THE KOREAN WAR 1950-53:
A 50 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

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INTRODUCTION
Lieutenant General Peter Cosgrove

Fifty years ago the Cold War briefly became a hot one. On 25 June 1950, seven infantry 
divisions, an armoured brigade and several independent regiments of the North Korean 
People's Army crossed the border into the Republic of South Korea to effect the reunification 
of the divided nation by force. By the usual scale of the wars of the first half of the twentieth 
century, it was not large: it was by no means a 'world' war. Perhaps it was this small scale 
that, for a long time, caused the Korean War to be known also as 'the forgotten war'.

It should not have been forgotten, especially in Australia. Apart from the casualties— 
Australia alone had 339 killed in action and another 1216 wounded—the war was a signal to 
Australian defence planners that fundamental changes in Australia's strategic outlook had 
occurred.

Korea reinforced the lesson of the war with Japan that events in Asia demanded as much 
attention as those in Europe. The understandable desire of many to turn the clock back to the 
conditions that had existed before the Second World War, best illustrated by the attempts by 
the former colonial powers to re-establish their empires, failed to recognise the impact of the 
dramatic changes that had occurred in the world order.

The increasingly active independence movements in Asia provided fertile areas for conflict 
outside the traditional European flashpoints. The traditional power brokers, Britain, France 
and Germany, had been replaced by the two superpowers. The United Nations added a new 
dimension to the resolution of international conflict. Overshadowing all these changes was the 
growing spectre of the Cold War with its nuclear dimension.

Korea had another lesson for Australia. Despite our cultural and emotional links to Britain and 
Europe, geographically we were a part of Asia. Events in Asia mattered to Australian security. 
Korea reinforced the judgements of the post-Second World War planners that we needed the 
ability to influence affairs in our part of the world. It confirmed the thinking that had led to the 
formation, in 1948, of permanent military forces in Australia—a dramatic break with the 
traditional reliance on part time forces.

Unfortunately, it was also a test of the political resolve to follow through these plans. This test 
we failed. To quote Jeffrey Grey:

It was now that the deficiencies in Australia's post war defence policies showed 
themselves clearly. There was no ready reaction force available, just one halfstrength 
battalion in Japan, under-trained, under-equipped and in no way ready for war ... 
Australia could not put men on the ground when they were needed, in the crucial 
early days of the war when the South Koreans and Americans were pushed down the 
Korean peninsula by the armoured weight of the Korean People's Army. It was a poor 
return for five years of planning.¹

When Australia did get men on the ground, they acquitted themselves very well. They 
continued the fine fighting tradition of their fathers and grandfathers.

The lesson we need to reinforce is that poor or inadequate planning usually demands a high 
cost in soldiers' lives to rectify. The postwar plans were not followed through and it was the 
poorly-equipped and under-strength 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, that suffered 
for this neglect. Korea is not the only, or indeed the best, example of such neglect but in this, 
its fiftieth anniversary, the lesson needs to be retold.
Endnotes

The Korean War may be mislaid, stolen, forgotten, and misunderstood in North American and western Europe, but its memory still shapes political calculations in Beijing, Tokyo, Pyongyang, and Seoul. To Asians, the war and fifty years of aftershocks have once again demonstrated the unwillingness or incapacity of Westerners to come to grips with the political culture of Asia. Unlike Australia, which has learned the politics of the Malay Barrier, the United States remains in the intellectual and emotional sense an occasional tourist in Asian politics, albeit an elephantine visitor that stomps the life out of anyone who happens to cross its feckless path. The fiftieth anniversary of the Korean War provides an opportunity to think about the persistent ignorance of Americans about Asia, but such reflections are not our national style unless they are encouraged by the press's discovery of wartime atrocities. That is hardly the best way to ponder international relations.¹

Any analysis of the Korean War should include some consideration of the Koreans themselves. Obviously their stake in its outcome represented a quantum leap beyond any other belligerent's costs and benefits, even the Chinese. The war may have been limited for all the other belligerents, but it was total for the Koreans. It is easy to see them simply as the unfortunate victims of a Cold War struggle waged through surrogates by the United States and the Soviet Union. Of course, both the global superpowers engaged their own forces against each other, too, although disproportionately so since the Chinese were willing to fight and die under the withering firepower of the United States, and the Russians were not. Such a view does neither of the Koreas justice since they represented two legitimate, if uncompromising revolutionary visions about the future of the Korean people, visions that still exist, embodied in the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.²

The human cost of the war—even allowing for the statistical uncertainties of government information agencies—was truly awful. In 1950 the population of the Republic of Korea numbered roughly twenty million, the population of North Korea about half that number. No one will ever know with any precision just what the war of 1950-53 cost the Korean people, but the estimates are catastrophic. The South Korean armed forces lost at least 187,712 personnel, and the fate of thousands more remains uncertain. Most of the MIAs probably died as slave laborers or as unwilling conscripts into the North Korean army. The civilian dead in South Korea may approach a million, victims of Communist massacres and servitude, dead of exposure and disease, and helpless targets of United Nations Command artillery and air strikes. Almost half the population of South Korea became refugees in 1950-51.

The North Koreans have extended the cult of Juche into their own history of the war. 'Self-reliance' is basically an exercise in self-deception and self-congratulation. The South Koreans estimate that the North Koreans suffered almost 300,000 combat-related deaths during the war. The North Koreans do not admit to any firm numbers of military fatalities, but they claim that two million North Koreans died from all causes, including alleged American germ warfare. The effect of the war upon the Korean economy and infrastructure also eludes precise calculation, but the estimates on the destruction of property and other kinds of wealth and assets for all of Korea falls in the 50-80 per cent range.

The sacrifice of the other belligerents is not comparable. The Chinese admit to fewer than 200,000 military dead, although western estimates triple this number. Although the war certainly retarded Chinese economic development and thinned the ranks of the People's Liberation Army, the Korean War was—in Chinese eyes—a costly victory, worth every life and renminbi. American losses, complicated by sloppy counting by the US Army, were not 54,000,
but 36,000 war-related dead in the Asian theatre of operations. The direct cost of the war to the United States falls in the $20-$30 billion range; the deaths and dollars represent about one-third of the American effort to defeat Japan in the Second World War. The other United Nations participants endured even less onerous losses in lives and treasure; the total of UN military deaths (not-US, not-ROK) is 3960. The financial contribution is even less awesome, even when adjusted for relative national wealth.\textsuperscript{3}

The ordeal of the Korean people after their liberation from Japanese rule in 1945 until the armistice of the internationalised civil war in 1953 can be understood through the history of the origins and ordeals of the army of the Republic of Korea, the \textit{Hanguk Gun} or, in American military-ese, the Republic of Korea Army or ‘ROKA’. In the parlance of the 1950s South Korean soldiers were known as ‘rocks’ or in less-complimentary, racist terms. The history of the ROKA reveals a great deal about the origins, conduct, and consequences of the Korean War itself—as would a comprehensive history of the North Korean army or \textit{In Min Gun} (‘People’s Army’). Putting the South Korean army back into the history of the Korean War helps place the Koreans in a critical turning point in their thirteen centuries of history as a people with a distinct culture, language, and heritage.

The history of any army requires some appreciation of the politics that influence its creation. The best place to start is with the resistance to Japanese annexation (1910) and the protest movement of March 1919. When the Japanese army and the colonial police smashed the Korean independence movement, the surviving Korean political leadership fled into exile where most of them remained until 1945. No single leader and no single party or independence faction emerged as the dominant force in exile politics; none established a Korean underground or partisan movement strong enough to either challenge the Japanese or eliminate its competitors within Korea or abroad.\textsuperscript{4}

In the loose sense the March First Movement evolved as two competing revolutionary, nationalist political groupings. The first was the Korean Communist party (officially formed in 1918-1923), which in reality became several competitive parties. Korean Communists before 1945 formed major factions in China, Manchuria, Siberia, the Russian Maritime Province, and Japan with a small group of fugitives within Korea itself. The other part of the Independence Movement shared some goals with the Communists (eg, drive away the Japanese) but its leadership drew its inspiration from sources other than Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Zedong. No less revolutionary in their goals for a new Korea, the radical nationalists drew their inspiration from the American and French revolutions, the economic development of Europe and the United States, and western theories of scientific management and modernisation. Their reformism stressed progressive education and European medicine, and they sought some modification of the Confucian value and family system.

It would, however, misrepresent their views to describe these reformers as democratic, liberal capitalists, although some of them understood and appreciated these concepts. The Korean radical nationalists (including Syngman Rhee) viewed politics as the province of an educated elite and economic development as a matter of command, not market, incentives. Westerners who knew Korean independence leaders recognised their commitment to some western learning and thought they were twentieth century westernised popular politicians. Foreigners no doubt could be fooled by Koreans who dressed as proper modern gentlemen, spoke some English, and attended a Christian church. Many of the radical nationalist leaders had, in fact, been educated abroad in England, Scotland, France, Germany, the United States, and Japan. American diplomats, especially those of the young, idealistic variety, found it hard to cope with leaders like Kim Ku and Syngman Rhee who could discuss the ‘Rights of Man’ with feeling and then go off to plot the assassination of a rival or the organisation of a riot to disrupt a competing party. Like other post-colonial independence movements, leadership gravitated to the boldest, charismatic, and least compromising leaders.

Establishing and organising a stable, expert, professional, and non-political army within such a political environment would have been a nearly impossible task. The difficulties were multiplied by two other factors. The first was the unbroken existence of the Japanese colonial police through the American military government and into the establishment of the First
Republic (15 August 1948) as the Korean National Police (Chosun Kyongchalchong). Even when stripped of its Japanese leaders, the Korean National Police (KNP) continued to act as a bastion of anti-radicalism, the protector of privilege and property, and the champion of Japanese treatment for labour organisers, mob protesters, tax evaders, economic criminals, and populist politicians. The KNP started with 8000 of its 20,000 original members. The KNP then became an employer of choice for anti-Communists who fled from North Korea in 1945-1946, many of whom were militant Christians and the backbone of rightist paramilitary groups like the Korean National Youth Association, the Racial Youth Association, and the Northwest Youth Association. The KNP and the rightist paramilitary associations enjoyed strong leadership from Cho Pyong-ok, Yi Pom-sok, and Chang Taek-sang, two of whom held western doctorates and the other an influential graduate of a Chinese Nationalist military academy. The Korean National Police had no intention of surrendering its monopoly of peacekeeping and national defence to any other official security force, especially one that might recruit members of dubious political orientation. The KNP also wanted no rival for American support in arms, instructors, and money, and it certainly did not want to share its system of extortion, which supplemented its meagre official pay. What it did want to share was its role as target for armed dissidents and rioters, who saw the police as an unwanted vestige of Japanese rule and a bulwark against freedoms that ran from democratic political organisation and voting to all forms of freelance crime and vengeful property destruction. The Korean policeman's lot was not a happy one.

The other factor is that the competition for the political mastery of all Korea began immediately upon the Japanese surrender in 1945. For less than four months the Koreans enjoyed some semblance of independent popular government exercised by 'People's Committees' or coalitions of local notables hastily organised to keep the peace in the wake of the Japanese surrender. Neither the American nor the Russian occupation regimes wanted the People's Committees to become the basis of a legitimate successor regime, and they both pressured the committees out of existence by establishing national military government systems, which depended on a combination of military presence and Korean cooperation. Nevertheless, the unstable nature of these coalition committees suggests they would not have survived the inevitable power struggles between the most powerful political movements in South Korea, the South Korean Labor (Communist) Party of Pak Hon-yong and the Korean Democratic Party of Kim Song-su and Kim Kyu-sik.

The polarisation of Korean politics in southern Korea and the Russianisation of politics in northern Korea (under the eager leadership of Kim Il-sung) represents the First Phase of a People's War, as preached by Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minn, and others. Although there was no conscious effort by Korean Communists to wage a protracted people's war, they did so. The period of revolutionary organisation and political agitation began in August, 1945 and lasted until March-April, 1948 when a wave of Communist-inspired strikes and uprisings plunged southern Korea into insurrectionary war. The Second Phase of terrorism and partisan warfare ended with the invasion of the Republic of Korea on 25 June 1950. The Third Phase is the conflict known as the Korean War, which ended with an armistice on 27 July 1953. The history of the South Korean army should be understood within these three phases of the Greater Korean War, 1945-53.

The Organisation of the Korean Constabulary

The sudden end of the Asia-Pacific war in August 1945 created an unexpected mission for the American armed forces in the western Pacific: disarm and repatriate over five million Japanese to the Home Islands before the outraged subject peoples—like the Chinese, Filipinos, and Koreans—extracted their own form of justice and endangered the peaceful occupation of Japan itself. Among the many terms the Japanese accepted was the liquidation of their overseas empire, which included Korea. With little planning and great urgency, large parts of the American ground forces on Okinawa and in the Philippines hurried to the Home Islands, Korea, and northern China. The US XXIV Corps (Lieutenant General John R Hodge)
of three infantry divisions sailed from Okinawa and landed at Inchon on 8 September 1945. The corps’ mission was to repatriate all the Japanese south of the 38th Parallel (where Russian troops had already arrived) and to keep public order until the State Department could form some policy about a Korean regime for the entire country, which would have to be negotiated with the Soviet Union.

The structure of the American occupation forces and its supporting civil administration influenced the definition of public order and peacekeeping during the repatriation process. General Hodge held the post of Commanding General, US Army Forces in Korea and Commanding General, XXIV Corps. Hodge coordinated his activities with General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander Allied Powers, but MacArthur, his nominal senior commander, showed only occasional interest in Korean affairs. Hodge most often reported directly to the Army staff in Washington through the agencies at the War Department concerned with occupation policies. Coordination with the State Department came from the meetings of the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee and with the other services through the committees of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As a subordinate agency under Hodge’s command, the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) actually governed Korea through various executive agencies headed by US Army officers until 1947 when appointed Korean officials took charge, aided by American civilian and military advisors.

