

***THE KOREAN WAR 1950-53:
A 50 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE***

***ANZAXIS AT WAR:
AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND DURING THE KOREAN WAR
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Shortly after 9 pm on 24 January 1951, near the South Korean hamlet of Naegon-ni, infantrymen of 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, manning a company outpost suddenly found themselves under fire from an approaching group of about twenty enemy soldiers. Hastily they called for defensive artillery fire through the FOO (forward observation officer) with them. A few minutes later a ranging shot arrived, to be followed by four more shells, which induced the enemy party to retire. Although slow by later standards, this quick and accurate fire impressed the infantrymen. It inaugurated a new episode of Anzac co-operation in the field, for the shells had come, not from the American artillery battalion which had hitherto supported them but rather from two troops of the newly arrived New Zealand 16th Field Regiment.¹ For the next two and a half years Australian infantry and New Zealand artillery would form a close and effective association within a Commonwealth force—renewing a relationship established on battlefields in New Zealand, South Africa and the Mediterranean.

The ease with which the two countries' fighting men joined together to confront the common foe belied the numerous difficulties which had beset the two governments as they contemplated what they would do in Korea, following the United Nations Security Council's call for assistance from all members in repelling North Korea's invasion of its southern neighbour. Far from demonstrating close affinity, Canberra and Wellington reflected earlier more negative influences—suspicion, resentment, aloofness, competition—in relation to each other as they sought to establish the basis of their participation in the United Nations effort in Korea. In particular New Zealand's response to Australia during the sudden crisis replicated a pattern of behaviour which had persisted for more than half a century.²

At the root of New Zealand's problem was the fact that with the federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 it went from being one of the larger of a group of seven colonies to being the small neighbour of a much larger, and assertive, state. Whereas New Zealand before 1901 had been amenable to co-operative action with the Australian colonies—the 1887 Australasian Naval Agreement was the most prominent example—after that date it was concerned not to be overshadowed. The fact that both countries were part of a much larger entity—the British Empire—provided New Zealand with a wider framework within which to seek to alleviate the effects of its relative position. Rather than looking to its trans-Tasman brother, it would focus its attention on its European mother. The 'jealousy of unequals', as a British High Commissioner in Wellington later put it, would underpin New Zealand's relationship with Australia for the next half century (and arguably longer).³

The imperial framework tended to downgrade the importance of co-operation between the two countries in any case. The application of British power was expected to prevent any significant threat developing in the South and South-west Pacific, at least not a threat greater than the capacity of either state to deal with using its own resources. Only when British capacity was thrown into doubt did they begin to look seriously at developing a closer relationship, though for a number of reasons little was achieved. Prior to the First World War, largely at the instigation of the Australian-born Minister of Defence, James Allen, talks were held by the respective GOCs in Melbourne, and some attempt made to co-ordinate activities.⁴ There was even talk of a joint expeditionary force, which, although not going anywhere, was roughly achieved in practice in the Middle East in 1915 with the formation of the New Zealand and Australian Division for service at Gallipoli. Allen had hoped for very close co-operation between the newly formed New Zealand Naval Forces and the Royal Australian Navy. But in fact the promise of such co-operation soon faded after the First World War, despite the fact that that conflict had given a boost to the idea by the actual performance of the two countries' forces on the battlefield and the emergence of a powerful symbolic term denoting it—Anzac.

Between the world wars similar influences were at work. Both governments looked to Britain, rather than to each other. As late as 1938 they were both sending their defence papers to London, but not across the Tasman. Each was learning of the other's activities by means of papers sent out to them by the Committee of Imperial Defence. Only as British capacity to fulfil promises of naval support declined in the late 1930s did they begin once again to view the possibilities of co-operation. Once again little was achieved before war intervened.

One reason was financial. In this area New Zealand generally had little room for manoeuvre. The fact that it could get a better deal from Britain left it with little incentive to look across the Tasman for such things as naval refits or training. When Australia made a serious attempt to get on closer terms in 1933, New Zealand's attitude was lukewarm, and little was achieved. By the time its attitude had changed, in the late 1930s, Australia had in turn lost interest, for its own growing rearmament program had taken up the slack in its productive capacity.⁵

