 45 Presidential Appointees.

A Korean War veteran who served with the Canadian Army, Vince Courtenay has long been associated with Korean War commemoration programs in Korea, Canada and abroad. In the 2000-2003 period he worked closely with the 50th Korean War Commemoration Committee, which was chaired by the renowned Korean War hero, General Paik Sun-yup, who was Korea's first chief of the combined staffs.

We Were Not Ready (Part Two)

by Alan Beck

The Forgotten Dakotas

Due to the publication of a number of books about No. 77 Fighter Squadron, those in the community with an interest in such matters, have a reasonable knowledge about the squadron's performance and achievements, and its contribution to Australia's effort during the Korean War. Unlike No. 77 Squadron, the contribution of the transporters (those who served with the C-47 Dakotas) has remained relatively unknown. What follows is a condensed version of the unit's involvement in the Korean conflict.

In June 1950, No. 77 Squadron comprised a large number of P51 Mustangs, two C-47 Dakotas, a few Wirraways and a couple of Asuters left behind by the RAF when it returned to England sometime earlier. One Dakota was a freighter, used for general transport duties; the other being fitted out for VIP transport at the disposal of Lt. Gen. H. Robertson, C-in-C of BCOF. The crew who flew the Dakotas included Flt. Lt. Dave Hitchins, pilot; Flt. Lt. Chas Taplin, co-pilot; Flt. Lt. Ivan Pretty, navigator, and Flt. Lt. Joe McDonald, signaller.

In the early days of the conflict, No. 77 Squadron contained no personnel with both knowledge and experience in operation room procedure who was also freely available. Flt. Lt. Chas Taplin had the first two qualities, presumably gained during WWII, so he was removed from the Dakota crew and placed in the operation room. This left the Dakota crew short one co-pilot.

Dave Hitchins recruited a replacement from a most unusual source. He persuaded his fiancée, a RAAF nursing sister from the base hospital, to fill the vacant seat. This she willingly did when off-duty. Not quite the RAAF thing to do, but it worked. She became the first female RAAF co-pilot – unofficially – in the Korean War (and perhaps in the history of the RAAF to that date).

The RAAF senior officers were quick to understand that air transportation was to play a major role in the conduct of the war. In order to better support the British Commonwealth 27th and 29th Brigades, as well as No. 77 Squadron, the Dakota unit was gradually enlarged. Additional Dakotas arrived with their crews and went into No. 77 Squadron, only to be removed after the promulgating of the new RAAF order on 20 October and officially posted into the newly designated and autonomous 30 Communications Unit. Within days, more C-47s arrived, raising the unit to its full strength of eight aircraft.

Flt. Lt. Dave Hitchins acted unofficially as 30 Comm. Unit's Officer-in-Command until the official commanding officer arrived at Iwakuni late in January 1951. As an experienced pilot and WWII veteran with advanced training in transport operations, Dave Hitchins prepared the newly arriving C-47 pilots for flying in the unfriendly and dangerous Korean environment.

Two essential skills were flying in zero visibility and landing using CGA (Ground Control Approach). Landing were often made despite the pilot not spotting the strip. One pilot remarked that he saw the ground twice during a mission: once when he boarded the aircraft, and the next when he left it after landing.

Flying in Korea was an extremely dangerous. Mountainous terrain and extreme weather conditions often

The term 'Communication Unit' was not well chosen. The unit's commanding officer told me in 1952 that the term did not clearly convey that it was an *aerial transport* unit, so the name changed to 30 Transport Unit. In 1953 this altered again, becoming No. 36 Transport Squadron. The squadron is still operational and provides essential aerial transport for our serving personnel engaged in conflicts and policing actions overseas.

made flights very hazardous. Not having pressurised cabins meant that C-47s had to travel at a relatively low altitude when carrying passengers. This meant flying through bad weather and not above it as is done today. Snow storms, in flight icing, zero visibility, iced-over runways, saturated air space, severe thunder and lightning storms, typhoons, strong cross winds, and overloading were the main reasons why flying in Korea was such a dangerous and unnerving occupation for the transporters. Our C-47s flew daily during the war, except for a few days being grounded in 1951 when a savage and destructive typhoon lashed the area.