Public order fell under the responsibility of the Bureau of National Defense, created in November 1945, and renamed the Department of National Security in May 1946 after the Russian delegation to the US-USSR Joint Commission on Korea protested that ‘national defense’ implied that the United States wanted Korea divided into two separate states. The Military Governors (Major Generals Archibald V Arnold, Archer L Lerch, and William F Dean) and the Directors of National Defense and National Security assumed responsibility for organising any security agency, including the Korean National Police and maritime patrol forces. Brigadier General Lawrence E Schick, USA, the Provost Marshal, XXIV Corps, proposed the creation of a separate Korean peacekeeping organisation in October, 1945, and assumed the duties of Director of National Defense; in the next eighteen months four other officers held the post. General Schick quickly concluded that the Korean National Police (slowly building to a planned strength of 25,000) could not perform all the pressing security duties that faced it. Generals Arnold and Hodge agreed because both of them wanted to reduce the American military forces in direct contact with the Koreans.7

Although the repatriation of 450,000 Japanese from Korea went smoothly, the social turmoil within the southern occupation zone gave General Hodge and his subordinates anxious days and sleepless nights. Any violence involving American troops could jeopardise the ongoing negotiations with both the Russians and the Korean political elite clamouring for more participation in government and for eventual independence and unification. The Namwon Incident of November 1945 (named after a town in the southwestern province of Chollanam-do) dramatised the American dilemma. When local authorities arrested members of the Namwon People’s Committee for not turning over some confiscated property, a mob formed outside a local KNP post to protest the arrest. The police and protestors clashed, and a policeman died. Several KNP companies rushed to the scene, but they, too, faced a rout until an American infantry battalion joined the fray, which included shooting and bayoneting. Two protestors died, and sixty other Koreans were wounded. The public outcry in Korea about American military brutality spurred the drafting of Plan Bamboo, a scheme to create a police reserve or constabulary, by Colonel Arthur S Champeny, Schick’s successor as Director of National Defense. Schick himself in November, 1945 proposed a 45,000-man national defence force for Korea. The SWNNC and JCS liked Champeny’s less dramatic Bamboo variant, a 25,000-man national constabulary, much better and approved it 9 January 1946.8

Post-liberation Korea required a great deal of peacekeeping, and almost everyone with political and economic ambitions sought to form a private army to secure his rights, perceived or anticipated. The People’s Committees formed their own modest security services composed of former guerrillas, self-appointed militiamen, and Korean veterans of the Japanese armed forces. Veterans numbered 300,000 men among the two million-plus Korean expatriates who had returned to the American occupation zone. Other Korean groups
excluded from the People’s Committees formed private armies. By the end of 1945 General Arnold’s staff identified fourteen such armed groups, and they did not include the large guerrilla underground already created by the South Korean Labor Party. The largest single group was the National Preparatory Army, a group of Korean veterans of Japanese service, authorised by the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence, the political coalition led by Yo Un-hyong that had accepted the surrender of the Japanese colonial government on 15 August 1945. The primacy of this force, however, was immediately challenged by the military arm of the Korean Provisional Government (Kim Ku, president) in exile in Chungking, the Korean Restoration Army (the Hanguk Kwangbokkun or Kwangbok Army). The Kwangbok soldiers (perhaps 3000) formed the armed support for what the Americans called ‘rightist’ groups.

Anticipating Washington’s approval of the Plan Bamboo force, General Schick changed the mission of the English Language School, established on 5 December 1945 to prepare interpreters for service with American military units. Located at the Methodist Theological Seminary in Seoul, the ELS had not yet started classes when Schick told his successor, Colonel Champeny, to make the school a screening course for officers for the Korean Constabulary. The curriculum would still include learning American military terms, but also drill, leadership, weapons, and minor tactics or roughly the same training plan of a US Army Second World War officers’ candidate school. Initial screening of candidates began on 14 January 1946. A USAMGIK officer, Lieutenant Colonel John T Marshall, USA, and two other officers formed the directing staff. When classes began later that month, eighteen American lieutenants transferred in from the 40th Infantry Division, then in the process of returning to the United States. General Hodge assisted the recruiting process by announcing that his plan to outlaw private armies (published on 13 November 1945) would go into effect on 21 January 1946. Hodge and Champeny also directed Marshall to use two notable Korean soldiers (Colonel Yi Ung-jun, IJA, and Colonel Cho Kae-ok, Kwangbok Army) to screen the first sixty candidates for a commission in the Constabulary. The Americans hoped that the candidates could be drawn in three equal contingents (twenty each) from veterans of the regular Japanese army, the Japanese-sponsored multi-ethnic Manchukuo army, and the Kwangbok army.

Cho boycotted the screening interviews since the political factions represented in the Kwangbok army advocated non-cooperation with the Americans and their ‘collaborationist’ allies. Thus Colonel Yi, a member of the Korean royal family and a graduate of the Imperial Military Academy (1914), had a dominant role in the selection process. His only rival for influence was Won Yong-duk, a former medical officer in the Japanese army, a native of Seoul, a graduate of the Chosun Christian College-Severance Hospital medical program, and Colonel Marshall’s English-language interpreter. As Cho and the Kwangbok veterans charged, the initial selections showed a bias to former officers of the Japanese armed forces; they also showed concern for English-language competence, level of education, physical fitness, military experience, appearance, and dedication to Korean independence. The officer with the first serial number (10,001) was Captain (IJA) Yi Hyong-kun, Colonel Yi’s charming son-in-law, age twenty-six, an Imperial Military Academy graduate (1944), and fluent in English.

Of the 110 members of the First Class, twelve had graduated from the Imperial Military Academy, ten from the Manchukuo (Manchurian) Military Institute, seventy-two as hakpyong or military cadets from civilian colleges and universities throughout the Japanese empire, two from Chinese armies, and fourteen directly from the Japanese army. One candidate did not graduate, but Colonel Yi Ung-jun accepted a commission and became No 10,110. One other new officer did not actually attend the course. Three transferred from the KNP but passed the course. Of this group, seventy-five eventually became generals in the South Korean army. As a group, they were sympathetic to American military values and aligned themselves with the nationalist-progressive revolutionary cause. Their American associates regarded them as the most professional and apolitical group of officers with whom they had to deal.
As planned, the Korean officers and their American advisors (two lieutenants, one interpreter, and two enlisted men per team) left the English Language School (immediately retitled the Constabulary Officers Training School) after seven weeks of instruction and went to the eight posts in each provincial capital to form the first company of what eventually would be an entire Constabulary regiment for each province. (The Island of Cheju-do became the site of a ninth regiment later in 1946.) Each KC company started with a nucleus of enlisted men from a battalion formed in Seoul to train with and support the First Class.  

The early recruiting went very slowly. In April 1946 the entire Constabulary, dressed and armed with Japanese cast-offs, numbered only 2000 officers and men. Although Colonel Marshall and his staff intended to recruit additional officers and enlisted men carefully, the pace of recruiting reflected additional factors. One was the hostility of the Korean National Police, whose senior officers publicly asserted that the future Korean army officer corps would come from their ranks, not those of the collaborationist, politically-suspect Constabulary. Working conditions in the Constabulary had little appeal: food, barracks' conditions, and discipline fell somewhere between the harsh standards of the Japanese army and the treatment of Japanese POWs. In March, 1946, the Constabulary endured the first of several mutinies; the sergeants of the 1st Battalion (Seoul) assaulled and beat into insensibility their battalion commander (Captain and future Army Chief of Staff Chung Il-kwon) and his staff, who were rescued by American advisors. (The plan then in effect had American officers as regimental commanders with Korean commanders and American advisors with each battalion.) The mutineers escaped any disciplinary action except discharge since they had real grievances and very good political connections with Kim Ku's Korean Independence Party, a noncooperationist group of former members of the Korean Provisional Government. Chung Il-kwon and his officers went to distant battalions, Chung to the 4th Regiment in Chunchon.

The two most important stimulants to building the Constabulary were the Korean National Police and the South Korean Labor Party, locked in deadly but low-level terrorist actions by the autumn of 1946. Supported by the most determined nationalist revolutionaries and some American allies, the Korean National Police started a crackdown on socialist-democratic dissidents in the summer of 1946. Some of the suspects were implicated in coup plots, banditry, theft of American property, terrorism, labour agitation, and extortion. The same might be said of the KNP and the rightist paramilitary associations. Fugitives from the police could find safe haven in the Constabulary—and they did. An unknown number of enlisted recruits came into the Constabulary as Communist infiltrators. Although the second director of the Constabulary, Lieutenant Colonel Russell A Barros, wanted to have the KNP screen his recruits for political orientation, the Korean National Police refused to cooperate. Barros had learned Asian politics as a guerrilla leader in the Philippines, so he knew his force had become a home for harried leftists, but he had no alternative but to accept (at USAMGIK's insistence) all candidates who could pass the routine physical and intelligence requirements. The issue became truly dangerous when Barros formed the Second Class (OTS) in September, 1946, just as political tension throughout Korea increased. Only thirty-five members of the Second Class had served as officers in any army; the remaining candidates came directly from civil life or from the Constabulary's enlisted ranks. Of the 196 officers eventually commissioned from an intake of 263, seventy-nine eventually became generals of the South Korean army. How many came from the ranks of the South Korean Labor Party or other leftist or rightist radical factions was not known then or now, but the sheer numbers of revolutionaries made the class unmanageable and aggressive, (the Korean officer serving as acting director of the OTS later claimed he survived several murder plots, one engineered by his most famous student, Park Chung-hee, the future general-president of the Republic of Korea, 1961-1979). The 387 graduates of the Third and Fourth Classes also showed little interest in serving in a professionalised national defence force. Graduating in 1948, some of their graduates continued the infiltration of dissidents into the Constabulary with cells of the South Korean Labor Party in almost every regiment and administrative office. Park Chung-hee headed a group of Communist officers at Constabulary headquarters and the Officer Training School. The formation of the Fifth Class (October, 1947) halted the appeal of the Constabulary as a sanctuary for fleeing dissidents; two-thirds of the 380 officers commissioned in the Fifth Class were northern Koreans, refugees from Communist
oppression, Christians, and members of the educated elite. They sought out the Communists in their midst for dismissal, a practice continued by the Sixth and Seventh Classes, the last ones chosen before the establishment of the Republic of Korea.  

The other factor that shaped the Constabulary was the Taegu or Autumn Harvest Rebellion of October, 1946, the most serious civil violence against USAMGIK and its Korean associates. The summer of 1946 had been just one more disaster in a series of economic disasters in the preceding decade. This one came from the weather, not Japanese exploitation. (During the Second World War Korean rice production doubled, but domestic consumption dropped by half from pre-1940 levels.) A shortage of rainfall, exacerbated by the lack of fertilizer, reduced the rice harvest and built anxiety about a winter famine. In addition, perhaps 10,000 Koreans perished in a cholera epidemic that summer, and the whole country endured quarantines, travel restrictions, and compulsory medical testing enforced by all the Korean security services. Alarmed by the deteriorating economic conditions, the Korean transportation unions called for wage raises under the threat of a general strike. Working from its surviving underground, the South Korean Labor Party recognised an opportunity to seize the vanguard position in a peasants and workers movement and to force the Americans to withdraw or at least seek a conciliatory policy toward the Left, perhaps even allowing reunification under a coalition government that the Communists could later subvert. The resulting uprising shook USAMGIK to the soles of its shiny jumpboots, hurried the withdrawal of American troops, and boosted the fortunes of the Korean Constabulary.

The transportation workers' strikes, strengthened by student protesters, brought the KNP and the demonstrators face to face in the streets. A series of police-protestor clashes then turned into urban guerrilla warfare throughout all four of Korea's southern provinces (the Chollas and the Kyongsangs) in October and November, 1946. Outraged at a combination of rice rationing, food confiscations, and higher prices, farm groups and ordinary people joined the marches, all met with force by the police with indifferent success. Small groups of urban guerrillas, many led by Communist cadres, assaulted tax offices, police stations, government offices, and the homes and businesses of local Koreans judged too sympathetic to the Japanese and the established social order. The police and rightist paramilitary groups retaliated.

On several occasions American infantry and military police had to fire into Korean crowds and kill protesters to stop attacks. Americans probably killed fewer than 20 of the 1000-plus Koreans who died in the uprising, but the experience convinced General Hodge that something must be done to prevent such incidents. The Constabulary had not been numerous enough (900 men in the four southern provinces) and ardent enough to put down the revolt. General Hodge, supported by MacArthur, urged Washington to approve a quick increase of the Constabulary to 50,000 officers and men and to plan for a force double that number, depending upon equipment and funding. The review process dragged on into 1947, but in the meantime, the Constabulary began to climb to double its 1946 strength. The general fear stirred by the Autumn Harvest Rebellion made recruiting much easier and more systematic in judging the recruits' politics. Nevertheless, more Communists entered the Constabulary enlisted ranks to escape the KNP and prepare for more uprisings.

The Autumn Harvest Rebellion also made the United States less interested in pursuing negotiations with the Soviet Union to find a formula for reunifying Korea. By 1947 no radical-nationalist politician like Kim Ku or Syngman Rhee would consider any proposal that gave the Russians influence over southern Korea. The moderates of the Korean Democratic Party, favored by General Hodge, found themselves either the victims of assassinations or other forms of coercion or harried from influence by rightist associations. Cooperation with the USAMGIK became a sure road to political oblivion unless the position gave one an independent power base and financial support, such as an appointment in the Ministry of Justice and the Korean National Police. In desperation the United States went to the United Nations and won the General Assembly's approval for the establishment of a United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK), a nine-nation committee to explore the question of self-determination for all of Korea if possible and for southern Korea if the Soviets proved intransigent. In the meantime, the Department of the Army pressed President Harry S
Truman to liquidate the occupation of Korea, but the State Department slowed the process enough so that the half-strength US 6th Infantry and 7th Infantry Divisions remained in place through 1947. The departure of other American troops increased the requirement to guard both Japanese and American property held by USAFIK, a mission assumed by the Constabulary in return for more funding in early 1947. For every American soldier it could replace on sentry duty, the Constabulary received the equivalent of US$6000 a year. In addition, it assumed custody of American weapons, equipment, clothing, and garrison property judged unsalvageable or too expensive to ship even to Japan. Training missions from the two American divisions still played a critical role for each of the nine provincial regiments. Whether the Korean Constabulary could survive without American sponsorship remained to be seen.