Another hindrance to a close co-operative relationship was competition, associated with New Zealand's perceived need to assert itself in relation to Australia. This condition had manifested itself at the outset of successive wars. When the Australian colonies and New Zealand sent contingents to assist Britain in South Africa in 1899, an 'ocean race' developed across the Indian Ocean, as New Zealand sought to have its contingent in the theatre first—an objective it achieved by a few days.⁶ In 1914 New Zealand was so fearful that Australia would get its force in the field first that it was prepared to despatch the ten troop transports carrying the Main Body of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force across the Tasman without an adequate escort, even though the German East Asiatic Squadron's position had not been determined.⁷ In 1939 New Zealand's precipitate announcement that it would send an expeditionary force to Europe forced Australia's hand, much to the irritation of the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies; New Zealand's action seemed to fly in the face of agreement earlier in the year to consult each other on such matters.⁸ It had the effect, Menzies complained to the British High Commissioner, of placing the Australian government in an invidious position: it would be faced with a demand in Australia for action to send a force at least as soon as New Zealand and, even if it agreed to do so, 'it would still be incontestable that their hands had been forced and that they were merely following New Zealand's lead'. Menzies was certainly conscious of a 'rivalry in patriotism' between the two countries, describing it as 'perhaps foolish' but incontestable.⁹

These differences were exacerbated by differing strategic perceptions during the Second World War. Although Australia and New Zealand had generally adopted similar approaches on the key strategic decisions, such as over the future of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1921, they had strongly diverged over the issue of where the two countries' main war efforts should be focused after Japan entered the war in December 1941. New Zealand's failure to follow Australia's lead by pulling its infantry division back from the Mediterranean to the Pacific led to a frosty relationship between the two governments, as Carl Berendsen found when he arrived in Canberra as New Zealand's first High Commissioner in March 1943.¹⁰

The Australian-New Zealand Agreement (Canberra Pact) of January 1944 was partly aimed at overcoming the effect of these wartime disagreements, and to chart a path of post-war co-operation. The new 'Anzaxis'¹¹ would proceed on the basis of a shared perception of needs in the South-west Pacific, and agreement to establish a 'zone of defence', There would be 'an expeditious and continuous means of consultation', and the two countries would aim at 'the maximum degree of unity in the presentation, elsewhere, of the views of the two countries'.¹² But the postwar practice did not match these professions of mutual support. As early as April 1946 Alister McIntosh, the Secretary of External Affairs in Wellington, was noting that relations with Australia had 'in fact reverted to what they were before the "ANZAXIS" came into being'.¹³ Four years later he thought the 'the old Anzacis [sic] has never been weaker'.¹⁴

This failure can be attributed to negative personal attitudes and policy divergences which were underpinned by an ongoing suspicion of Australia among the key New Zealand policy-makers. McIntosh was not particularly dismayed by the post-war tendency for the Canberra Pact to slip into limbo. He never evinced any great concern to establish closer ties with Canberra and on the eve of the Korean War confessed to feeling 'sincerely and deeply

ashamed' of his own part in the conclusion of the agreement. His private view was that it had never been in New Zealand's interests 'to work in double harness with the Australians'. Indeed, he thought New Zealand would be better 'to stick to our own line and, in a way, to behave to the Australians as the Canadians did to the United States'.¹⁵ This view was shared by McIntosh's influential predecessor as Secretary, Berendsen, now ensconced in Washington as New Zealand Ambassador. In February 1950, presumably forgetting that he had been born in New South Wales and lived there till he was ten, he expressed his conviction 'that most Australians are by nature or upbringing, or possibly both, impossible people'.¹⁶

Among the politicians the mood was not much more sympathetic. Peter Fraser, the Prime Minister who had signed the Canberra Pact, was complaining in 1947 of an element of 'Australian Imperialism' which he thought lay behind certain regional defence proposals emanating from Melbourne.¹⁷ Fraser's successor, National Party leader Sidney Holland, had no particular affinity for Australia or Robert Menzies. After the Colombo Conference in January 1950 McIntosh described how New Zealand's Minister of External Affairs, Frederick Doidge, had taken 'an instant dislike' to his Australian counterpart, Percy Spender; McIntosh himself obviously shared this attitude, describing Spender privately as 'an absolute little tick'.¹⁸

If personal attitudes were important in shaping New Zealand's approach to the Anzac relationship, they were reinforced by a divergence in strategic perspective which had re-emerged in the late 1940s in relation to Commonwealth defence plans. New Zealand, in 1949, made a firm commitment to send its forces to the Middle East in the event of war with the Soviet Union, while Australia refused to choose between Middle East and South-east Asia in advance. New Zealand agreed to participate in the Australian-dominated ANZAM defence planning machinery for the South-west Pacific only on the understanding that it would not distract it from what it regarded as its primary task, to prepare an augmented infantry division for despatch to Egypt immediately war began with the Soviet Union.