From June 1950 until July 1953, about 1100 days, I estimate (very roughly) that the Dakotas flew about 4,500 individual completed missions from Japan to Korea and back.

In the three years of the war, our C-47s carried millions of kilograms of supplies and equipment, about 100,000 personnel and 12,762 wounded and sick troops on med-evac flights from Korea back to Iwakuni in all kinds of weather. Not one aircraft or single life was lost due to an in-flight mishap, although some flights came perilously close to disaster.

In-flight icing affected aerodynamics and sometimes made aircraft unflyable, forcing the crew to jettison freight. One aircraft piloted by Russell Law arriving at K14 actually collided in mid-air with a small US spotter

(continues on page 8)

We Were Not Ready (from page 7)

aircraft. Fortunately, Law kept his aircraft under control and landed safely. The incident didn't do his career any harm; he eventually rose to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. Another close-call happened within seconds after landing at Suwon. Instructed by the control tower, our C-47 Dakota remained stationary at the end of the strip while US fighters took off. With its wheels just off the ground one of the fighters hit the cockpit of the C-47 with its undercarriage. The fighter pilot managed to belly-land his plane. No one involved suffered serious injury but the Dakota was written-off, perhaps prematurely. Dave Hitchins thought it still air-worthy and offered to fly it back for repair. His offer was, perhaps fortunately, refused, [Hitchins later became an Air Commodore and commanding officer of No. 36 Transport Squadron].

Maintenance of the C-47s was kept at a very high level by the unit's ground crews; so good, in fact, that not one operational flight was cancelled because an aircraft stood unserviceable on the tarmac. Demand for aircraft was fully met every day, and more importantly, every aircraft returned safely to base each day.

The RAAF has come a long way in aerial transport since the Korean War but it was the transporters of that time who set the flying and maintenance standards of excellence carried over to this day. The unit met and overcame the challenge of the Korean weather to go *anywhere, anytime, in any weather*.

Hill 217

by Don Scally

Editor's Note: Don Scally is part of South Korea's Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs' invitational return to Korea for veterans disabled in the conflict. He and his daughter went as guests of the MPVA in September. This is his story of how he came to sustain his wounds.

I arrived in Pusan from Japan along with three of my friends, Graham Nicol, Arthur Buchan and Norman Cowie. We spent a day and a night there and met up with my older brother who had arrived in Pusan a few days before me. We were part of a group of reinforcements for the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

We travelled north and joined the battalion. Arthur and Norman went to A Company while Graham and I were posted to 4th platoon, B Company. 4th platoon was mainly engaged in day patrols into No Man's Land, crossing the Imjin River by flat bottom boats, and returning before sunset. However, some of these incursions spilled over into a second day, which meant we were out there overnight.

The enemy heavily mortared us as we returned from one of these patrols. It is a terrible feeling seeing the black smoke from the exploding bombs and knowing you have to advance through it. Graham took a direct hit and died instantly. In the chaos, the confusion, amid the smoke and noise, there was nothing we could do for him. Tears welled in my eyes, but like the rest, I pressed on. His body was later recovered and is buried in Pusan.

We continued to do patrols in No Man's Land, and for a few weeks in October 1951, both A and B Company were part of the Commonwealth Division Command's operation to capture Hill 355. The assault began on the 2nd, and by the 4th the hill was firmly in Battalion hands.

Bad news travels fast, and word soon reached me that Arthur died in the fighting and Norman was wounded, losing his left leg. This was devastating news, but I didn't have much time to dwell on it.

The following day our commanders ordered the Battalion off the hill and onto our next objective: Hill 217. We approached it under constant mortar fire and this time it was my turn to go down. Shrapnel tore into my body and legs, sending me to the ground. I tried to get up but my legs would not take my weight. Two South Korean porters lifted me onto a stretcher and my journey down began.