The Birth of the Korean Army and the War for South Korea, 1948-1950

Despite repeated efforts to set up some process of unification, the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea made no progress in joining the two Koreas in the winter of 1947-48. Korean politicians had even less success, although Kim Ku and Kim Kyu-sik made at least a gesture toward negotiation. All they managed to do was strengthen the appeal of Syngman Rhee to the Americans and the Korean people. Pretending to be above politics and party, Rhee formed all sorts of alliances with important groups in the militant radical-nationalist camp: northern refugees, bellicose Christians, the Korean security forces, aspiring entrepreneurs, and the Korean bureaucrats in USAMGIK. Rhee pitted serving senior officers of the Korean National Police against those of the Constabulary, and he made promises to them and to officer-aspirants unwilling to serve under American supervision that he would favour them with office if he became president or prime minister. For a foreign policy, Rhee managed to rail against Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States with almost equal vitriol. In the meantime, Kim Ku reverted to type, arranging the assassination of three leaders of the rival (and more liberal) Korean Democratic Party, one of them the respected Yo Unhyong (19 July 1947). In this volatile environment, UNTCOK, in February, 1948 announced that it would proceed with elections and an interim government that would produce a Republic of Korea in the south. It would be recognised as the legitimate government of all Korea, an open denial of the authority of any Russian-sponsored regime in northern Korea.

The principal advisors to the Korean Constabulary in 1947-48—Lieutenant Colonel Barros, Captain John P Reed, and Captain James H Hausman—knew that the Constabulary faced heavy odds in surviving open politisation, subversion by the bellicose right and the Communists, demoralisation from poor support and training, and the factionalism within its own officer corps. In the face of all these perils, the Constabulary doubled in size to 50,000 with the likelihood that it would double again to 100,000 before the last American troops left Korea at the end of 1948. When the American troops departed and the occupation ended, the entire foundation of American support would evaporate unless Congress provided some alternative funding to the Department of the Army's Government Aid and Relief of Occupied Areas (GARIOA) funds. The American garrison would take away its instructors, weapons, training ammunition and supplies, garrison equipment and consumables, and surplus uniforms. The Military Government groups would go; the Counterintelligence Corps detachments would go; and all the administrative structure of the USAFIK would go. The Constabulary advisors—part of the Military Government—would depart, too, unless they were recreated as a different military group within the US diplomatic mission. There was also some question whether UNTCOK would allow any strengthening of the Constabulary during the election process, even though political violence would probably increase and overwhelm the Korean National Police as it had in 1946.15

The South Korean Labor Party, directed from a sanctuary in the Russian zone at Haeju, Hwanghae Province, not far across the 38th Parallel near the western coast, saw opportunity where the Americans and their Korean associates saw peril. The Autumn Harvest Rebellion of 1946 showed what possibilities still existed for a mass uprising by unhappy tenant farmers, romantic revolutionary students, militant workers, alienated members of the middle class, and every Korean who nursed anti-foreign hatreds. The United Nations could be attacked as an American front organisation and the United States as the tool of those unrequited Japanese
imperialists who wanted to reverse the results of the Second World War and throw back the Communist revolution in China. The southern Communists had substantial SKLP cells in five of the nine Constabulary regiments. Moreover, rightist groups, still conducting terrorist acts against the Korean leftists, seemed equally determined to subvert the Constabulary and gain full control of the Korean National Police. This threat provided a welcome distraction and uncertainty in the political equation, likely to paralyse USAMGIK decision-making. At the personal level, Pak Hon-yong no doubt received encouragement from Kim Il-sung, who already saw himself as the great liberator of all Korea with the southern Communists in the first (and expendable) line of battle.

Answering the call of the Korean labour movement, thousands of Koreans marched, chanted, and made speeches in a general strike that spread throughout southern Korea in February, 1948. The protest marches were accompanied by industrial sabotage, mob violence, and terrorist attacks on the police stations. The KNP struck back, and within five weeks the death toll had reached more than 300, the wounded three times that number, and the number of arrests around 1500. The general strike flamed out, but few thought the unrest had ended. In the meantime, the Constabulary increased the pace of its preparations for battle; its major program was the replacement of Japanese bolt-action Type 38 rifles with American M-1s. The transfers, however, meant that each regiment would have twice its normal number of weapons sometime in the spring of 1948, which might actually increase the likelihood of mutiny and the raising of guerrilla bands. The Communists had also stockpiled Japanese weapons and ammunition in southern Korea's mountains.

The Korean insurrection of 1948-50 flamed into open warfare on Cheju-do island in April 1948 and provided the first clear picture of the Constabulary's problems. Under pressure from rightist associations and uncertain of the loyalties of the KNP detachment on the island, Governor Pak Kyung-jun resigned to organise a liberal-democratic party on the island, always a notable centre of Korean radicalism. The USAMGIK governor, Major General William F Dean, sent Colonel Barros to the island as temporary governor, but the Rhee faction pressured Hodge to replace Barros with Yu Hae-jin, an associate of Yi Pom-sok. Barros remained on the island as US civil affairs chief and commander of a military government company, a CIC detachment, and a security platoon from the US 20th Infantry. Barros had good reason to report that the island would not stay peaceful. Governor Yu and the KNP started a round-up of all their political opponents, but they did not have the support of the 9th Constabulary Regiment, whose commander, Lieutenant Colonel Kim Ik-yol, had open leftist sympathies and was a friend of the island's leading revolutionary, school teacher Kim Tal-sam, a veteran of Japanese military service.

On 3 April 1948 Kim Tal-sam's partisans, reinforced with KC deserters, made simultaneous and well-organised attacks on twenty-four Cheju-do police stations. The KNP, rightist paramilitary associations (empowered as auxiliary police), and parts of the 9th Regiment fought back. The campaign then moved into hunt-chase-and-ambush operations in the mountainous countryside without resolution but with mounting deaths, especially among the stunned villagers caught in the crossfire. The 9th Regiment proved so undependable that its remnants (with the exceptions of administrative personnel) left the island for retraining. It turned its pacification mission over to the new 11th Regiment, formed around cadres of the 5th Regiment (Pusan) and a unit dominated by militant anti-Communist refugees from northern Korea. The new regimental commander, Lieutenant Colonel Pak Chin-gyong, enjoyed the affection and trust of his advisors and troops and already had a reputation as one of the leaders of the Constabulary. A graduate of an elite civilian university in Japan, Pak spoke fluent English, treated his troops with true consideration, and preached civilian control of the military and the rights of Koreans to live free and prosperous. Under Colonel Pak's command, the KNP-KC counter-guerrilla forces conducted proper cordon and search operations against the hardcore partisan leaders and fighters, assisted by US Army spotter planes, intelligence agents, and support troops. The partisans took to the rugged mountains, especially giant Halla-san, an extinct volcano surrounded by a howling wilderness. The insurrection started to flame out. On Cheju-do and on the mainland the May elections for a national assembly to draft a constitution proceeded with relative peace and honesty under UN supervision.
The first step in the creation of an independent Republic of Korea under United Nations and American patronage sent the dissident underground (right and left) into a flurry of organisational activity, but no general uprising. Again Cheju-do provided the spark for renewed violence. On the evening of 18 June 1948 two members of the stay-behind 9th Regiment headquarters staff shot their new commander to death under a plan designed by Lieutenant Mun Sang-gil. The investigation of Colonel Pak's murder finally revealed the depth of Communist infiltration in the Constabulary. Captains Hausman and Reed, the two most influential advisors at Constabulary headquarters, persuaded the Constabulary's first Korean commander, Brigadier General Song Ho-sung, to establish his own counterintelligence/counter subversion agency and put it under the command of Colonel Paik Sun-yup, a native of Pyongyang and a fine soldier as well as dedicated anti-Communist.

Assisted by the US Army 971st Counterintelligence Detachment, Paik started a thorough screening of the Constabulary officer corps for secret cells of subversives of any political colouration. The least dependable unit was identified as the 14th Regiment, stationed at the southern port city of Yosu. The regiment contained both an SKLP cell and a group of Kim Ku's terrorists. Under orders to sail for Cheju-do some officers and senior enlisted men of the SKLP cell staged a mutiny on 19 October. Most of the regiment and the local SKLP cadres then attacked the KNP and any government sympathisers. The rebellion soon spread to the city of Sunchon where more police, other public officials, and 'rightists' were massacred. The two lieutenants who led the mutiny were members of the suspect Third Class, eventually purged of sixty per cent of its members. Within a week the Yosu-Sunchon rebels had grown to almost 2000 armed members and had gained control of much of eastern Chollanam-do.

The Yosu-Sunchon Revolt quickly developed into a three-front partisan war that threatened the existence of the Republic of Korea, created on 15 August 1948 under the presidency of Syngman Rhee. Under the inspirational leadership of Kim Tal-sam, the Cheju-do rebels conducted raids and resisted KC-KNP expeditions into the mountains. As government operations improved with the reinforcement of another KC regiment, Kim Tal-sam slipped off the island for North Korea, but left the guerrillas under the capable command of Kim Tae-chin.

The second front developed in the aftermath of the suppression of the Yosu-Sunchon revolt because Syngman Rhee and General Song Ho-sung (against the advice of their American advisors) ordered that the cities be retaken as quickly as possible. This decision allowed the most determined and well-trained rebels to fade into the Chiri mountains. Both Suchon and Yosu became the targets of Constabulary firepower (mortars and machineguns) and indiscriminate killing while the rebels escaped with their weapons. The total casualties for the entire affair, which finally ended with the recapture of Yosu on 27 October, cost at least 4000 lives, innocents and belligerents alike. The surviving rebels—perhaps as many as 1000—rallied other dissidents to their ranks and spread out as guerrilla bands through the two Cholla and Kyongsang provinces, preying on small towns, the transportation system, truck convoys, and KNP and KC outposts.

The third front also started as a partisan war along the 38th Parallel. With the news of the uprising in the south, Pak Hon-yong and his cadre of southern Communists dispatched guerrilla columns to reinforce their embattled brethren with Kim Tal-sam providing the critical military leadership. As the Constabulary rallied to fight the infiltrating guerrilla columns, its counter-guerrilla patrols and raids crossed the border and soon engaged the North Korean border constabulary in pitched battles. By the spring of 1949 the South Korean security forces found themselves fighting a complex partisan war of uncertain duration and conclusion.

For the next six years the Communist guerrillas in the southern mountains posed a threat to public order and the free movement of civilian and military transportation in South Korea. For the first time the KNP and KC cooperated in the name of organisational survival—especially when the American advisors to Minister of Defense Sin Sung-mo persuaded President Rhee to invoke the constitutional provision for martial law in the guerrilla-infested areas of the Chollas and the Kyongsongs. This declaration placed the senior Constabulary officer in charge of all the regular and paramilitary security forces. With the police and their auxiliaries taking responsibility for positional defence and population control, the Constabulary task
forces (usually a brigade of two or more regiments) pursued the guerrillas throughout the mountains. Command of the Chiri-san Task Force rotated between experienced counter-guerrilla veterans of the Manchurian army—Kim Paik-il, Chung Il-kwon, Yu Jae-hung, and Paik Sun-yup. Won Yong-dok, using his influence with Rhee, went from doctor to line brigade commander and also directed a Chiri-san task force. Constant military pressure throughout 1949 wore down the Chiri-san guerrillas to less than 200 active fighters, and the Constabulary scored a major victory by killing Lieutenant Kim Chi-hae, the skilled and determined leader of the Yosu mutineers.

The counterinsurgency campaigns on Cheju-do and in the four southern provinces cannot be definitively evaluated in terms of casualties since the security forces exaggerated their successes, and the guerrillas left no reports. The rebel losses (which certainly included executed civilian sympathisers and true innocents) fell somewhere between 10,000 and 30,000 with the bulk of the casualties inflicted on Cheju-do. Independent American reports from KC advisors and CIC agents put the estimated enemy casualties at around 200 a week and friendly losses at twenty-five a week. What could be traced more accurately was the number of incidents a week, which went as high as thirty in the fall of 1948 but dropped to 10 by March, 1949, and shrank in geography to Chollanam-do.\footnote{15}

The Constabulary also enjoyed reasonable success against the cross-border guerrilla raiders, who did not enjoy public support in Kyonggi and Kangwon provinces and who did not enjoy the same degree of surprise as the southern guerrilla bands since their intelligence and support apparatus could not develop under KNP-KC pressure. Unknown numbers of infiltrators however, survived and faded into the population even if they could not establish a basecamp system or operate in groups larger than ten to forty. The guerrilla cross-border expeditions (which numbered six by Constabulary estimates) still required a major commitment of Constabulary forces along the major corridors into southern Korea: the Ongjin peninsula, the Kaesong-Munsan valley, the Tongduchon-Ujongbu corridor, the Chunchon-Pukhan-gang basin, and the main range of the Taebaek mountains east of the Hwachon Reservoir. When the Constabulary retaliated or pursued the guerrillas to the north, the South Korean soldiers engaged more heavily armed regulars of the North Korean Border Constabulary (Bo An Dae), employing Russian and Japanese heavy machineguns and mortars. By the end of 1949 the two Korean armies were fighting pitched battles against each other from prepared defensive positions, backed in the case of the North Koreans by heavy and effective artillery fire. Without comparable supporting arms, the South Koreans had to close with their enemy and depended upon 'special assault units' to destroy bunkers with satchel charges and, in one famous case, mortar shells strapped to the bodies of ten 11th Regiment sergeants, who are still revered in the ROK as 'the human bombs'. In the spring of 1949 when the North Korean border guards gave way to regulars of the \textit{In Min Gun}, the intensity of the fighting increased to the point where South Korean army headquarters and the senior American advisors believed an invasion likely. The last American unit in Korea, the 5th Regimental Combat Team, did not leave the peninsula until June 1949, when the danger appeared past.\footnote{16}

The counterinsurgency campaign in southern Korea took place in a political environment that mortgaged the advantages of combat experience to confusion and demoralisation within the ranks of the South Korean armed forces. On the surface the Constabulary benefitted from the creation of the Republic of Korea since by National Assembly law it became the Army of the Republic of Korea (\textit{Hanguk Gun}), now responsible primarily for defence against external attack and the sole claimant for American military assistance and advisors. The army also survived one last attempt to discredit it when the Korean National Police charged that most of its senior officers should be prosecuted for collaborationism with the Japanese under the terms of the new National Traitors Law. The American advisors, led by Brigadier General William L Roberts and Captain Hausman, convinced Rhee that the equally new \textit{National Security Act} (December 1948) gave the army wide powers to police its own ranks as well as to control all pacification operations in areas designated by Rhee. Rhee agreed to let the army purge its own ranks and to do so with its own internal intelligence network. The army immediately started to process the imprisoned Yosu-Sunchon rebels; it tried and convicted 2817 prisoners with 410 receiving death sentences and 563 life imprisonment. Army agents directed by the G-2, Paik Sun-yup, then went to work screening every regiment for likely dissidents.\footnote{17}
Within a period of eighteen months, the South Korean army expanded its total strength toward 100,000 officers and men while it purged its ranks of suspected conspirators and mutineers. The expanded purge set off another set of mutinies. The first occurred in the 6th Regiment (Taegu) in November, 1948, followed by another in Pohang (February, 1949). The resulting wave of arrests and executions produced more evidence on the extent of Communist infiltration of the army, unmasking the cell in Seoul headed by Major Park Chung-hee, subsequently sentenced to death but spared when he agreed to recant and cooperate. The worst remaining unit was the 8th Regiment (Chunchon), commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Chae Nam-gun. Already suspected of SKLP collaboration for his inept performance in the Chiri-san campaign, Chae was relieved of his command and arrested. Sufficiently scared, Chae's two henchmen, Majors Kang Tae-mun and Pyo Mu-jong, staged a mass defection of their two battalions to North Korea. (Some of their soldiers were clearly committed Communists, but the majority were not, and thus became in effect prisoners, but two companies actually fought their way back across the border to freedom.) The May, 1949 Chunchon Affair represented the most dramatic case of disaffection, but, in fact, as many as 4000 soldiers may have deserted to North Korea in 1949-1950. In addition, two ROK navy gunboats sailed north in the hands of mutineers.