It was against this background that Australia and New Zealand entered yet another war in June 1950, in response not to imperial or Commonwealth imperatives but rather to an unexpected call from the United Nations Security Council. As in 1939, a fundamental likemindedness was evident in the stances adopted by the two governments. Both were founder members of the United Nations and had espoused its objectives; both believed, however, that the combination of veto provisions in the Security Council and the Cold War confrontation between the Soviet Union and its erstwhile Western allies had stymied the UN security provisions. Both were disposed to give moral backing to the United Nations in this new crisis, and, after some initial hesitance on New Zealand's part at least, both went further to give combat support to the UN effort in Korea, making commitments of naval forces within four days of the outbreak of the conflict. Even so, neither government acted before learning that Britain would make available most of the Far East Fleet, then fortuitously cruising in Japanese waters, for operations in Korea.¹⁹ Australia, with naval forces in the remnant of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan, was also well placed to make an immediate naval contribution. New Zealand, by contrast, had no naval forces in the vicinity. Two frigates were quickly prepared and they left Auckland on 3 July 1950, just five days after the government's decision. It would be a month before they entered the fray. In so far as both Australian and New Zealand components served as part of the UN Command within a British naval framework their participation highlighted continuities with the 1939-45 conflict.

As in 1939, it was the contribution of ground forces that caused problems in the Australian-New Zealand relationship. This manifested itself not only in successive decisions to commit forces but also in the settlement of the composition of those forces. The two governments found themselves addressing this problem in mid-July 1950 following an appeal for further assistance from the UN Secretary-General, Trygve Lie, in which he stressed the importance of ground force contributions. The New Zealand authorities were conscious of the practical difficulties of making any such effort. This was because New Zealand's military activities were focused on producing a new expeditionary force (dubbed 3 NZEF) to fulfil the Middle Eastern commitment undertaken the previous year. The New Zealand Army had no formed combat units, with regular personnel being used as instructors of the eighteen-year-old compulsory

military trainees who would form the bulk of the division, or as cadres for various units of that division. New Zealand's first instinct was to seek advice from its Commonwealth partners, Australia included. It became evident that there was little enthusiasm in London for a ground contribution, or indeed in Canberra, despite the fact that Australia, of all the Commonwealth countries, was the best placed to respond positively to the appeal because of the battalion which it had stationed in Japan as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force.

Although the New Zealand military authorities indicated that a battalion-sized force could be provided on a long time frame without compromising the preparation of 3NZEF—regarded as more important than making any contribution in Korea—there was little enthusiasm for such a course, partly because it was believed that the crisis in Korea would be surmounted long before any New Zealand unit could reach Korea. From New Zealand's viewpoint, a co-ordinated Commonwealth approach to the ground force issue would be the best outcome. In particular it would lessen the impact, and the possible disadvantages in relations with the United States, of a New Zealand decision not to provide a ground force for Korea. Information being received from London seemed to indicate that such an approach would be forthcoming, albeit after the British had taken the advice of their representatives in Washington. Holland was surprised, and greatly angered, therefore when the British High Commissioner in Wellington informed him during the afternoon of 26 July 1950 that Britain had decided to contribute a ground force and that this would be announced within hours (probably about 10.30pm New Zealand time). The Dominion governments were in effect being presented with a *fait accompli*, and left to follow suit if they so decided. Holland recognised the disadvantages of New Zealand, a Pacific country, appearing merely to follow Britain in terms of its relationship with the United States. But he was also influenced by another consideration—his expectation that Australia would probably take the same attitude and rush to announce a decision to contribute a ground force before the British did so. The competitive instinct with Australia reasserted itself. Rather than seeking a co-ordinated Anzac response, Holland determined to beat both Australia and Britain in making the announcement.²⁰ Robert O'Neill was well off the mark when he suggested, in his official history of Australia's involvement in the war, that New Zealand was 'not as intent as Australia to precede Britain in announcing the decision'.²¹

Meetings of the Defence Committee, the Cabinet, and party caucuses were held in rapid succession during a frantic couple of hours to approve a New Zealand ground force contribution. Holland duly announced this decision when Parliament resumed sitting in the evening. New Zealand, he stated, would make available a 'special combat unit for service with other ground forces'. The composition of this force was not mentioned, though the discussions had proceeded on the basis that it would be an artillery regiment. In the event both Australia and New Zealand announced their decisions at about 7 pm on 26 July 1950, but because New Zealand's time zone is two hours ahead of eastern Australia's it easily achieved Holland's objective to be first in the field with its offer.²² The Australian High Commissioner in Wellington, Sir Roden Cutler, had been informed of New Zealand's decision just before it was announced, but neither government had placed a high premium on consulting the other on this matter in the preceding days. Their approach had been a far cry from that envisaged in the Canberra Pact of 1944, but in the aftermath of the decisions both governments tended to overlook the deficiencies and to blame the British government for creating a situation in which both were forced to act hastily.