The hill was too steep to allow the bearers to carry the stretcher normally. Instead, they dragged it from the front with the two back handles trailing on the ground. I hung on with my left arm until we reached the casualty clearance station. The pain first hit me when they put green gauze over the wounds on my back. After that, the morphine they pumped into me kicked in.

Carried to a helicopter, I was strapped to the outside and flown to a MASH clearing station. My last memory was being bundled onto an operating table. When I woke, I was on a train pulling into Kura railway station in Japan. I remained in hospital there for six months. If not for the quick evacuation from the battlefield I would have died. To the South Korean porters who lugged me off the hill and the helicopter pilot who flew me out, I give my sincere thanks and eternal gratitude.

It may have been a stroke of luck that I never reached Hill 217. A few weeks later, on the 4th November, an attack by the Chinese on Hill 217 killed 18 men from my company. My platoon commander, Lieutenant McMillan Scott, was one of the soldiers who died. His body was never recovered.

LETTER FROM NORTH KOREA

By Roly Soper

Editor's Note: this is an edited and shortened version of the story first published by the Korean War Commemoration Council in Vince Courtenay's online Korea Vet News. Roly Soper is a Korean War veteran from Calgary, Canada, who since he retired has backpacked to more than 80 nations. In early April 2009, he travelled by plane from China to North Korea with a small group of tourists.

Moments after our group cleared immigration and customs at the Pyongyang airport we were met by two guides. They would be our constant companions for the next five days. We escaped their scrutiny in the late evenings at the tour group hotel, Yanggado International, but were not permitted to venture outside the hotel grounds. Additional sets of eyes belonged to our tour bus driver and a videographer who was also a constant companion and pointed his camera at us with great frequency.

The Korean Peninsula is known as the *Land of the Morning Calm*. That sobriquet should be applied to North Korea only, considering the hustle, bustle and frenetic traffic chaos in the South. Pyongyang is so quiet in comparison, that it's eerie. The city's wide, multi-lane boulevards are frequently empty of traffic or carry just the occasional vehicle. People cross the streets or walk along them with barely a cautionary glance. After the constant frenzy of gridlocked Beijing, Pyongyang seems like the centre of an alien, idyllic universe.

Head and shoulder portraits of the country's founding father, the late Kim Il-sung, are everywhere – buildings, bridges, monuments. Surprisingly, images of the son successor, Kim Jeong-il are not displayed in the same fashion.

Pyongyang, capital of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), is opulent in its grandeur. The city is swept, brushed and polished. The downtown area in particular gleams with shining marble encased within huge government buildings. Monuments are everywhere and are dedicated to their liberation from the Japanese at the end of the Second World War, their "victory" in the Korean War but mainly to the memory of Kim Il-sung. At the Mansu Hill memorial, a statue of the former president is 65 feet tall.

Our sightseeing itinerary in the company of our guides, driver and photographer, began each day following a hotel western-style buffet breakfast and lasted until completion of a late evening dinner. Lunches and dinners were Korean cuisine and somewhat more exotic than that served in Korean restaurants in Canada.

Usually there were several dishes of vegetables, fish, meat of who-knows-what, eggs and kimchi of various spiciness. At one restaurant, dog soup was offered. Two of the group ordered it and said it was good. Beverages included tea and beer. With reference to money: we could buy things in the hotel and elsewhere but had to use euros. Change was made in either euros or Chinese yuan. We were not permitted to use or have in our possession DPRK currency. However, I made a secret deal to buy three won notes as souvenirs.

We never witnessed groups of people standing around the streets doing nothing. Everyone seemed busy, even though some activities were obvious "make-work projects" such as picking grass from cracks in sidewalks and streets. Hotel employees and store clerks (where we were permitted to visit) were friendly. However, people going and coming from work, usually in large groups, scarcely acknowledged our presence. They marched by with the look of weary combat soldiers inflicted with the thousand yard stare.