The merciless triage of the ROK army waned in 1950 with 4000 officers and men detained or arrested, a process that ended the immediate careers of most of the suspects. Half of them went to an army detention camp on Yui-do (island) in the Han River in metropolitan Seoul for extended questioning and processing. Four hundred officers and men were then tried by court-martial and convicted of murder, mutiny, conspiracy and similar crimes and received prison terms, and another five hundred received death sentences, of which around 200 actually went to the stake at an army firing range at Susaek-dong, west of Seoul and today the site of the Korean National Defense University. Jim Hausman watched his friend Chae Nam-gun fall before a firing squad, and Lieutenant Mun Sang-gil and his two assassins died at the post as well. If the North Koreans might have estimated that the South Korean army was committing suicide, their enthusiasm is understandable. They also may have deluded themselves that the Koreans would fall apart like the Chinese Nationalist army in mass unit defections. They should have noticed that the First Class, the most professionalised and senior leaders of the ROKA, produced only five purged officers and seven eventual defectors.

Habitually suspicious of his senior officers and encouraged in his anti-military biases by his Austrian wife, Francesca, Syngman Rhee contributed to the turbulence by appointing new officers from outside the Constabulary at senior ranks, playing favourites within the First Class, and frequently shifting commanders to limit the development of cliques and disloyal units. He balanced appointments by source of military experience and political connections; two of his first four generals came from the Chinese Nationalist Army (Kim Hong-il and Song Ho-sung) and two from the Japanese Army (Chae Pyong-dok and Yi Ung-jun). Since Rhee played the same games with the Korean National Police, the army benefited from similar changes in the KNP leadership, but its own leadership suffered. The best the Americans could do was to protect officers from the Japanese and Manchurian armies and place them in important subordinate positions; this included Chung Il-kwon, Yu Jae-hung, Paik Sun-yup, Kim Paik-il, Kang Mun-bong, and Yi Hyong-gun. Rhee, however, preferred eccentrics like Kim Yong-duk, a former Japanese army 'pacification' expert who sported a Wilhelmine moustache and specialised in atrocities and graft.

During the partisan and border campaigns, the American military assistance effort also changed, some aspects for the better, others not. The Provisional Military Advisory Group-Korea of 1948 (241 personnel) became the Korean Military Advisory Group with an established Table of Organisation (191 officers, 304 enlisted men) and replaced the Military Government and the American tactical units as trainers for the ROKA. The group commander was Brigadier General William L Roberts, USA, an armour officer with a respectable Second World War record in Europe and a personal friend of Army Chief of Staff J Lawton Collins. The officers assigned to KMAG might have preferred troop assignments in Japan, but they were career regulars, some of them West Point graduates, veterans of the Second World War, MOS-qualified, and available in adequate numbers because of their overseas tour dates. Some actually volunteered since Korea offered active and challenging service for adventurous and unmarried junior officers. The KMAG advisors went to two general types of
assignments. Each Korean division was supposed to have thirteen officers and sixteen enlisted men as advisor-trainers, with an American lieutenant colonel as adviser to the division commander. The number of advisors allowed a team only down to the regimental level. The other group of advisors were assigned to the army headquarters and staff sections and to the new-born ROKA training system. Much training, however, had to be provided by American mobile training teams because neither the Americans nor the Koreans had the manpower or equipment to set up a separate training establishment.

The training of the South Korean army faced daunting problems. Probably the most worrisome was the counter-insurgency and counter-border raid campaigns, which keep almost all the tactical units in the field or in widely-separated posts. Language difficulties compounded the problems; virtually no American officers spoke Korean or Japanese, and only the senior officers of the Korean army spoke either Japanese or English, so even using nisei soldiers as interpreters had limitations. Since spoken and written Korean was a pre-modern language, technical terms were not easily translated and often appeared as phonetised English-Korean, a dialect so different that English words pronounced in Korean ("Konglish") sound like another foreign language. To compound the strains in Korean-American relations, the Korean officers and NCOs used Japanese methods of discipline, which meant swift and painful corporal punishment in many forms, banned in the US Army more than a hundred years before. Another persistent problem was the use of military labour and construction materials for money-making enterprises ('the welfare fund') to support the Korean officer corps, whose pay was abysmal.

One limitation could be traced directly to American politics: the failure to provide money for military assistance, meaning the purchase of American arms and equipment. Despite the persistence of the State Department and the reluctant cooperation of the US Army, South Korea received no important material support between the termination of the occupation in the summer of 1948 and the spring of 1950. Demoralised by its failed logistical support of the Chinese Nationalist army, the Department of the Army did not want to give away more scarce equipment to the South Koreans. Since American war plans for a conflict with the Soviet Union excluded Korea, Generals Bradley and Collins opposed Secretary Acheson's pleas for more aid to Korea. Congress opposed military assistance for other reasons—mostly partisan and fiscal—until the Truman administration in February 1950 conceded that it would provide military aid to the Chinese Nationalists on Taiwan. In March, 1950 Congress voted Korea $10.9 million under the provisions of the Military Defense Assistance Act (1948). Before June, 1950 the United States had provided South Korea $279,470 in equipment from the $71 million targeted for Asian nations. The economic development programme of the Economic Assistance Agency amounted to $150 million in FY 1949 and FY 1950. Neither assistance program had much effect in Korea.

The low level and character of military assistance to South Korea remained the primary responsibility of the Army leadership in Washington with Brigadier General Roberts a willing accomplice. The ROK equipment requests for FY 1951 were written in the Pentagon and transmitted to KMAG for negotiation; the South Korean military leadership and KMAG insisted that the army needed more artillery, a tactical air force of its own, and tanks and anti-armour mines. Army apologists (principally Bradley and Collins) later argued that the Defense and State Departments feared that Rhee and his generals wanted heavy weapons to 'march north', a bellicose goal oft-repeated in their public statements to the South Koreans. Neither Army nor State took such statements seriously, but they were useful in passing responsibility for lightly arming the South Koreans to the Rhee administration. In fact, the authorisations for ammunition, communications equipment, vehicles, and artillery were token assistance, even if useful in fighting border raids and guerrillas. Even though he was risk-adverse in Korean affairs, General MacArthur proved more helpful, providing training experiences for the Koreans in Japan and transferring 'excess' materiel to the South Korean army. The result was an evaluation of Korean military readiness from General Roberts (for the public record) that stressed ROK pluck and fighting spirit. Roberts called the ROKA 'the best little Army in Asia.'
The assessments inside the Army were far more realistic. The ROK Army had only thirty of its sixty-seven infantry battalions manned, equipped, and trained for minimal counter-guerrilla and security duties. No ROKA unit had a real anti-armour capability beyond three weak battalions of 140 57mm anti-tank guns. The ROKA had only six untested battalions of field artillery, armed with the M3 or the lightweight version of the US Army's M101A1 105mm howitzer. Anti-tank shells were in short supply, an average of three per gun. The South Korean howitzers had half the range of their North Korean counterparts. Fire support coordination of any kind was an unknown skill in the ROK army, and the only aircraft in the ROK Air Force were twelve light spotter L-8 and L-4 aircraft and ten T-6 trainers. One squadron of the Cavalry Regiment, the Capital Division, manned M8 'Greyhound' scout cars, armed with a 37mm gun. Only twenty battalions had held full-scale field exercises; only four battalions were judged even 70 per cent combat effective in training and equipment readiness. South Korean regiments and divisions could be called administrative offices, but not operational organisations capable of fighting a real war. Although Roberts and MacArthur both advocated arming the South Korean army for combat with the North Korean army, their analysis received short-shrift in the Pentagon.22

The South Korean Army and the War Everyone Knows, 1950-53

At 0400 on the morning of Sunday, 25 June 1950 (local Korean time), Premier Kim Il-sung set Operation PREEMPTIVE STRIKE in motion and ordered seven divisions, reinforced with task forces from the 105th Armored Brigade, to cross the 38th Parallel at six points and to create a unified Communist Korea. The three-phase plan assumed that the ROKA would be destroyed on the battlefield, routed in an exploitation campaign down the peninsula, and further fractured by defections and partisan warfare against its reserve units and support structure. Although they confidently reassured Stalin and Mao Zedong that the United States would not intervene, the North Korean political and military leaders believed that American air support would be neutralised by the summer monsoon and the lack of Korean airbases. They also planned to seize Pusan as quickly as possible and close the port to American ground forces or logistical assistance to the South Koreans. The North Koreans planned their victory celebration for 15 August 1950, the fifth anniversary of the liberation from Japan.23

Among the many unpleasant surprises of the Korean War for the Communists was the repeated resurrection of the South Korean army. Of the eight ROKA divisions deployed in June, 1950, only five were still in action three months after the war began. In the same period the strength of the army fell from 95,000 to perhaps 35,000 effectives. The losses among junior officers and experienced soldiers were especially high. To remain in the war the South Korean army conscripted refugees and threw them into battle without training; South Korean students left their university studies throughout Korea and Japan and formed volunteer battalions, all of which suffered catastrophic losses. Of the estimated 40,000 student-soldiers of 1950, some 14,000 died in battle. The combat battalions of the Korean National Police joined in the battle, and paramilitary groups formed in the mountains just like their Communist counterparts with whom (like in Second World War Yugoslavia) they clashed with untempered ferocity. Atrocities against prisoners civil and military by both sides stained the ground from Seoul to Taegu. Yet against all expectations, including those of Douglas MacArthur and his staff, the South Korean armed forces survived defeat after defeat and lived to fight again. When the war ended in 1953, the Hanguk Gun numbered almost 600,000 officers and men and manned all but three divisional sectors along the line of contact with the North Korean-Chinese expeditionary force. Had not that army seemed capable of continuing the war if necessary, the United States would not have signed the Armistice.24

Like the Continental Army of 1775-83, the ROKA suffered more than its share of battlefield defeats and command rivalries, but its troubles could be traced to defects in training, morale, and equipping that could be remedied—in time. The army's most obvious defect was its lack of firepower: one artillery battalion per division, no tanks, few antitank guns, and no anti-tank mines. Its infantry needed ample 75mm recoilless rifles and 3.5-inch rocket launchers to deal with armoured vehicles and bunkers. Its internal phone and radio communications capability was limited. It had virtually no logistical capability. Its rations were often inadequate. Its medical services were primitive. And its system of discipline remained tied to swift corporal
punishment and, in some cases of desertion and cowardice, field executions. South Korean formations larger than regiments had difficulty coordinating supporting fires and tactical manoeuvre. Korean staff work remained primitive throughout the war, and rivalries between individual generals and cliques of senior officers did not help, especially when Syngman Rhee encouraged such friction through rapid changes in assignments. And the army's rapid expansion and soaring casualties made unit cohesion and morale difficult to maintain.

The litany of disasters that plagued the South Korean army would depress even the most incurable optimist among the American generals of the US 8th Army. The defence of Seoul and the withdrawal to Taegu ruined the 2nd, 5th, and 7th Divisions, and the 1st Division (Paik Sun-yup) remained in the field only by absorbing the remnants of the other divisions. In the First Chinese Offensive (October-November 1950) the 1st Division again took heavy losses, and the 6th, 7th, and 8th Divisions disintegrated. The same three divisions (ROK II Corps) received more rough handling in late November, and the elite 1st Division collapsed in the face of the Chinese Third Offensive (January 1951). At this point in the war ROKA commanders down to company level had the power to shoot deserters, defectors, and cowards on sight. In the Chinese Fourth Offensive (February 1951) the ROK 3rd, 5th, and 8th Divisions reeled back in retreat, a performance repeated in April and May 1951 by the ROK 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions in the Chinese Fifth Offensive. Even at the end of the war, the South Korean army took the brunt of Chinese attacks. In the Kumsong Offensive of July, 1953 the Chinese roughly handled four ROK divisions and rolled back the front lines in eastern Korea by forty miles. Rhee's generals remained uncertain to the very end of the war whether they would receive medals and promotions or be purged and disgraced. About the best they could hope for was protection provided by their KMAG advisors and exile to the US Army school system abroad.