Australian-New Zealand relations were tested more directly by the resolution of what kind of forces were to be sent. With the hope of establishing an Anzac brigade, Australia wanted New Zealand to provide an infantry battalion. The preference in Wellington, however, was to contribute an artillery unit, partly because there was a desire to avoid a situation where New Zealand infantry would be dependent on others for support (unhappy experiences with British armour in North Africa in 1941-42 were influential), partly because artillery were likely to suffer less casualties than infantry, and partly, probably, because of an expectation that Australia would dominate any such grouping. Berendsen no doubt expressed a widely held view among New Zealand policymakers when he later suggested from Washington that such an arrangement would be 'quite disastrous' because the Australians would undoubtedly 'shove us right into the background' and 'we will get no credit whatsoever for this force which will be represented as, and certainly accepted as, Australian'.²³ New Zealand attitudes were also

influenced by the fact that the British had already hinted that a New Zealand artillery unit could be linked to a British or Commonwealth force, and there was a preference for some such arrangement.

On 1 August Holland received a telephone call from Arthur Fadden, the acting Prime Minister in Canberra. Fadden, on instruction from Robert Menzies in Washington, wanted to know whether Holland would agree to Menzies, in a speech he was about to give to the US Congress, stating that Australia and New Zealand, in a few months' time, would provide an Anzac force equivalent in size to three infantry battalions. Holland was incensed by this approach, feeling that he was being steamrollered into making a decision on the spur of moment (ironically something he had not been averse to doing in relation to previous Korean issues). It is clear that this conversation was not a happy one, and it was not helped by a poor connection. Holland recorded later that Fadden had spoken 'at the rate of knots' and had appeared 'rushed and rattled'. He told Fadden in no uncertain terms that it would be 'quite improper' for Menzies to make any reference to the part that New Zealand might play in Korea. To make sure the point got across Holland repeated it three times.²⁴ His mood would not have been improved had he known that Menzies had in fact already discussed the idea of an Anzac force with American officials, and found them enthusiastic about it. In his speech to Congress, Menzies stated that Australia would send a force 'which, co-operating as I hope and believe it will, with the New Zealand force, would serve to make up a first class combat group'.²⁵

This episode left a sour taste in New Zealand mouths. McIntosh was in no doubt that Fadden had 'tried to bustle' Holland,²⁶ while Berendsen, in Washington, was characteristically forthright in his condemnation of the Australian approach:

I think it is completely intolerable and quite characteristic of the Australians that it should even have been thought possible that he [Holland] could form an opinion on such a matter on the spur of the moment as the result of a telephone conversation, and I think his response was perfectly admirable. What is more I think it quite characteristic of the Australians that Menzies should have even thought it possible that he should refer to New Zealand in his speech to Congress. That again shows the way in which they act ...²⁷

However, Holland's irritation with Menzies had presumably dissipated by the time the Australian Prime Minister arrived in Wellington just three weeks later, en route for home. When Menzies met with the New Zealand Cabinet on 22 August, he referred to the 'really warm welcome' he had received.²⁸

Meanwhile the question of force composition had been resolved at a service-level meeting in Melbourne on 8 and 9 August which included the head of the British service liaison staff in Australia. The New Zealand Chief of the General Staff, Major General Keith Stewart, represented New Zealand. The expectation in Wellington that this would be a difficult meeting was reflected in Alister McIntosh's private comment that it would be 'a little test match'.²⁹ He thought that if the Australians were 'going to make difficulties ... then maybe we will have to find a "Father" in the form of the Mother country'.³⁰ At Melbourne Stewart was asked, probably privately, whether New Zealand would consider sending infantry rather than artillery so that an Anzac brigade could be formed.³¹ Following his instructions Stewart firmly resisted such proposals, and they do not appear to have been discussed in the formal sessions.³² In the end there was satisfaction in Wellington with the outcome of the discussions. The three countries, it was proposed, would bring their contingents together as a brigade group, which would be commanded by a British officer. The non-operational control of the force would be vested in the Commander-in-Chief, BCOF, an Australian officer.³³ Having got its way on the nature of its contribution, New Zealand had no qualms about Australia taking a leading role in the facilitation of the joint force; indeed in due course it would press Australia to sustain its non-operational position, seeing advantages in having a counter-balance to the British dominance of the operational command.³⁴ New Zealand set to work to produce the field artillery regiment which would provide the basis of its contingent. This had to be recruited, trained and equipped from scratch, and it was not until 10 December 1950 that the 1056-strong force left Wellington.