The multi-lane, paved-but-cracked highway from Pyongyang to Kaesong runs south as straight as a bamboo stick for 160 km. Along the highway are several pairs of huge concrete pillars that could be toppled to create tank blockades. Gun emplacements are not visible.

The road does not pass through towns or villages until it comes to Kaesong. However, from the highway, villages can be seen in the distance - pastoral beauty; clusters of tiled roofs painted in pastel colours, perhaps shielding the poverty that is prevalent in the DPRK. During the 2½ hour drive in our small tour bus, we spotted a total of three vehicles sharing the highway.

During the Korean War (1950-53), Kaesong was a village, and like countless other villages was caught in the maelstrom of rampaging armies until it was designated as the location of peace talks between the United Nations Forces and the combined armies of North Korea and the People's Republic of China volunteers.

Although Kaesong is now a modern city, sections of the original village with its houses of tiled, curved Oriental roofs still exist and are in use. In fact we were billeted overnight in an old hotel; a rambling, one-story complex of tiny rooms and matching courtyards. That night we slept on a bamboo matting floor with a rice-packed pillow and covered with quilts to ward off the cool spring air.

We visited the small building on the outskirts of Kaesong where the initial peace talks took place. Then we proceeded farther into the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) until we came to Panmunjom and the Joint Security Area. This is where the demarcation line runs through the middle of the DMZ separating North and South

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Korea. When the armistice was signed it created a ceasefire effective 27 July 1953. At the point of contact on that date, opposing forces pulled back two kilometres, creating a four kilometre-wide DMZ across the peninsula for 248 kilometres coast to coast.

The demarcation line runs through it, dead centre. A peace treaty has never been signed, so technically North and South are still at war. Hopefully recent actions and political rhetoric cool off before the situation turns hot. We arrived in Pyongyang just a few days after the Taepodong-2 ballistic missile was fired on April 5.

It was a strange feeling standing on the balcony of the main North Korean building looking across to the South Korean/UN structure about 50 metres away. In between the two buildings is one of the Quonset-like huts where periodic discussions take place between North and South. The demarcation line runs down the middle of the conference table. The building in which the armistice agreement was signed is located in the North Korean sector.

On visits to the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in 1981 and again in 1992, I had been on the South Korean side looking at the building where I now stood. The North Korean military types didn't seem to mind that I scanned the immediate area and distant hills with my binoculars.

Although trees now grow where devastation once existed, crests of distant hills are visible. Where the demarcation line curves north then east from Panmunjom (well north of the 38th Parallel, the pre-war boundary), the battle-scarred features, perhaps 30 km away – Hill 355 (Little Gibraltar) and its adjoining salient and The Hook, ignite memories of my youth. They're impossible to forget.

After returning to Pyongyang, we resumed the tightly organized sightseeing schedule. Almost everywhere we visited, or everything we saw, related to *The Great Leader*, the late President Kim Il-sung.

Kim, a Russian trained Korean, was encouraged by Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union to unite North and South Korea. Stalin supplied armament including tanks that spearheaded the North's invasion of the South on June 25, 1950.

"Evidence" of their "victory" in the Korean War is displayed in posters, billboards, monuments, and in the huge military museum in Pyongyang. The latter is crammed with captured American weapons ranging from handguns to tanks. Also displayed are remnants of downed U.S. aircraft – fighters, bombers, helicopters.

An interesting segment of our tour was boarding the USS Pueblo, permanently displayed at a dock on the Taedong River that flows through Pyongyang. The Pueblo incident gained world-wide attention in 1968 when the U.S. vessel was captured in North Korean waters (the U.S. claimed the ship was on international seas) where it was apparently monitoring onshore activities – or in the words of the DPRK, "spying."

Not all our activities were war-related. We spent an evening at a symphony concert. The orchestra was large - I counted fifty in the string section alone – and played beautifully. On another occasion we visited a music academy and went to a number of classrooms to listen to students in various disciplines. We also attended a student concert of music and dance. It was professional quality. Whether militarily or culturally, the long shadow of Kim Il-sung looms everywhere.