The trials of the South Korean army are similar to those of any new army in war. Untried armies throughout the twentieth century have always found it difficult to fight withdrawals and to coordinate air and artillery support, if they have any. There are ample operational examples from the French, Russian, Commonwealth, and American forces in the Second World War. Common South Korean practice was to fight in place until overwhelmed or out of ammunition, then flee in small parties wherever the terrain allowed, but not on the roads, which were almost always blocked by Chinese ambushers. The Koreans would not fight for the last truck or artillery piece or road junction, which angered the Americans, who thought they should. The Koreans fought well in the mountains, but not in corridors, which tended to jam with vehicles and support units who raced out of danger in a crisis. Only the ROK 1st Division received American augmentation: two artillery battalions and a tank battalion. The Chinese initially thought it was an American division. The Chinese also learned that ROK divisions could not bring much indirect fire to bear on a swift night attack and thus targeted ROK divisions for their initial penetrations. The Chinese actually thought Korean infantry fought with more stubbornness than American GIs (Marines excluded) and proved harder to catch when they took to the mountains.  

From General MacArthur's earliest view of the ROK Army in defeat just south of the Han River, American officers almost always misestimated their allies. It remains debatable whether MacArthur's characterisation of the ROK Army as 'entirely incapable of counteraction' was accurate or whether the general wanted to mislead the JCS or whether he just could not grasp an operational situation. In any event, the ROK army rallied in front of Taegu; its first dramatic contribution to eventual victory came at the Battle of Tabu-dong where Paik's 1st Division stood with the US 27th Infantry and drove back an armored attack down the Naktong corridor or the 'Bowling Alley'. Not so well known are the battles fought along the eastern coast, especially the struggles for Yongdok and Pohang that exhausted the North Korean 2nd and 5th Divisions. Until the Chinese intervention, the 1st, 3rd, 6th, and Capital Divisions showed admirable elan and foot speed in chasing the NKPA north. In the spring of 1951 the 1st Division stopped a Chinese army west of Seoul at Susaek-dong, and the resurrected 6th Division fought another Chinese army to a draw at the Battle of Yongmun-san. The most famous ROKA divisional action occurred in the Battle of White Horse Mountain (Paekmasan) in which the 9th Division launched nine attacks and defended against twenty-eight Chinese attacks in a week-long battle in which the ROKA lost 3500 soldiers and the Chinese more than 10,000. (The 9th Division has been the White Horse Division ever since.) By war's end
the South Korean army had authentic heroes in all the ranks and boasted a group of experienced division commanders accepted by their American counterparts as capable battlefield commanders: Paik Sun-yup, Paik In-yup, Min Ki-sik, Song Yo-chan, Yu Jae-hung, Kim Chong-o, Kang Mun-bong, and Choi Yong-hui. Despite its erratic performance and persistent leadership problems, the ROK army never quite folded, despite predictions in Pyongyang and Washington that it was terminally ill.

Part of the credit for the South Korean army's survival goes to the American officers and enlisted men of the Korean Military Advisory Group. The two officers most responsible for KMAG's effectiveness were Lieutenant General James A Van Fleet, USA, 8th Army commander from April 1951 until his retirement in January, 1953, and his protege, Brigadier General Cornelius E Ryan, USA, an overage infantry officer with a proven talent for training raw troops in the United States and Greece. At its peak wartime strength in 1953 KMAG numbered almost 1900 officers and men, about half the estimated manning requirements for a Korean army of seventeen divisions or 500,000 personnel. (The United States provided 3500 officers and men to advise and train a South Vietnamese army slightly smaller than the ROKA.)

Van Fleet and Ryan had no illusions about the herculean task of improving the South Korean army. One chief of KMAG (not Ryan) told an American corps commander 'that it is impossible to underestimate a ROK division'. American advisors despaired that ROK generals would ever fight their divisions as divisions, not as a collection of battalions. Van Fleet, however, knew that only rapid improvement of the ROKA offered any increase in the effectiveness of his coalition force after 1951. He gave Ryan a much better cadre of advisors, American officers who had commanded regiments and battalions in Korea and then finished their tour in KMAG. He instituted a retraining program for ROK divisions placed in corps reserve. He placed a high priority on developing a full South Korean army training establishment and sent larger groups of officers to US Army schools in the United States, especially the Artillery School at Fort Sill. Van Fleet closed the 'artillery gap' of the ROK army by forming corps artillery groups of US and ROK battalions and keeping them in supporting roles even if their parent divisions went into reserve. South Korean divisions that properly used and protected the artillery groups received the 'Van Fleet day-of-fire' or five times the amount of shells normally allotted to American firing battalions. Van Fleet knew that almost any money invested in the ROK army was well spent; in 1952 the monthly cost of keeping one US soldier in the field was $3129.31, a Korean soldier $193.87.

The Americans also faced the determined efforts of President Syngman Rhee to make the army the instrument of his political ambition. In 1950-51 Rhee had used his expanded executive powers to change and reorganise the police and paramilitary agencies, removing their leaders, placing them under the temporary operational control of the army, and restricting their independent funding and recruiting. Rhee then turned on his own generals in 1952 when some of them failed to endorse his campaign to revise the constitution in a way that would ensure his re-election by popular vote, not a risky vote of the hostile National Assembly. One chief of staff, General Yi Chong-chan, fled to Van Fleet's compound after he refused to impose a martial law regime on Pusan and its environs, and another former chief of staff, Chung Il-kwon, had to be bundled off to America for currency exchange irregularities. Van Fleet also protested the development of special internal security commands outside of his operational control, like General Won Yong-dok's Provost Martial Command and General Kim Chang-yong's Counterintelligence Command. Although he admired Rhee in many ways, Van Fleet clashed with him repeatedly over issues crucial to the welfare and morale of the army. Van Fleet also approved of American planning (Operation EVERREADY) to replace Rhee if he became an obstacle to a negotiated settlement of the war in 1952-53.

In December, 1952 President-elect Dwight D Eisenhower made a hurried and largely cosmetic trip to Korea in order to honour a dramatic campaign pledge he had made the previous October: 'I shall go to Korea!' Although Eisenhower and his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, later argued that their deft diplomacy and muted nuclear threats brought the war to a close in July, 1953, Eisenhower's real concern was whether the South Korean army could hold in 1953 and eventually defend the Republic of Korea with a minimum of American
military assistance. He admitted to Secretary of Defense Robert A Lovett before his trip that he really had no new ideas about how to end the war. 'I am quite sure that you and my old friends (at the Pentagon) know that I am not pretending that I will find answers that they have overlooked.' Eisenhower went, looked, and reflected that the United States had no option but to throw its financial resources behind the continued expansion and improvement of the South Korean army. On 27 July 1953 the United States—despite Syngman Rhee's continued opposition—signed the Armistice because it now believed that the much-maligned Hanguk Gun deserved a level of confidence that it had bought with its own blood.

Endnotes

The author thanks Lieutenant Colonel Kim Jiyul, US Army, and Major General Lim Sun-ha, ROKA (Ret), for their assistance with this essay and absolves them of all responsibility for errors in either English or Korean.


5. Colonel Kenneth C Strother, USA (Ret), 'The Occupation of Korea, September-December 1945', 1984, a memoir by the Acting C/S XXIV Corps, Kenneth C Strother Papers, US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania (hereinafter USAMHI); John C Caldwell, *The Korea Story* (Chicago: Regency, 1932), a memoir by a missionary's son serving in the military government; USAMGIK, 'Organization of National Police of Korea', December, 1945, USAFIK Historical Files, RG 332, National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter NARA).


8. The Korean account is Ministry of National Defense, Haebang kaw Kon-gun (Seoul: MOD, 1967) translated in part for me by Colonel Hun Nam-sung and Major Park Il-song. See also Lee Young-woo, 'The United States and the Formation of the Republic of Korea Army, 1945-1950', PhD dissertation, Duke University, 1984. I have relied also on Huh Nam-sung, 'The Quest for a Bulwark of Anti-Communism: The Formation of the Republic of Korea Officer Corps and Its Political Socialization, 1945-1950', PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1987, supplemented by my own interviews (1996-2000) with Generals Paik Sunyup, Kang Yong-hoon, Lim Sun-ha, and Kim Ung-soo, all members of the first group of Constabulary officers. I also conducted interviews with the late Lieutenant Colonel James H Hausman in 1995 and used transcripts of other interviews with Hausman by John Toland, now housed in the Franklin D Roosevelt Library. Colonel Hausman and his family also gave me complete access to his papers, 1945-50, which are now located in the Korea Institute, Harvard University. My account is based primarily on the *Hansama Hwasaeng* account by Paik Sun-yup, the key memoirist in the Corps. All the material was translated in part for me by the author's Korean wife, Dr. Huh Nam-sung.


10. Huh, 'The Quest for a Bulwark of Anti-Communism'.

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16. G-2, XXIV Corps, Period Intelligence Reports (PIR), April-December 1949, copies, archives, KIMH.

17. Paik interview; PIRs 1093-95, March 1949; Hausman oral history.

18. Paik and Hausman interviews; PIRs 1110-15, May 1949; CG USAFIK to Dept Army (CSGID) 4 February 1949, USAFIK Messages sent 1949-50, RG 9, MacArthur Papers, MacArthur Memorial and Library.


20. See State Dean Acheson to Charles Ross, 20 January 1950, Presidential Secretary Files, Truman Papers; 'US Aid to Korea since Close of World War II', 26 June 1950, Korean War Files, Dean C Acheson Papers, Harry S Truman Library. See also Sawyer, KMAG in War and Peace, 96-104.

21. Oral history, Mr Niles Bond, December 28, 1973, Truman Library, and interview with author, 2 March 2000. Mr Bond was the State Department member. MDAP Team. The Roberts quote is in a Time magazine interview, 5 June 1950.


THE KOREAN WAR 1950-53:
A 50 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

ANZAXIS AT WAR:
AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND DURING THE KOREAN WAR
Ian McGibbon

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 cooperation 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. 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.

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).

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. 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 fulfill 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.

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. 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. 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. 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.

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.

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 cooperation. The new 'Anzaxis' 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'. 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'. Four years later he thought the 'the old Anzacis [sic] has never been weaker'.

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'. 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'.

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. 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'.

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. 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. 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'.

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. 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'. 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. 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 Hasse tt, 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. 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. 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 comradeship and that’s our way of showing it. 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’. 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’. 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’. 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 night to get here?”’ 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’. 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. 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

3. UK High Commissioner; Wellington, to Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, No 152, 31 August 1949, D035/3761, Public Record Office, London.
11. The term ‘Anzaxis’ was coined by the Official Secretary in the British High Commission in Wellington, RR Sedgwick. See McIntosh to Berendens, 3 February 1944, in McGibbon, *Undiplomatic Dialogue*, 61.
15. Ibid.
16. Berendens to McIntosh, 14 February 1950, in ibid, 212.
24. ‘Note by Mr Holland on his telephone conversation with Mr Fadden …’, 1 August 1950, PM324/2/7, NA.
27. Berendens 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.
31. DC(50)M.4, Minutes of Defence Committee meeting on 14 August 1950, JSO80/1/1, Joint Services Organisation, NZDFHQ.
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.
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.
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.
47. Lt PF Nicholson, letter, 6 November 1951 (copy in author’s possession).
54. Ibid, 356.
Throughout the twentieth century few issues have generated as much inter-service animosity as close air support (CAS). In the First World War it was one of the first types of missions flown by aircraft, but during the inter-war period both armies and air forces largely neglected it. During the Second World War, following the lead of their Axis enemies, the Allies made tactical air support an integral part of the combined arms team. However, it was in the independent role of precision strategic bombing that air forces, particularly the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), felt that they had made the greatest contribution to winning the war. In the immediate post-war period the USAAF pursued and won its independence from the Army. The advent of nuclear weapons and the Cold War with the USSR seemed to vindicate the primacy of the strategic role of air power over its tactical support of both land and naval forces. However, the Korean War again demonstrated the importance of being able to employ air power in a variety of tactical roles, including CAS. The US Army's post-war assessment of the US Air Force's support for the UN ground forces in Korea was critical of the poor level of joint cooperation achieved between the air and ground units. The air force believed that the Army's use of CAS wasted resources better employed on more lucrative targets and two years after the war it abolished all joint doctrine boards. Observing this quarrel at close hand, the civilian strategist Bernard Brodie concluded, 'If airmen were like laboratory animals running a maze, they would seek to repeat successes and recoil from frustrations. They would now be all in favour of tactical as against strategic uses of air power'. Of course, Brodie understood that the reason this did not happen was human nature.

In contrast, during this same period, all three Australian Services maintained a remarkably positive attitude to the use of tactical air power in support of land and naval forces. Indeed, the decade from 1943 to 1953 was a high point in joint co-operation between the Australian Services. Unlike the US, where the post-war environment fostered inter-service rivalries, in Australia the close co-operation developed in New Guinea and the island campaigns of the South-West Pacific was preserved into the 1950s. This essay will examine why the Australian Services were able to maintain high levels of inter-service co-operation, particularly in the area of CAS in the period immediately following the Second World War. It will also discuss the successful employment of Australian air units in tactical operations during the Korean War. It will conclude with an examination of the increasing frustrations, which saw inter-service co-operation in Australia decline significantly over the next four decades.

The Importance or Joint Forces to the National Strategy—1946

In February 1946, the Australian Chiefs of Staff drew up their appreciation of the nation's strategic circumstances. By their assessment, the strategic choices open to Australia were isolation or co-operation. The chiefs rejected what they termed the fallacy of isolation because, as 'an isolated continent with a small population and limited resources, [Australia] is unable to defend herself unaided against a major power'. They concluded that an isolationist policy of continental defence would only lead to disaster and hence national security policy 'must be built upon co-operation with other nations'. It followed that the nation's preparations for war 'must be such that her forces can co-operate with those of other nations [and that] overseas commitments may be necessary and in fact unavoidable in ... a future war'. To meet the requirement for credible forces to contribute to coalition operations, the appreciation called for a force structure in which the three Services were organised and trained to provide a mobile joint task force based on permanent personnel, rather than specially raised forces or militia. Key aspects of the force structure that the service chiefs wanted were a fleet train capable of maintaining the task force operating in the South-cast Asian littoral, Army units trained for amphibious operations to take and hold forward operating bases and an air component that included not only fighters and bombers, but also sufficient strategic transport assets to support the other services.
The strategy of co-operation with allies and the focus on developing joint forces suitable for coalition operations were direct results of Australia’s experience in the Second World War, particularly the American-led campaign in the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA). One of the important developments of that campaign had been the founding of a RAAF School of Army Co-operation at Canberra. Between 1942 and 1945 the school had trained over five hundred Australian Army and Air Force personnel in the techniques of ground air co-operation, forward air control of artillery and reconnaissance. After April 1943, following the development of a US/Australian air support doctrine for the SWPA, Australian Army and Air Force personnel trained at the school made a significant contribution to the success of ground/air co-operation operations. This included support to the many amphibious operations carried out along the northern coast of New Guinea and in the islands of the Dutch East Indies. Of particular note was the planning and conduct of air support for the OBOE Campaign in Borneo during mid-1945, when large numbers of bomber and carrier borne fighter aircraft were used to support divisional-sized landings by Australian troops at Tarakan, Labuan and Balikpapan.