The New Zealanders had not long been in action when Australian-New Zealand relations at a political level were again strained by another force composition issue. In February 1951 Washington began pressing both countries to expand their forces. Despite practical obstacles to such action, the New Zealand government was disposed to make an increase, by sending a transport company. Only at the last minute did it recognise the need to consult Australia or Britain, with whose forces New Zealand's Kayforce was associated in 27th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade. Attitudes in Wellington were revealed by Deputy Secretary of External Affairs Foss Shanahan's comment, when instructing Colonel DT Maxwell, the New Zealand Military Liaison Officer in Melbourne, to ascertain discreetly what Australia was doing about the American request: 'At the same time we should not wish to find ourselves in the position where the Australians "beat us" in advising what we will do'.³⁵

During March the New Zealand government was angered by what it considered a 'breach of etiquette' on Australia's part over the matter. New Zealand had, at Canberra's request, deferred telling the Americans that an increase in New Zealand's force was planned pending a discussion by the Australian Cabinet of Australia's response scheduled for 30 March. In adopting this co-operative approach, Holland was sensitive to the fact that Menzies faced a general election on 28 April. However, when Spender, a few days before the Cabinet meeting, sent an interim reply to Washington, stating that the matter was under consideration, Holland was most irate, considering that it 'savoured of sharp practice'. Spender's New Zealand counterpart, Doidge, was ordered to send him a 'sharp reproof... for getting in ahead of us',³⁶ and Washington was immediately advised that Kayforce would be increased. However, Doidge's terse cable to Canberra did not seem to have fully registered New Zealand's irritation with the Australian authorities, as became evident when they subsequently tried to dissuade New Zealand from advising Washington of the proposed increase to Kayforce. Given the mood of Holland and Doidge, this request had no hope of being granted, but in fact it came after New Zealand had acted.³⁷ The increase was not announced publicly until 2 May, the delay being caused by discussions leading to the establishment of a Commonwealth division, which resulted in New Zealand agreeing to contribute personnel for the divisional headquarters, including a transport platoon and signallers. These decisions brought Kayforce's authorised strength to 1498.

Apart from the problems over settling the composition of New Zealand's force in Korea, the two governments had no difficulty in co-operating in either general strategic or economic issues arising from the Korean War or in the practical implementation of the force decisions finally taken. Of the strategic issues, the most important was the establishment of a security arrangement with the United States, a longstanding goal of both governments before the outbreak of the conflict. A Pacific Pact had seemed the most effective way of achieving such an objective, and both governments had had in the back of their minds the likely political advantages of supporting the United States in Korea when they considered force commitments in June-July 1950. Ironically key figures in both administrations came to the conclusion that the development of the American response in Korea had lessened the need for a Pacific Pact. Menzies, meeting the New Zealand Cabinet in Wellington on 22 August 1950 on his way home from Washington, argued that it had been rendered unnecessary by the American response to Korea.³⁸ Doidge soon afterwards told Parliament that he thought the Pact was 'not as necessary to-day as we thought it was six months ago', though within a month he had reversed himself, almost certainly because of reports that the Americans were about to make renewed efforts to bring about a Japanese peace settlement.³⁹

The Chinese intervention in Korea from October 1950 greatly assisted the two governments in their pursuit of their goal, not least because of the sense of urgency induced in Washington in regard to the peace settlement. On the issue of Japan there was again fundamental accord between the approaches of the two antipodean governments. New Zealand and Australia both continued to argue in favour of stringent controls on Japan, but at talks with American envoy John Foster Dulles in Canberra in February 1951 eventually agreed to go along with the American preference for a soft peace treaty. They took comfort in the tripartite treaty arrangement which emerged from the talks. Under the resulting Pacific Security (ANZUS) Treaty of 1 September 1951 Australia and New Zealand became formal allies, buttressing the informal alliance which existed through their Commonwealth links. By associating with a much greater power, they replicated the situation that had existed in their relationship with Britain.

New Zealand had an external focus which both reduced the need for co-operation with Australia and offered it an opportunity to alleviate the effects of its smaller size in its dealings with that country on security matters.