In Beijing, prior to leaving for the DPRK, we were briefed on what we could do and what we could not do. We signed an agreement to that effect. Verbally we were told that when we visited the mausoleum of Kim Il-sung we must bow before the body.

"This has nothing to do with your beliefs. This is showing courtesy to your hosts. Don't think about it, just do it! If you're not willing to do this, you're not going to the DPRK." When the time came, we joined hundreds of locals in the huge mausoleum as we made our way from gallery to gallery of Kim memorabilia (one room held over 500 of his medals and awards).

During the hour-long procession through the mausoleum my thoughts dwelled on the tragedy of the Koreans – a country divided, families separated – most forever. Kim Il-sung was a pawn of the Soviet Union's expansionist policies, its self-proclaimed goal of communist world domination.

The UN's victory in Korea was the prevention of the South being part of communist North Korea. The people of South Korea enjoy a high standard of living in a prosperous country. Their brethren in the North are subjected to a disciplined lifestyle, frequent famines and related starvation.

Then the climax of the procession: We were marched forth in fours in near-military precision, bowed once in unison before the body and marched out. It was a fitting conclusion to five days in the Hermit Kingdom. Our side trip to North Korea had been by plane from Beijing to Pyongyang. Our return was by overnight train. From Pyongyang we headed north-west, crossed the Yalu River to the Chinese border city of Dandong where we changed from a Korean to a Chinese train, then on to Beijing.

Prelude to the Korean War

by David J Richie

From *Strategy & Tactics* magazine Issue No.111. Republished with permission.

Editor's Introduction: With North Korea is back in the headlines again (for all the wrong reasons) it may be useful to revisit the situation as it was in the late 1940s. The differences between that decade and today are stark. Kim Il Sung might have been a mass-murdering tyrant modeled on Stalin, but his decisions and actions were, for the most part, rational. The same cannot be said of his son, Kim Jong Il, whose posturing and political manoeuvring as his country crumbles, is hard to fathom.

Five years after the end of the Second World War, the bright hope of the Allied victory had become the tragedy of Cold War politics. The bulk of eastern and central Europe was left in the grip of Soviet generals or domestic communists whose first allegiance was to Moscow. By 1950, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania and East Germany had all been reduced to the status of provinces in a new Soviet empire.

Those European nations that had not been swallowed up by Stalin were, nonetheless, in desperate straits. Most were starving; the rest were near bankruptcy as a result of the recent war. Throughout western Europe, communist political movements threatened to sweep away governments already tottering on the brink of collapse. In Greece, a bloody communist-instigated civil war had finally ended in a government victory thanks mostly to U.S. economic and military aid.

The sickness of Europe was the sickness of the world. For a century, the political policies established at Whitehall and the Quay d'Orsey had been the policies not only of Great Britain and France, but of most of Africa and Asia. What the British and the French didn't rule, the Belgians, the Dutch or the Portuguese did. Except for China, Imperial Japan and a few under U.S. protection, Europe called the tune in Asia and Africa. Now, the Axis challenge of World War II had so weakened Europe that its long imperium was ending. Nationalist movements throughout the far-flung empires were already in the process of throwing off the imperial shackles.

With the breakup of the European empires, a global power vacuum was created. In the orient, the recent defeat of Japan and the just-concluded power struggle in China between Chiang Kaishek's Kuomintang and Mao Tse-tung's Communists ensured that neither could fill the vacuum. That left only two powers with the resources to do so: The United States and the Soviet Union.