The School of Land/Air Warfare

On 31 August 1946 the RAAF School of Army Co-operation was disbanded. However, the acting Minister of Defence had approved the establishment of a similar organisation to be renamed the School of Land/Air Warfare (SLAW) at RAAF Base Laverton in Victoria from 22 January 1947. The following year, acting on a recommendation of the Defence Committee, the Minister of Defence proposed that the school be re-located to RAAF Base Williamtown in New South Wales and established on a permanent basis. Indeed, the Minister wanted the operations of the school expanded ‘because of the benefits derived from courses [taught] at the school’. The Minister considered that the school was a valuable instrument for training officers from the three Services in combined operations and the principles of inter-service co-operation as they related to air support. In expressing this opinion he had been influenced by a Joint Planning Committee report, in which Colonel JG Wilton had stated: ‘in the recent war close co-operation and understanding was developed between the Services and agreed systems of procedure adopted in relation to air support. It is most important that this co-operation be retained in peace. Unless a school such as that under consideration is established on a permanent basis, much of this experience and co-operation will be lost’.

Wilton also believed that the creation of the SLAW on a permanent basis was the best way to keep current with new technical developments from abroad and provide the Australian forces with a medium for demonstrating and training personnel in the techniques of joint warfare.

RAAF Williamtown was already closely associated with joint training. During the Second World War aircraft from the base had provided support for training US and Australian personnel in amphibious operations at the RAN’s HMAS Assault at nearby Nelson Bay. The primary considerations for the siting of the SLAW at Williamtown were the availability of adequate accommodation in the form of hangars and lecture huts and the ability of No 78 Wing to provide aircraft. However, the location was also regarded as ‘most suitable in the event of amphibious warfare training being undertaken’. Two courses were taught at the school’s Land/Air Warfare Wing: a Senior Course of two weeks duration for lieutenant colonel and above and a six week Junior Course for captains and majors. The Senior Course taught general principles of employment, while the more detailed Junior Course taught air/ground co-operation procedures, reconnaissance, air photograph interpretation and artillery fire support direction. Of the twenty positions available on this course three were filled by RAN students, seven by the RAAF and the remaining ten students were from the Army. During the same period the Army Command and Staff College at Fort Queenscliff also taught students the use of air support in amphibious and other types of operations. In addition, from late 1948 qualified Army Ground Liaison Officers (GLO) were stationed at HMAS Albatross, near Nowra in New South Wales, to foster close co-operation between the new RAN Fleet Air Arm and the ground forces.

In the five years between the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Korean War, the Australian Services were largely successful in maintaining and developing their hard won expertise in joint operations. Achieving this goal was largely due to the strong support which joint operations received from both politicians and the service chiefs. This support was
based on a clear assessment of Australia's strategic circumstances and the understanding that, to be a useful coalition partner, Australia would need effective joint forces capable of operating with those of other nations. In the period immediately before the Korean War, the importance of coalition operations to the national defence strategy saw Australian air, ground and naval units committed to Malaya and Japan. The SLAW was the main agency through which expertise in joint warfare was maintained. The school was not just aimed at maintaining expertise, there was also a strong commitment to developing both the technology and tactics of interservice co-operation. In December 1950, only a few months after the beginning of the war in Korea, the SLAW launched the Land-Air Warfare Liaison Letter. Issued under the authority of the naval, military and air boards, the first edition of the letter contained a foreword by all three Australian Chiefs of Staff, which emphasised the importance of maintaining the skills of inter-service co-operation in peace and war. The Liaison Letter was an important medium for disseminating reports from operations in Korea and Malaya and discussing new doctrinal and technical developments. This was especially important, as operations in Korea marked the first large-scale use of jet aircraft in combat and there were new lessons to analyse and incorporate into the air/ground co-operation doctrine. As the editor of the Liaison Letter reminded his readers, the problem of peacetime was 'that our doctrine tends to exist in a vacuum, or more correctly, in a refrigerator'. He believed the only 'antidote' to the slow atrophy of land/air warfare doctrine in peacetime was the objective study of lessons from the Second World War, regular training exercises and contemporary operations. In the light of the controversy that developed over tactical air operations in Korea, such advice was both wise and timely.

Frustration—The UN Forces and Tactical Air Power in Korea

In the first months of the Korean War, the UN forces were compelled to come to terms with the fact that air superiority did not make victory on the ground inevitable. This was an idea that would prove to be very resistant to antidote in Korea and in many of the conflicts in which the US was subsequently involved. The problems surrounding CAS in Korea were largely the result of inter-service rivalry between the US Army and Air Force in the late 1940s, which had led directly to the atrophy of US land/air doctrine. The USAF explained their priorities in terms of strategy and funding. The predominance of strategic air assets over tactical was based on deterrence theory and designed for the worst case scenario of a general war with the Soviet Union in Europe. However, as Air Force Chief of Staff General Vandenberg told the US Congress in May 1949, the USAF was funding 'the minimum tactical air force requirements which permit joint training with other forces for testing and improvement of new tactics, techniques and equipment, for some limited deployment during the early phases of a war and for a minimum basis for expansion in event of war'.

Within the USAF, the subordination of Tactical Air Command (TAC) to Strategic Air Command (SAC) was underlined by the fact that in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s no TAC general became Air Force Chief of Staff. Before Korea, relations between TAC and the Army were strained over the question of CAS. TAC commanders wanted to focus the bulk of their limited assets on an interdiction campaign, while Army commanders wanted greater power to determine the priorities of tactical air support. Army doctrine still relied upon artillery to supply its requirement for intimate fire support and did not expect the type of integrated close support enjoyed by the Marines. However, the unresolved question of greater Army control over tactical air assets, together with the numerical inferiority of the US ground forces in the early months of the war, exacerbated existing inter-service animosities. In Korea, the USAF felt that the Army's demands for CAS were in large part due to this initial numerical inferiority, which also made it difficult for the ground forces to fulfil their part in the joint air-ground mission. The Air Force believed that these inadequacies caused the Army to substitute aerial firepower for tanks, anti-tank weapons and artillery, whereas from the USAF's perspective most CAS missions had little effect on the Communist ground forces. The USAF's resistance to close support operations, combined with their strong doctrinal commitment to deep interdiction and strategic operations, rapidly pushed disputes with the Army into the open. The presence of US Navy and Marine Corps air units with their own tactical doctrine and command and control arrangements further inflamed the controversy. In particular, many Army commanders began to covet the dedicated tactical air support organic to the Marines, seeing it to be the correct way to control air power.
In July 1950, General Vandenberg, reacting to criticism of the air force over the CAS issue in both professional journals and the civilian press, complained that "the American public has no appreciation of the fact that air action has been an essential factor in operations in Korea." Lieutenant General Walton Walker, the ground force commander, agreed with Vandenberg. Walker believed that tactical air support had been a key factor in keeping the UN Forces on the Korean Peninsula and then allowing them to advance to the Yalu River. His assessment of the contribution of tactical air power included both CAS and interdiction missions. However, while CAS comprised a smaller proportion of the missions flown by the US Far Eastern Air Forces (FEAF) and the UN Allied contingents, the highly visible CAS missions had greater importance to the ground forces.

CAS was certainly crucial in the first weeks of the war when it helped to stabilise the situation in the Pusan Perimeter. Close support operations were also significant in protecting the UN withdrawal after the Chinese entered the war. Operation STRANGLE, a concerted air interdiction campaign against the Communist lines of communication, proved to be ineffective. This was largely because the Communists were able to open alternative routes to re-supply their forces, while increased anti-aircraft defences resulted in heavy losses among UN aircraft. In June 1952, when the ground war was relatively static, FEAF adopted the more successful air pressure strategy. This aimed at inflicting high losses on the Communist Forces to encourage an outcome to the protracted armistice negotiations at Panmunjom. The problem was working out how to damage enemy targets, without exposing UN aircraft to the danger posed by enemy anti-aircraft defences. It was solved by relatively simple measures, such as increasing the altitude used for attacking ground targets and diversifying the target program. This common sense strategy thus capitalised on the UN's air superiority, as well as the inherent flexibility of air power. In Korea the USAF was operating under conditions very different to those for which it had been designed and trained to fight. North Korea had few targets worthy of strategic attacks. However, this does not excuse the misuse of strategic air power by the Army and it is easy to have sympathy for the FEAF Commander, Lieutenant General George Stratemeyer, after he was ordered by MacArthur to carpet bomb an area of twenty-six square miles. Contemporary claims, that the circumstances of the war in Korea were extraordinary and that the peculiarities of this one theatre should not give rise to hasty judgements about the proper application of air power, had great validity. That they seem less valid now is only because, with greater experience of limited warfare, the second half of the twentieth century has continued to expose shortcomings in the employment of air power in limited conflicts.

Success—Australian Air Power in Korea

This atmosphere of inter-service rivalry was the backdrop against which the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and later the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) Fleet Air Arm (FAA) contingents operated in Korea. However, the passion generated by the ongoing inter-service antagonisms between the US Forces had little effect on the small and specialised RAAF and RAN FAA contingents. The operations of No 77 Squadron RAAF have been well covered in the official history, specialist books and the 1996 RAAF History Conference. It is difficult to add anything to the history of the squadron that has not already been covered in these sources. However, some synthesis of the sources provides useful amplification of the reputation for competence in joint operations, which this RAAF unit gained in Korea. In contrast to the RAAF's contribution to the Korean War, the operations of the RAN's Carrier Air Group (CAG) operating from HMAS Sydney are less well known. As with No 77 Squadron, the contribution made to the war effort by No 805 and No 808 Sea Fury Squadrons and No 817 Firefly Squadron was well respected by the US Forces, with whom they operated. Indeed, although relatively small in size, the contingents committed by all three Australian Services to the UN war effort in Korea made valuable contributions to the coalition, largely through the high quality of their personnel and training. Their performance was certainly a vindication of the Chiefs of Staff 1946 policy of building forces that could credibly contribute to coalition operations.
No. 77 Squadron—RAAF

The Official Historian, Robert O’Neill, highlights the importance of No 77 Squadron's ability to operate closely with units of FEAF and the US Fifth Air Force. From early July the squadron’s P-51 Mustang fighters, flown by pilots experienced in air-to-ground missions, made a contribution to the defence of the Pusan Perimeter 'far out of proportion to its modest size.'

No 77 Squadron's call-sign, 'drop-kick', became synonymous with accurate support to ground forces and FEAF records listed RAAF sorties separately from other 5th Air Force operations.

The squadron was fortunate in its familiarity with USAF operational methods and the excellent logistic support for its aircraft provided by the USAF supply system. So useful were the Mustangs that the Americans had to re-equip several squadrons with P-51s, when the F-80 Shooting Star jet fighters were unable to operate from airfields then available to the UN Forces, giving them a very limited loiter time over ground targets. The P-51 was a slower but highly versatile aircraft, with a good weapons load and drop tanks, which gave it endurance. While it was well suited to the ground attack role, the exposed position of the radiator in the belly of the fuselage was particularly vulnerable to small arms fire and flak. Once punctured, the radiator rapidly lost coolant and the engine seized. This was usually fatal to the pilot, especially at low altitude and, during the nine months it operated with Mustangs in Korea, No 77 Squadron lost ten pilots, mainly to ground fire.

In the initial stages of the war, No 77 Squadron operated from their base at Iwakuni in Japan. Pilots would leave Iwakuni early in the morning and attack a pre-assigned target, then land at Taegu airfield for refuelling, rearming and reassignment. These operations, which included air superiority, interdiction of the battlefield and CAS missions, tested the versatility of the squadron. In accordance with existing US doctrine, these operations were controlled by a Joint Operations Center (JOC) manned by personnel from the US air force, navy and army.

The JOC passed on Army requests for air support to a USAF Tactical Air Control Center (TACC), which was generally co-located with the JOC and had the task of allocating missions and special control measures for specific missions. The TACC would then pass control of the aircraft to a Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) composed of air force personnel. The most important of these was the Forward Air Controller (FAC), who could be either airborne or ground based. FACs were supported by communication staff who ran their VHF radio sets for communication with aircraft and an HF set to communicate with a USAF Air Liaison Officer posted to the headquarters of the Army formation that the TACP was supporting.

The system was very similar to the one developed during the Second World War and generally conformed with Field Manual 31-15 (1946) Air-Ground Operations and a number of interservice agreements made in the late 1940s.

This hastily formed air support system suffered from problems caused by the lack of joint training before the war. The inexperience of personnel and poor communications resulted in a number of incidents of fratricide. On 3 July 1950, No 77 Squadron was directed to attack an enemy convoy, which turned out to be South Korean troops. In September, sixty soldiers of the Argyll and Sutherland Highland Regiment became casualties of an attack by USAF P-51s. The Argylls had displayed white recognition panels, but so did the intended target, a North Korean unit on an adjacent hill. The TACP supporting the British was unable to contact the aircraft to alert the pilots and call off the attack. The worst such incident involving Australian ground forces occurred at Kapyong in April 1951, when two members of D Company, 3RAR, were killed in a napalm strike from a US Marine Corsair directed by a FAC. Observing these problems from the US, Lieutenant General 'Pete' Quesada, who had led Eisenhower's tactical air force in Europe during the Second World War noted, 'You can have all the doctrine you want, but unless you have the people ... to implement those doctrines, you might as well throw those doctrines away'.