On economic issues arising from the war the two South Pacific governments also stood shoulder to shoulder. The American decision following the outbreak of the Korean War to press ahead with its plans to establish a strategic stockpile in case of war with the Soviet Union had serious implications for both countries. One of the commodities sought by the United States was wool, which occupied a very significant place in both their economies. New Zealand was quite happy to follow Australia's lead in responding negatively to American proposals for an allocation system that would have seriously distorted their auction arrangements. In the event a conference in Melbourne in November 1950 failed to resolve the matter to the Washington's satisfaction and the Americans were forced to obtain their required supplies on the open market. For both Australia and New Zealand the ensuing 'Korean wool boom' was an unprecedented windfall—the effects of which were soon dissipated by the rising cost of the commodities they imported.⁴⁰

The relations between the two countries was further reinforced by the helpful Australian approach to New Zealand's practical problems in making its effort in Korea. Australia facilitated New Zealand's commitment in a number of ways. For example, some members of Kayforce went to Australia for courses before the force was despatched to Korea. But it was as a staging point that Australia proved most useful to New Zealand. Kayforce's second reinforcements in early 1951 flew to Sydney to join an Australian troopship for the onward journey to Korea. When the troopship *Wahine*, carrying the Expansion Draft, ran aground on a reef off Masela Island in August 1951, the troops were taken to Darwin and camped there until air transport could be arranged for them to complete their journey to Japan. Australia provided assistance in salvaging gear from the ship.⁴¹ From 1952 New Zealand replacements flew across the Tasman to Sydney to join commercial flights to Japan, and an officer was stationed in Sydney to facilitate this process.⁴²

Co-operation in the field was also close. It was facilitated by the use of the same or similar doctrines in training. There were only a handful of regular officers with New Zealand's force but they found classmates from Duntroon when they finally reached the front and joined the 27th Commonwealth Brigade in January 1951. As happened during the world wars, Australians and New Zealanders served in the other country's force. When the gunners arrived in Korea, 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, was commanded by the New Zealand-born Lieutenant Colonel IB Ferguson, and there were a dozen or so others in the battalion who originally hailed from New Zealand. Fourteen members of Kayforce at that time had given Australia as their birthplace when they enlisted.⁴³ Later in the war nine New Zealand regular infantry officers and NCOs spent periods in Korea with Australian battalions, and one was killed in action. Several Australian officers spent periods attached to 16th Field Regiment, one of them commanding a battery for six months in 1952.

When they arrived the New Zealanders were very much the new boys, whereas the Australian infantry they began supporting in Korea had been in action for almost four months. There was a sense among the New Zealanders that they had to earn the respect of the Australians, something that was more difficult to do because they were gunners, not infantry. But they were not unaware that the provision of effective support would go a long way towards achieving this objective. This they provided at several critical moments, such as at Kapyong on 23-24 April 1951. Some members of the Australian companies ensconced on Hill 504 have since down-played the importance of artillery support during the night of 23-24 April, when the Chinese strongly attacked them. Indeed one of the company commanders claims never to have heard an artillery shell during the night.⁴⁴ Nonetheless the evidence is overwhelming that the gunners in fact played a very important role in these proceedings throughout the night, despite communications problems. One troop remained in action until dawn supporting 3RAR, long after the rest of the regiment had pulled back further south. During the afternoon of the 24th, moreover, New Zealand shells played a vital role in protecting the withdrawing 3RAR, as company commander Captain RW Saunders later recalled: 'As "D" Company [the last to pull back] evacuated their positions Chinese troops

were right behind them and many a Chinaman had a dead heat or photo finish with a 25-pounder Kiwi shell'.⁴⁵ The New Zealand gunners' reputation among the Australian infantrymen was further enhanced during Operation Commando—the 1st Commonwealth Division's only advance—five months later. Lieutenant Colonel Frank Hassett, Ferguson's successor as commander of 3RAR, would later recall the support provided by 16th Field regiment during that operation: 'the soldiers of 3RAR will always be grateful for that magnificent support'.⁴⁶ At no time during the war were there incidents, such as later occurred in Vietnam, in which New Zealand shells accidentally killed Australian infantrymen, which might have soured attitudes.

As in previous conflicts, the Australian and New Zealand contingents in the field exhibited a special bond, one that was expressed in typical antipodean fashion. A New Zealand junior officer, in a letter home, succinctly depicted the curious nature of this relationship: 'They call us Robin Hoods and we call them robbin' b—ds, but with all the abuse that is hurled there is a deep feeling of affection between the two, although no outsider can pick it'.⁴⁷ It was not only abuse that was thrown. Whenever troops of the two contingents came near each other there were likely to be clods of mud, old eggs, water or anything available flying through the air, and officers were not exempt from this ignominious treatment, as numerous letters testify. Other UN troops struggled to understand the nature of the Anzac relationship. 'The other UN forces think we are crazy', one soldier wrote, 'but actually we are the only troops who have such a strong bond of comrade-ship and that's our way of showing it'.⁴⁸ Another found it comical to watch the faces of Americans present at such 'battles': 'They just look on in wonderment and awe, and can't understand how such friendship can entail such abuse, and still remain such good friends'.⁴⁹ For all their amity with the Australians, however, New Zealand soldiers always perceived themselves as somehow different from them. Major Richard Webb, a regular officer and the first second-in-command of 16th Field Regiment, later recalled that the New Zealanders 'used to like seeing the Aussie antics, but they never felt constrained to emulate them'. Webb referred to 'a slight larrikin tendency in the Australian' which was acceptable because 'he does it with a bit of flair'.⁵⁰