The United States was in an exceedingly poor position to fill the vacuum in the Far East. It had always been U.S. policy to demobilize its armed forces as rapidly as possible at the end of a war, and the recent world war was no exception. Whereas in July of 1945 the U.S. had a total of 12,355,000 men enrolled in its armed forces, of whom 7,447,000 were overseas, just a year later, there were only 3,004,000 men enrolled, of whom 1,335,000 were overseas. By 1950, the United States Army had shrunk to a pathetic, officer-heavy cadre of 591,487 men, just 7% of its peak wartime strength of 8,267,000. Economically powerful as the Americans were, the dawn of this new decade found them militarily weak. Faced with a Soviet threat in Europe, America could exert little direct influence on events in the Far East.

The Soviet Union had meanwhile kept half of its vast 12,500,000-man wartime military machine under arms. Predominant on land, its expansionist aims had been held in check over the previous five years only by Western naval and air forces and by the American monopoly on nuclear weapons. When the Soviet Union exploded an atomic bomb of its own on 23 September 1949, ending the American monopoly, it seemed to many in the West that the Soviets were ready to open a new wave of military conquests. Stalin, it seemed, was about to fill the global power vacuum.

While all of these factors had an effect on American strategic formulations, it was the recent fall of mainland China to a Soviet-backed Communist insurgency movement that most strongly affected the thinking of U.S. leaders in 1950. Since 1926, China had been torn by an on-again, off-again war between Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists and Mao Tse-tung's Communists. The Nationalists had a powerful lobby in the States, and Chiang had long been the special darling of a number of powerful American political leaders. Mao had, for much of this time, been supported just as strongly by Moscow.

When the Red Army overpowered the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria in 1945, the vast weapons stocks captured by the Russians were turned over to Mao, who used them to drive Chiang's inept generals from pillar to post over the next five years. The United States meanwhile showed its disgust over the legendary corruption and bad faith of the Nationalists by cutting off aid (twice) during the late 1940s. When the Chinese communists finally drove the Nationalists from the mainland in December of 1949, the China Lobby made much of this contrast between the policies of Stalin and those of Truman. According to Chiang and his

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supporters, China did not fall to the Communists – it was “pushed” into their arms by the Americans.

The China Lobby’s argument had now become exhibit number one in a Republican Party indictment of the Democratic administration of President Harry S. Truman. According to Republican leaders, the Democrats were “soft on Communism.” They allowed Stalin to conquer Eastern Europe and then they let China to fall to Stalin’s proxy, Mao. The reason was obvious. The New Dealers who had controlled the executive branch of the U.S. government since 1933 were a bunch of left-wing idealists who placed America’s interests behind those of Russia.

Some of them might even be secret communists, dedicated to the overthrow of the American political and economic system. Whatever the truth of this charge, President Truman and his key policy advisers correctly understood that it was the type of political dynamite that could easily blast a party from power. Thus, in the election year of 1950, America’s top leaders were in no mood to accept further Communist gains anywhere in the world.

Explaining the Army to Civilians

Editor’s Note: Here’s an amusing if convoluted piece I acquired from the Royal Army Regiment Association (Victorian Branch) July/August newsletter, which they took from another, unknown source, which is fine given that they lifted their A Sailor Joke from this magazine, which is fine given that I liberated it from an Internet site devoted to all things military who in turn filched it from somewhere else. Some might call this lazy reporting or unimaginative editing; however, in this age of limited resources and environmental concern, we here at The Voice prefer to call it...recycling. Enjoy!

Dumb civilian, I thought to myself. However, I said, “The system is really quite simple. You see, all people in the Army are soldiers, but not all soldiers are privates. Some are officers who are commissioned, but some are officers who are not commissioned. Obviously if every private was called private it would be confusing, so some privates are called things like trooper, driver, gunner, craftsmen, sapper or signaller. Not all of the drivers actually drive because some of them cook, but we don’t call them cooks. For that matter, not all drivers are called drivers — some of them are privates or gunners. Gunners, as I ‘m sure you know are the guys that fire guns, unless of course they are drivers or signallers just to make it clearer. All gunners belong to the artillery, except that in the infantry we have gunners who are called privates because they fire a different sort of gun. For the same reason, we call our drivers and signallers privates as well.