In November 1950, the appearance of Soviet built MiG-15 fighters gave the Communists an aircraft that outclassed the RAAF and USAF Mustangs. As a result of this, No 77 Squadron was withdrawn from operations in early April 1951 to begin retraining on jet aircraft at their base in Iwakuni, Japan. The decision to rearm the squadron with jet aircraft had been made in the previous December. The Minister for Air had informed the Australian Cabinet that Mustangs 'would not compare with any jet aircraft which might be brought against them and
General Stratemeyer had recommended that they be re-equipped with jets'. The decision to purchase the British built Gloster Meteor Mk 8 was made on the basis that the preferred replacement aircraft, the US F-86 Sabre, would be unavailable until at least 1954 because of the need to equip US squadrons. As Alan Stephens explains in Going Solo, the introduction of the Meteor into RAAF service, during wartime, was attended by a number of problems. Foremost of these was the aircraft's performance, particularly in the air-to-air role for which it was designed. While the Meteor could put up creditable opposition against the newer swept wing fighters such as the Sabre and the MiG-15 at lower altitudes, it was outclassed at higher altitudes where air-to-air combat commonly occurred.

Even before the squadron resumed combat operations, the question of its role and performance had assumed political importance. As is so often the case in coalition operations, national pride meant there was a desire to ensure that No 77 Squadron continued to be in the forefront of UN air operations. On 29 June 1951, the senior Australian officer and commander of the British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (BCOF) in Japan, Lieutenant General Sir Horace Robertson, wrote to the RAAF's Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice Marshal George Jones, indicating that 'a limited employment of 77 Squadron in Korea will inevitably result in adverse criticism'. He also believed that such criticism, presumably from senior USAF officers, would be '...damaging to the very high reputation 77 earnt (sic) in the first few months and I am anxious that they not be subject to [such] criticism when they go into action with their new aircraft'. However, soon after it commenced operations with the Meteor in Korea on 29 July, doubts about the aircraft's performance in air-to-air combat mounted. By late 1951 the squadron found itself looking for a role in which the RAAF could again make a useful contribution to the UN war effort.

The decision to return the squadron to the ground attack role coincided with a major shift in the tempo and type of air operations in Korea. As part of the new air pressure strategy, the USAF was considering removing the RAAF Meteors from the forward air base at Kimpo and assigning them to a less demanding role. This was exactly the type of damage to the squadron's (and thus Australia's) prestige that General Robertson had feared. However, it was avoided when No 77 Squadron's new commander, Wing Commander Ronald Susans, proposed to the USAF that the Meteors could be useful in the type of air-to-ground missions in which the squadron had excelled when it was operating Mustangs. Susans had established that the aircraft could be modified to carry rockets and maintain a rate of 1000 sorties per month. The squadron's return to the ground attack role in January 1952 was, as the official history notes, one that they found 'both humiliating and tedious'. The pilots now 'believed that they had the worst of both worlds: all the discomforts of active service life at a forward base in the extremes of the Korean weather and none of the offsetting excitement and valuable professional experience of combat'. Once again, ground attack missions would prove to be expensive in both lives and aircraft. Already by the end of 1951 one in four of the squadron's pilots had been killed or captured.

When the war ended, No 77 Squadron had completed 15,000 sorties in their jets, losing 23 Meteors and 32 pilots (in addition to those killed flying Mustangs) mainly to ground fire. Through its operations in Korea the squadron had established and maintained a fine reputation for the RAAF. Its flexibility, responsiveness and high levels of serviceability made it a very useful addition to the allied air contingent during the war.

The RAN Carrier Air Group—HMAS Sydney

Although less well known than the operations of No 77 Squadron, the three squadrons of the RAN's FAA, which served in Korea, also demonstrated the value of having forces well versed in the techniques of joint operations. The FAA was a new capability for Australia and one directly related to the 1946 Chiefs of Staff appreciation. The first of two aircraft carriers, HMAS Sydney was commissioned in mid December 1948 and thirty-two months later the FAA was at war. In the period between its formation and setting sail for Korea on 31 August 1951, the carrier's air crew were involved in antisubmarine warfare exercises (ASW), combat air patrols (CAP) with the fleet and naval gunnery control exercises. These were practised on cruises in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and from the airfield at HMAS Albatross, the Naval Air Station near Nowra in NSW. Embarked with the CAG was an Army Carrier Borne Air
Liaison Section (CBALS) tasked with assisting in the training and briefing of air crews on such matters as targets, battle damage assessments, map reading, escape and evasion techniques and the procedures for directing naval gunfire.

On her arrival in Korean waters, the *Sydney* was due to take over from the British carrier HMS *Glory*. *Glory* had been working as part of the USN’s Task Force 77, which was primarily engaged in Operation STRANGLE, the ultimately unsuccessful campaign of interdiction against the Communist supply routes. The allied naval aircraft involved in these missions attacked roads, bridges, railway tunnels, enemy troop concentrations, supply dumps and convoys. The RAN CAG’s squadrons would perform all of these missions, which, like the RAAF’s ground attack missions, commonly took place at altitudes of between sixty and 3000 metres. The presence of the CBALS was vital to the successful conduct of such missions. When *Sydney* departed, 71 CBALS, which normally had a complement of one officer, a warrant officer and a corporal driver, was augmented by the officer from 72 CBALS, Major Max Simkin, because of the high tempo of naval air operations in Korea. Simkin flew ahead to Japan to conduct reconnaissance for the CAG, leaving Major Gordon Hardcastle as the Carrier Borne Air Liaison Officer (CBALO) charged with conducting the work-up training for the pilots during the passage to Korea.

Hardcastle was an Air Liaison Officer (ALO) with considerable experience. He had attended a course at the RAAF School of Army Co-operation in early 1945 and ended World War II attached to a USN bomber wing in the Philippines. In 1947 he attended a course at the School of Land/Air Warfare at Laverton and returned for subsequent courses as a part-time instructor. The following year he was sent to the RAF School of Army Co-operation at Old Sarum to be trained as a CBALO. He also spent time with the British Army of the Rhine and on HMS *Illustrious* before joining *Sydney*. In 1949 he had accompanied the carrier on its training cruises and also worked with the pilots, while ashore at HMAS *Albatross*. When *Sydney* received orders to proceed to Korea, Hardcastle obtained a copy of the USN’s manual for directing naval gunfire. On the passage to Korea he drilled the CAG’s air crews in these procedures, using exercises based on a cloth model set up in the Air Intelligence Room. The only break to this routine occurred on 6 September, as the carrier passed by Rabaul. The Administrator of New Britain requested a fly past as a demonstration to settle some civil unrest. *Sydney* obliged with a fly past and an army support exercise, which, judging by the Administrator’s subsequent report, had the desired effect.40

The daily drills in target location and gunnery direction paid immediate dividends when *Sydney* commenced operations in Korean waters during October 1951. Following a mission in which pilots from *Sydney* had directed the 16 inch guns of the battleship USS *New Jersey*, the carrier’s commander, Captain Harries, received a signal complimenting the *Sydney*’s pilots for the accuracy of their target spotting and the high sortie rate maintained by the CAG.41 As operations continued, the *Sydney*’s Sea Fury and Firefly aircraft were engaged in a range of missions, which included photographic reconnaissance, bombing of enemy supply lines, close support of ground troops, CAPs and support for search and rescue missions flown by USN helicopters. Korea saw the first large-scale use of helicopters for such missions. The American pilots of these aircraft frequently took considerable risks and many RAN and RAAF pilots owed them their lives and freedom. Another innovation to assist downed air crews was introduced by the *Sydney*’s CBALOs. Using red and yellow fluorescent panels, each about a metre square, pilots could communicate with circling aircraft to inform them as to whether the crews were injured as well as the direction of enemy fire. The system was so effective that it was soon adopted by No 77 Squadron and, on 20 December 1951, promulgated for use by Headquarters, US Fifth Air Force.42

The *Sydney*’s experienced CBALOs also ensured that the battle damage reports submitted by the RAN pilots were as accurate as possible. Notes written by the CBALOs in early December 1951 advised the pilots that, in assessing enemy troop casualties, ‘a rocket must be seen to strike a known number of troops before we accept them as being killed. Consequently, our estimates are a minimum, for when large concentrations of troops are attacked, many unobserved casualties must result. [This] system gives a much truer picture of the damage done to the enemy than the rather grandiose claims made by some other air units operating in
this theatre'. The role played by the CBALOs in Sydney's operations was significant. In particular, the two officers influenced the performance of the CAG on a daily basis, as they briefed and debriefed air crews, gathering target and other intelligence to assist with future missions. Captain Harries recognised their efforts and the excellent work they had done 'since long before the ship came to Korea'. Together with the RAN pilots they helped to train, the Army ALOs formed an effective combined service team. By the time her patrols ended in late January 1952, Sydney's CAG had maintained a very high sortie rate (2366 in four months). Once again, via the excellent performance of a relatively small unit, Australia was able to make a significant contribution to the coalition. For the loss of three pilots and nine planes, Sydney's aircraft had killed 1428 troops and destroyed forty-seven rail bridges, four road bridges and 1000 buildings.

**Australia's Defence Policy and Political Economy—1950-53**

The 1946 Chiefs of Staff Appreciation was written by men who had learned the lessons of the Second World War. They believed that Australia could only be successfully defended with allied support and, in order to attract such support, the nation needed to field credible joint forces, structured for coalition operations. The high degree of interoperability that enabled the RAAF, RAN and the Australian Army to work as part of the UN coalition was vindication of that belief. The Menzies Government, elected in 1949, had endorsed the nation's requirement for versatile joint forces to support its policy of Forward Defence, which would see Australian personnel deployed to overseas theatres to oppose the communist threat.

In December 1950, with the added impetus of the Korean War, the new government had formed a National Security Resources Board (NSRB) to 'superimpose an expansion of the immediate and prospective defence programmes on an economy already bearing the strain of ambitious programmes of development and immigration'. The task of the NSRB was to manage the expansion of the armed services together with the building of new defence infrastructure and purchases of new equipment. The program was allocated £395 million over the three years 1951 to 1953. For the RAN it included the construction of ten new ships and the refit or conversion of seventeen more. The RAAF received 690 new aircraft, including nineteen Australian-built Lincoln bombers, and funds were also spent to further plans to produce Canberra and Sabre jets locally. The Army purchased sixty Centurion tanks and 1000 transport vehicles. However, towards the end of 1952, the cost of this massive expansion began to tell on the already strained Australian economy.

In the three years up to 1950, Australia had taken in 350,000 migrants and Menzies' government made plans to accommodate a further 200,000 per year, without impacting on the nation's standard of living. This was to be achieved by boosting production of commodities, such as raw materials and foodstuff, which were Australia's chief income-producing exports. However, even with a wool boom in the early 1950s, the government's ambitious programs of national development and defence expansion soon created a balance of payments problem. As early as December 1951, the Treasurer, Arthur Fadden, had warned Menzies that these programs would put the country in debt. The only means of financing the trade deficit they would create was to cut imports or increase borrowing from overseas. Faced with these unpleasant choices, the government decided that the defence expansion could not be allowed to have a detrimental effect on the nation's economic development. Indeed, the Prime Minister felt, 'excessive expenditure on defence preparations to meet a threat which may never materialise would further the communist aim'.

The Defence Committee's Report, *A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy*, which cited changes in the international environment, made the government's shift to a more affordable defence policy possible. The Defence Committee had concluded 'the likelihood of global war is now more remote than it was considered to be at the time the present Defence Policy was determined [1950] for two main reasons, namely the strength of the Allies has considerably increased and Russia has achieved much by her cold war tactics'. While the threat of global war had abated, the Committee reported that the Cold War had intensified. On the basis of these assessments the Committee recommended that Australia's defence preparations combine preparation for the remote possibility of global war with participation in cold war operations. The highest priority was allocated to cold war operations such as the counter-insurgency operations in Malaya and supporting collective security arrangements under the South East Asia Treaty Organisation.
Frustration—The Long Decline of Australian Jointness

The effect of this change in defence policy on Australia's land/air capability was not long in coming. Commenting on the Defence Committee report, the Minister of Defence, Philip McBride, noted that the Defence Vote for the year 1953/54 had yet to be decided. The decision hinged on 'the outcome of the Armistice negotiations in Korea, and the effect of the Armistice on the future strength of the Forces'.\(^{52}\) When it came a few months later, the decrease in the defence budget resulted in reduced unit readiness and efficiency. Major Hardcastle, who, after Korea, had become the Officer Commanding the 1st Armoured Regiment at Puckapunyal, found himself with sixty new tanks but no proper facilities for maintaining and storing them.\(^{53}\) The net effect of the reduction in defence spending was that it forced the Services to concentrate on their own parochial interests and compete with each other for limited resources.

While the SLAW was formed to teach the principles of inter-service co-operation, it also relied upon inter-service co-operation for its continued existence. The SLAW soon became a casualty of the conditions created by the reduction in the Defence Vote. When the Joint Planning Committee met in September 1953, it decided that, while the desirability of parachute training at the SLAW was unaltered, the financial limitations of the Defence Vote meant that parachute training at Williamtown as a peacetime requirement 'must be regarded as a low priority'.\(^{54}\) Obviously the Land-Air Warfare Liaison Letter was also a low priority and it ceased after only three annual issues. With it disappeared the only forum for discussion of doctrinal issues that affected all three Services.