This peculiar interaction masked a serious side. Among the New Zealanders, the fighting qualities and toughness of the Australians were greatly respected. On the other side, the growing competence of the New Zealand gunners was a key to Australian attitudes. This was reflected in the comment by 3RAR commander Frank Hassett: 'Despite the chaffing and good natured rivalry', he noted, 'when it came to serious fighting, the New Zealand artillery would work until they dropped in order to give the Battalion the very best support'.⁵¹ On one occasion Australian infantry moving back through New Zealand gunners waiting for them were reputed to have had the following exchange: 'We knew you blankards would be sticking around', one digger was moved to remark. 'The reply was equally short and unemotional "Well, does it take you all blank blank night to get here?"'.⁵²

Even after the armistice in July 1953 close ties were maintained. In February 1954 500 infantrymen of 3RAR marched eight kilometres to Kayforce's camp for a fraternal visit, and the gunners made return visits. This goodwill even survived the Australians' desecration of the giant kiwi on the hill overlooking the New Zealand camp. One night it was altered to resemble a kangaroo. An Australian mortar crew, who were adjudged to be the guilty party, were ordered to restore the kiwi, it being reported that their sergeant had made them 'as a safety precaution ... remove their hats, claiming that the Kiwis would shoot on sight any Australian slouch hat seen in the vicinity'.⁵³ Given the close and friendly relationship, it was fitting that 16th Field Regiment left Korea with 3RAR aboard the troopship *New Amsterdam* at the end of 1954.⁵⁴

For both New Zealand and Australia, the Korean War represented the renewal of a pattern which had first been evident fifty years before. Both responded in similar fashion to the call for assistance in Korea, reflecting once again the fundamental alignment of the two countries' approach to international affairs. They both made their main effort within a British framework, similar to much of the approach in the Boer and world wars. Within this context old influences were evident: the sense of competition was again demonstrated by the difficulties over the settlement of the two countries' ground force contribution. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Australia-New Zealand Agreement just six years before, there was inadequate

consultation between the two governments over the nature of their contributions. Moreover, a competitive streak on the part of the authorities in Wellington was again in evidence. As in the previous conflicts, these political difficulties did not prevent the closest of relationships being established on the battlefield itself. In this respect, the traditional approach was replicated. While New Zealand and Australian forces had not co-operated as closely in the Second World War as in the First—because of differences of strategic perspective and the nature of command organisation in the Australasian area generally—the Anzac spirit was revived in Korea, albeit on a small scale. This is reflected in the fact that the two countries' memorials in Korea share the same enclosure near the town of Kapyong. Nevertheless the Anzac relationship in Korea looked backwards rather than forward: it would be another two decades before the two countries began seriously to address the question of fulfilling the promise of the Australia-New Zealand Agreement and giving a firm foundation to the ANZAXIS.