A Lance Corporal is called Corporal, unless he is a Lance Bombardier, then we call him Bombardier to distinguish him from a full Bombardier, who is just like a Corporal. All other ranks are called by their rank for the sake of simplicity except that Staff Sergeants are called Staff, but they are not on the staff. Some Warrant Officers, who are not officers, are called Sergeant Major although they are not Sergeants or Majors. Some Warrant Officers are called Mister which is the same thing that we call officers, but they are not Warrant Officers.

A lieutenant is also called Mister because they are subalterns, but we always write their rank as Lieutenant or Second Lieutenant, and second comes before first.

When we talk about groups of soldiers there obviously has to be clear distinction. We call them Officers and Soldiers although we know that officers are soldiers too, sometimes we talk about officers and other ranks which is the same as calling them soldiers. I guess it is easiest when we talk about rank and file, which is all the troops on parade except the officers and some of the NCOs and a few of the privates, and the term is used whether everyone is on parade or not.

A large unit is called a battalion, unless it is a regiment, but sometimes a regiment is bigger than a battalion and then it has nothing to do with the other sort of regiment. Sub units are called companies unless they are squadrons or troops or batteries for that matter. That is nothing to do with radio batteries, and don’t confuse this type of troop with the type who are soldiers but not officers.

Mostly the army is divided into Corps as well as units; not the sort of Corps which is a couple of divisions, but the sort which tells you straight away what trade each man performs, whether he is a tradesman or not. The Infantry Corps has all the infantrymen for example and the Artillery Corps has all the gunners. Both these corps also have signallers and drivers except those who are in the Signals and Transport Corps. Both these Corps provide a special service and that’s why the Transport Corps provides cooks. In fact the Signal Corps is not a service at all because it is an arm. Arms do all the fighting, although Signals do not have to fight too much, rather like the Engineers who are also an Arm but they don’t fight too much either. So you see, it’s really quite simple.”

Now you will be able to explain the composition of the army to any family member or civilian.

Death of a Korean Patriot

Major General Park She-jik, chairman of the Korean Veterans Association, died on July 27th (Armistice Day in Korea) at the Asan Medical Centre from complications of pneumonia. He was 76.

General Park was appointed commander of the ROK 3rd Infantry Division in 1979 and in 1980 was appointed Commanding General, Capital Defence Command, with responsibility for safeguarding the capital of Seoul and all approaches to it.

While director of Korea's National Security Agency, General Park was at the same time Chairman of the Planning Committee for the remarkably successful 1988 Olympics – which showcased a modern Korea to the rest of the world and ushered in an entirely new era for Korea and its people. General Park also headed the Korea-Japan Organizing Committee for the FIFA 2002 World Cup, an astounding international success watched by hundreds of millions of football fans all around the world – and which had all hotels in Korea jammed to the gunnels with more than two million visitors.

Korea has lost an outstanding figure and Korean War Veterans the world over have lost a warm and admiring friend. Working with others, he helped bring Korea out into the world in 1988, and he brought the world to his Korea.

Oops!

Of the 50 “four-pipe” destroyers transferred from the U.S. to Britain in 1940, none had a more unusual war career than *HMS St. Albans* (ex-USS *Thomas*), which not only sank the German submarine U-401 but also, by mistake, the British minesweeper *Alberic* and the Polish submarine *Jastrab*.

* * *

The most successful single-aircraft bombing attack of World War II was made by a JU-88 of KG30 on 22nd February 1940 off the coast of Borkum. It sank two destroyers by itself in a single sortie. However, they were German destroyers, the *Lebrect Maas* and the *Max Schultz* – a small matter of recognition.

* * *

On the 24th of July 1943, the German submarine U-459 shot down a RAF Wellington bomber in the Bay of Biscay. The stricken plane crashed on the sub's deck which detonated one of the Wellington's depth charges, causing the sub to sink.

* * *

Off Portsmouth in 1947, the British destroyer, *HMS Saintes*, was conducting live fire exercises against a target towed by the tug *Buccaneer*. The gunners completely missed the target and hit and sunk the tug instead.