Endnotes

1. Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War*, vol II: *Combat Operations* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1996), 73.
2. On the relationship generally see Ian McGibbon, 'The Australian-New Zealand Defence Relationship since 1901', in *Revue Internationale d'Histoire Militaire*, No 72 (Canberra: Australian Commission of Military History, 1990), 123-45.
3. UK High Commissioner, Wellington, to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, No 152, 31 August 1949, D035/3761, Public Record Office, London.
4. Ian McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli, Defending New Zealand 1840-1915* (Wellington: GP Books, 1991), 240.
5. See IC McGibbon, *Blue-water Rationale: The Naval Defence of New Zealand 1914-1942* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1981), 245-46.
6. McGibbon, *Path to Gallipoli*, 111.
7. McGibbon, *Blue-water Rationale*, 23-24; McGibbon, 'The Australian-New Zealand Defence Relationship since 1901', 135.
8. Menzies to Savage, 28 November 1939, in RG Neale, ed, *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937-49*, vol II: 1939 (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976), 437.
9. Sir Geoffrey Whiskard to Dominions Office, No 301, 24 November 1939, in *ibid*, 433.
10. See Berendsen to McIntosh, 5 June 1943, in Ian McGibbon, ed, *Undiplomatic Dialogue: Letters between Carl Berendsen and Alister McIntosh 1943-1952* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993), 25.
11. The term 'Anzaxis' was coined by the Official Secretary in the British High Commission in Wellington, RR Sedgwick. See McIntosh to Berendsen, 3 February 1944, in McGibbon, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, 61.
12. For the agreement see Robin Kay, ed, *The Australian-New Zealand Agreement 1944* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1972), 140-48.
13. McIntosh to Berendsen, 18 April 1946, in McGibbon, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, 108.
14. McIntosh to Berendsen, 29 May 1950, in *ibid*, 230.
15. *Ibid*.
16. Berendsen to McIntosh, 14 February 1950, in *ibid*, 212.
17. Note of a Discussion with Field Marshall Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, 17 July 1947, PM156/1/1, External Affairs Records, National Archives, Wellington (hereinafter NA).
18. McIntosh to Berendsen, 1 February 1950, in McGibbon, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, 203.
19. Robert O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53*, vol I, *Strategy and Diplomacy* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial/AGPS, 1981), 50; Ian McGibbon, *New Zealand and the Korean War*, vol I, *Politics and Diplomacy* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992), 98.
20. See Minute by Second Naval Member, 27 July 1950, N08/11/26, Navy Department Records, New Zealand Defence Force HQ, Wellington (hereinafter NZDFHQ).
21. O'Neill, *Strategy and Diplomacy*, 78.
22. McGibbon, *Politics and Diplomacy*, 98.
23. Berendsen to McIntosh, 15 August 1950, in McGibbon, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, 242.
24. 'Note by Mr Holland on his telephone conversation with Mr Fadden ...', 1 August 1950, PM324/2/7, NA.
25. O'Neill, *Strategy and Diplomacy*, 84.
26. McIntosh to Berendsen, 7 August 1950, in McGibbon, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, 238.
27. Berendsen to McIntosh, 15 August 1950, in *ibid*, 242.
28. 'Record of a Discussion at a Meeting of Cabinet on Tuesday, 22 August 1950 with the Rt Hon RG Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia', CAB2, Cabinet Office Records, NA.
29. McIntosh to G Powles, 10 August 1950, McIntosh Papers, POW1, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Wellington.
30. McGibbon, *Politics and Diplomacy*, 402.

31. DC(50)M.4, Minutes of Defence Committee meeting on 14 August 1950, JSO80/1/1, Joint Services Organisation, NZDFHQ.
32. See Jeffrey Grey, *The Commonwealth Armies and the Korean War: An Alliance Study* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 91.
33. McGibbon, *Politics and Diplomacy*, 111.
34. *Ibid*, 310-11.
35. Shanahan to Maxwell, 5 March 1951, JSO26/3/3, NZDFHQ.
36. Note for file, by McIntosh, 30 March 1951, PM324/2/7, NA.
37. McGibbon, *Politics and Diplomacy*, 219-20.
38. 'Record of a Discussion at a Meeting of Cabinet on Tuesday, 22 August 1950 with the Rt Hon RG Menzies, Prime Minister of Australia', CAB2, NA.
39. McGibbon, *Politics and Diplomacy*, 123.
40. *Ibid*, 133-34.
41. McGibbon, *Combat Operations*, 199. See also AD333/5/2, Army Department Records, NA.
42. McGibbon, *Combat Operations*, 293.
43. *Ibid*, 72.
44. Ben O'Dowd, *In Valiant Company* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 2000), 165.
45. Quoted in Norman Bartlett, *With the Australians in Korea* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1954), 105.
46. Maurice Piers and Fred Kirkland (compilers), *Korea Remembered: The RAN, ARA and RAAF in the Korean War of 1950-1953* (Sydney: Combined Arms Training and Development Centre, 1998), 285.
47. Lt PF Nicholson, letter, 6 November 1951 (copy in author's possession).
48. Gnr TJ Cottle, letter, 30 May 1951 (copy in author's possession).
49. Gnr CR Kinzett, letter, 24 May 1951 (copy in author's possession).
50. McGibbon, *Combat Operations*, 473. citing interview by Jeffrey Grey with Lieutenant General Sir Richard Webb.
51. Quoted in *The Battle of Maryang San, 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, Korea, 2-8 October 1951* (Sydney: Headquarters Training Command, 2nd edn, 1994), 17.
52. *Japan News*, 2 November 1951.
53. McGibbon, *Combat Operations*, 353.
54. *Ibid*, 356.