Result of Unity Poll

Earlier this year, in an effort to heal the fragmented nature of Korea War veteran representation in Australia, IFKWVA recommended the following (as outlined in the June edition of *The Voice*):

- the founding of a new organisation representing all Korea War veterans by the disbanding and reforming of the KVAA Inc. as the Australian Korea Veterans Association (AKVA)
- the formation of a NSW base with existing AKVA President, Harry Spicer.
- the establishment of a SA base as AKVA.
- that all Korea Veterans be invited to join AKVA, including those who served as Peace Keepers (up until 1956).

These proposals, put to the membership of the KVAA Inc. have been overwhelmingly rejected. Only two votes supported the motion. Votes were received from all states plus New Zealand.

As stated in June's *Voice*, the KVAA Inc. is prepared to ‘open our doors’ as a communications centre for organizations outside our current sphere, but are not prepared to surrender sovereignty for the sake of others, particularly as we are the largest Korea veterans association in Australia. KSEAFVA is also adamant that it wishes to pursue a ‘no change policy’ given the many years of its existence. We remain the only two groups representing Korea War veterans to be accorded recognition by IFKWVA.

Thus, the onus is on those associations not recognised by IFKWVA (such as the Australian Council of Korean Veterans Associations and the organizations it purports to represent, and the Australian Korean Veterans Association) to reach some understanding with either the KVAA Inc. or KSEAFVA if they want their feelings and views heard internationally. This they are reluctant to do at present while at the same time, as they have stated in the past, “under no circumstances whatever will we tolerate a coalition of the KVAA and K&SEAFVA being accepted as a basis group to represent Australian Korean Veterans at an international level.”

In a response from IFKWVA on 29 June, Colonel Gadd wrote that “the outcome from my recommendations for unity is disappointing but as I intimated during my visit, the lack of unity is an Australian problem which can only be settled by Australian veterans in Australia...”

In the meantime, the KVAA Inc. will continue to work on the behalf of Australian ex-servicemen and women in general, and those who served in Korea in particular regardless of their affiliation.

Farewells

Edie Barlow
on 6 May 2009
Associate Member
Partner of member, Ron Kennedy

Don H. Isard
5/1169
on 29 September 2009

Don McLeod
on 7 September 2009
ex-HMAS Sydney
KVAA Inc. Life Member

Ken Phillips
on 24 September 2009
3/400711, 3RAR

Ron J. West
51732 3Bn
on 28 Sept. 2009

Jack Coyle
5/400219 3RAR.

Apology

In the the last issue of *The Voice*, the name and contact details of our Western Australian delegate, John Southorn, were inadvertently omitted. We apologise for the oversight.

The Ode

They shall grow not old,
As we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them,
Nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun,
and in the morning
We will remember them.
LEST WE FORGET

* * * * *

The Korea Veterans Association

Victor Dey OAM (President) and The Committee
request the pleasure of your company at the annual KVAA Inc.

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Venue:	Batmans Hill on Collins 623 Collins Street, Melbourne
Date:	Wednesday 2 December 2009
Time:	1130 hours for 1230 hours
Bill of Fare:	Traditional Christmas Dinner
Meal Cost:	\$25 per person
Drinks:	Own Cost at Hotel Prices
Award Presentation:	Certificates of Service 10, 15, 20 & 25 Year Pins
Entertainment:	<i>The Swing Masters</i>
RSVP:	25 November 2009

Book early as there are only 170 places

Please detach and return to Gerry Steacy, 1 Kent Court, Werribee, Victoria 3030

RSVP: 25 November 2009

Please return your acceptance and payment by this date. We are committed to confirm guest numbers and pay the caterer seven days prior to the function.

Please confirm attendance for ___ people.

Names of those attending: _____

Enclosed please find my cheque / money order for ___ people @ \$25.00 per person: \$____.00

Please make cheques / money orders payable to: **Korea Veterans Association of Australia Inc.**