Over the next four years the activities of the school were gradually curtailed until, finally in 1957, its activities were suspended. The problem was essentially one of funding. The cost of operating the SLAW was paid by the RAAF. The Army only paid for the salaries of its instructors and the allowances of its students. The Air Force proposed a plan to maintain the operations of the school but at a greatly reduced cost. Under this proposal the SLAW would close and its duties would be taken over by an Air Support Unit. The staff from the SLAW would form mobile instructional teams to offset the reduction of formal training at Williamtown. The estimated cost of these arrangements was only £15,000 per year, with the flying hours, personnel and aircraft involved to be 'diverted from other activities over the whole field of operations of the RAAF'.\(^{55}\) Only seven years earlier General Rowell had written in the forward of the first Land-Air Liaison Letter that, 'Success in war is dependent upon the close co-operation of the armed forces involved ... This co-operation is just as important in time of peace. Therefore, it is essential that every officer of one Service has a knowledge of the organisation, the tactics and the problems of the others'.\(^{56}\) Although it was never entirely closed down, the Air Support Unit languished until 1966, when joint operations gained fresh impetus from Australia's involvement in Vietnam. However, this revival of interest in air/land operations was not in time to help newly-graduated Lieutenant John Hartley, who went to Vietnam in that same year. In his preparation for operations in Vietnam, General Hartley recalls receiving no formal instruction in the use of CAS, beyond a few lectures at Duntroon and witnessing a CAS display at Puckapunyal.\(^{57}\)

Conclusion

In the following two decades most of Australia's joint capabilities continued to deteriorate. Capabilities such as amphibious and air/land operations existed as little more than residual capacities. Preserved in small units in each of the Services, they remained largely in the form of doctrine without equipment or equipment without doctrine. One positive development was that, in the late 1960s, the Air Support Unit began to undergo the transformation that would see it evolve into the current Australian Defence Force Joint Warfare Centre.\(^{58}\) This change commenced with the strong support of the RAAF's Director General of Operational Requirements, Air Commodore Ronald Susans, who had commanded No 77 Squadron in Korea. Not surprisingly, the champions of jointness are frequently officers whose operational experience confirms the importance of inter-service co-operation.
The RAAF Historian, Alan Stephens, commenting on the RAAF’s joint warfare credentials in the period 1946-71, candidly concedes that the RAAF’s downgrading of the SLAW in the late 1950s was short-sighted, especially in view of the joint nature of operations in Vietnam. He also characterises the RAAF’s attitude to the issue of battlefield air support during this period as one of ‘indifference or arrogance’. When it came to a head in the post-Vietnam period, the resulting inter-service battle over the ownership of rotary wing battlefield support aviation created animosities which still reverberate through parts of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) today. Hopefully, the introduction of armed reconnaissance helicopters to the ADF in the near future will not spark similar inter-service frictions. When Bernard Brodie made the comparison between the USAF’s resistance to providing the US Army with tactical air support and behavioural experiments involving rats and mazes, he was making a point about human nature. In this century alone, the armed forces of many nations have neglected the obvious requirement for close co-operation between all three Services with remarkable tenacity. In peacetime, the primary cause of inter-service frictions are low defence budgets, which force the Services to compete for scarce resources. Rats too, when compelled to compete for resources, will turn on each other. The most frustrating aspect of all this is that the skills of co-operation learned at the cost of lives and money during war are very soon dissipated by the parsimony of peacetime defence spending. This cycle of peacetime neglect and rapid wartime expansion has hindered the development of jointness in both the US and Australia. However, for a brief period between the end of the Second World War and the end of the Korean War, Australia was able to break that cycle. The excellent performance of her forces in Korea was the direct result of a defence policy which, recognising the need for training and equipping credible joint forces, did not baulk at funding them.

Endnotes

3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. The Chiefs’ conclusions, based as they were on recent experience in the Second World War, remain sound. The most significant conclusion of Williamson Murray and Allan Millett’s *Military Effectiveness*, which presents case studies of the performance of military organisations in the period 1914-45, is that nations with a sound strategy could redress the tactical and operational deficiencies of their armed forces. However, those nations with a faulty strategy, notwithstanding the effectiveness of their armed forces on the battlefield, were invariably defeated. See Murray & Millett, eds, *Military Effectiveness*, 3 vols (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989).
5. ‘An Appreciation by the Chiefs of Staff on the Strategical Position of Australia, February, 1946’, Part X, Local Defence, 24, and Part XII, Australia’s Forces to be Maintained in Peace, 27, Item 1645/9, Series A5954/69, NAA.
6. See Unit History Sheets of the RAAF School of Army Co-operation, 1942-46, File 43/1, Series 64, Australian War Memorial (hereinafter AWM), and Minutes of Defence Committee Meeting, 20 August 1946, Item 63/301/65, Series A816/1, NAA.
7. Notes on Defence Committee Agenda No 146/1948,16 November 1948, Item 1509/16, Series A5954/69, NAA.
8. Minutes of a Joint Planning Committee Meeting, 9 November 1948, Item 1509/16, Series A5954/69, NAA.
9. Item 151/2/1206, Series A816/1, NAA. The word ‘triphibious’ refers to close coordination of amphibious operations with air support. It was used by MacArthur to describe his operations in the South-West Pacific during the Second World War.
10. The syllabus from the post-war SLAW was given to the author by the late Lieutenant Colonel B Williams MC.
11. In 1950 the SLAW ran seven of these junior courses and trained a total of 14) officers, including 9 students from the British Forces and 22 from the New Zealand Forces, the remainder broken down as follows: 12 RAN, 53 Army and 45 RAAF. See Land-Air Warfare Liaison Letter No 2, June 1951, 7, Item 9/4/AIR, Series A1127/1, NAA.
12. Land-Air Warfare Liaison Letter No 3, June 1952, 8, Item 9/4/AIR, Series A11267/1, NAA.
15. One historian has suggested that the USAF's employment of Marine and Navy pilots against strategic targets deep in North Korea, when they were trained and equipped for close support missions, was a manifestation of post-Second World War service politics. See Roger Beaumont, Joint Military Operations: A Short History (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1993), 140.
16. H Vandenberg, REDLINE Message to General Stratemeyer, 19 July 1950, Vandenberg Papers Box 86. The US professional military journals of the period contained several articles on the CAS issue. For example, see K Kinter, 'Who Should Command the Tactical Air Forces?', Combat Forces Journal (November, 1950), and 'The Air-Ground Operation in Korea', Air Force (March, 1951). Articles with similar titles can also be found in these journals from the 1960s to the 1990s, indicating that the issue of CAS has never really been satisfactorily resolved in the US.
17. Perhaps the real inter-service failure in Korea was the time it took for the UN Command to establish an effective joint headquarters for the command and control of the land, air and sea assets deployed in Korea. The responsibility for this problem rests with General MacArthur.
18. For an assessment of Operation STRANGLE and interdiction in Korea generally, see Malcolm W Cagle & Frank A Manson, The Sea War in Korea (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1957), esp ch 8.
20. This incident occurred in mid August 1950 when the UN forces were hard pressed. However, its effectiveness was questionable, resulting in ninety-eight B-29 Superfortress bombers releasing over 4000 bombs without any confirmation that a single enemy soldier was even injured by the attack. See R Frank Futrell, The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953 (Washington, DC: United States Air Force, 1963), 130-31.
21. The challenge for air forces is to determine what has changed from one conflict to the next. This is a difficult task and at various times the balance between employing tactical or strategic capabilities of air power will need to vary. This was done successfully in Korea through the air pressure strategy.
24. Unlike the RAN FAA squadrons, No 77 Squadron did not have an Australian Army Air Liaison Section attached to it in Japan.
25. Details of the USAF air support system are given in an article, 'Air Support in Korea', in Land-Air Warfare Liaison Letter, No 3, June 1952, 9-18, Item 9/4/AIR, Series A11267/1, NAA.
26. Even in April 1950, MacArthur’s headquarter had refused permission for the 5th Air Force and the 8th Army to form a JOC composed of personnel who were permanently assigned to the unit. See Futrell, The United States Air Force in Korea, 61.
27. See ibid., 86. The RAAF were exonerated of any blame in the incident.
31. Extract of Cabinet Minutes, 7 December 1950, Item C264, Series A4940/1, NAA.
33. Robertson to Jones, 29 June 1951, Item 1/501/636, Series A707, NAA.
34. Ibid.
35. For the debate over the RAAF’s employment of the Meteor in air-to-air combat see Stephens, Going Solo.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. No 77 Squadron RAAF in Korea - A Brief History, nd, File 927/1/1, Series 114, AWM.
41. Ibid, 88.
42. Ibid, 93. The official history ascribes this innovation to Captain Harries, but it seems more likely that the RAN FAA History is correct in ascribing it to the Army CBALOs. See O'Neill, Combat Operations, 475.
43. Ibid, 86-87.
44. Ibid, 101.
45. Ibid, 100. These figures were compiled by the CBALOs.
46. Minutes of the First Meeting of the NSRB, 18 December 1950, Series A4639/X/MI, NAA.
47. NSSRB Report: Defence and Development, 1950-1953, December 1953, Item 4, Series AA 1985/58/1, NAA.
48. Economic Development in Australia, 8 August 1950, Item 11/301/739, Series A816V1, NAA.
49. The Balance of Payments Problem, Cabinet Agendum, 3 December 1951, Item 51/1723, Series A571/2, NAA.
50. A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, 8 January 1953, 6, Item C2813, Series A4940/1, NAA.
51. Ibid, 7.
52. Defence Department File on the Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, 8 January 1953, Item 1509/16, Series A5954/69, NAA.
53. When the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General SF Rowell, visited the unit to inspect the new equipment, only seventeen of the tanks were in working order. These vehicles proceeded to pass the reviewing stand in succession until the General had seen sixty tanks.
54. Defence Department File on the Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy, 8 January 1953, Item 1509/16. Series A5954/69, NAA.
55. School of Land/Air Warfare—General Correspondence File, Item 63/301/65, Series A81671, NAA.
56. Land-Air Warfare Liaison Letter No 2, June 1952, 5, Item 9/4/AIR, Series A1127/1, NAA.
58. Australian Joint Warfare Establishment, December 1966, Item A45, Series A7941/2, NAA.
59. Stephens, Going Solo, 309.
60. Ibid, 313.
The Koje Island prison riots were one of the great military cockups of the Korean War, a war which in general provided a rich source of military cockups. The American leadership of United Nations Command (UNC) in Korea sought to turn the stigma of the Koje Island disaster from an American cockup into a United Nations cockup. The involvement of Canadian troops in this process forced Canadian national command arrangements on combined operations to adopt a form which has endured and expanded with the increase in number and complexity of post-Cold War peace operations.

Canada has never taken military leadership as a nation. As part of the French, then British, then arguably American empires, Canada has historically provided forces to be commanded by others in what today are called combined or multinational operations. When French Canada was attacked in the Seven Years' War, it was the French Empire that defended its property against the British Empire. When the Fenians invaded in the 1860s, it was the British Empire defending its own. If tomorrow the armies of Absurdistan attacked Canada, chapter VIII of the North Atlantic Treaty would make the very defence of Canadian soil a NATO task, calling upon traditional Canadian allies such as Hungary and Italy.

As a result of this history, the Canadian armed forces have always been structured to generate forces and place them under the command of others. Even when Canadian soldiers were commanded by Canadian generals, whether in Northwest Europe 1945 or Rwanda in 1994, the Canadian generals worked for bosses like Bernard Law Montgomery and Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

This is not to say, however, that Canadian governments have been willing to give Imperial or UN commanders carte blanche to dispose their Canadian troops. The experience of the South African War demonstrated to Canada that the Dominion was not wise to entrust its young men and, perhaps more important, its expenditure on them, to the British Army. As such, when Canada contributed to the British Empire's efforts in the First World War, it was with carefully constructed reservations.

The Canadian contingents sent to Europe from 1914 through 1918 were given to British generals on terms that current NATO doctrine calls 'operational control' (OPCON) defined as:

The authority granted to a commander to direct forces assigned so that the commander may accomplish specific missions or tasks which are usually limited by function, time, or location, to deploy units concerned, and to retain or assign tactical control of those units. It does not include authority to assign separate employment of components of the units concerned. Neither does it, of itself, include administrative or logistic control.¹

Canadians sent to Europe became discreet formations of the British Empire's army from an operational point of view; but administered, paid, equipped and supplied by Ottawa. They were only to be deployed as a group, first as a division, then a corps, though one regiment, the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) was initially deployed within a British brigade. Significantly, Colonel (later Major General) John Carson, a representative of the Canadian Minister of Militia, was sent to London to administer national support and provide what today is called national command. Later, after the dismissal of Sir Sam Hughes as Minister of Militia, the Canadian High Commissioner in London, Sir George Perley, was made a member of the Canadian cabinet with responsibility for overseas forces (Minister for Overseas Military Forces of Canada or more usually 'Overseas Minister').²
Thus, while operational control of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) was vested in British corps and army commanders, command remained vested in the Canadian Governor-in-Council, via the Overseas Minister. While at first the administration of the CEF might appear not to relate to operational matters, it must be kept in mind that the top Canadian in London was responsible for training the CEF, as well as for appointing officers to CEF commands on the Continent. After March, 1917, the Imperial War Cabinet included the Canadian Prime Minister, giving the CEF much more the appearance of an allied nation rather than a colony. Also in 1917 a Canadian officer was promoted to command the Canadian Corps. Thus the senior Canadian officer in theatre commanded Canadian forces in theatre. The picture is very much one of a Canadian formation which in modern NATO-speak was under OPCON to a British field army.

During the Second World War, speaking very roughly, Canadian forces were under a similar arrangement. Canadian Military Headquarters (CMHQ) in London was the administrative link to Ottawa, while Canadian forces deployed were kept together in Canadian formations under what we now call operational control of British generals. The concept of command and control of a multinational alliance was that 'Canadian Forces serving with the British army had the right, as a last resort, to refer any matter concerning them to the Canadian Government'. Stephen Hart emphasises that 'Although [General Harry] Crerar strove to establish in principle the constitutional relationship between the British and Canadian armies, he did not believe that this principle would actually be required'.

During the Second World War, Canadian troops were kept together but their theoretical right of referral to Ottawa was kept theoretical. Crerar cited the principle when appealing not to Ottawa but to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in London: it was a bargepole which Crerar could use to keep Montgomery away when convenient.

This appears to have been the guiding principle which took Canada into the Cold War. Canadian forces had been committed fully in the Second World War with a general proviso that Canadian formations remain together and with only a theoretical right of referral to Ottawa. Just so, the Canadian contribution to UN operations in Korea was initially made in the tradition of commitment to a grand alliance. Canadian soldiers committed to Europe would be commanded by Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), and Canadian soldiers committed to Korea would be commanded by UNC.

It was demonstrated early in the Cold War that Canadian participation could not be taken for granted. When the British and American air forces were stretched to the limit by the 1949 Berlin airlift, they requested Canadian aircrew to provide personnel depth for the operation. Canadian Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent was disinclined to provide individual Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) personnel to the Royal Air Force (RAF), since like his predecessor Mackenzie King he thought it implied a subordinate role for Canada within the Commonwealth. While Australian honour and independence seemed to survive 6000 Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) flight hours running the blockade, Canada temporised until the blockade ended. This was mirrored years later when the Canadian Army opted out of the 1990-91 Gulf War by offering up horrific casualty estimates until the idea of sending land forces was dropped.

In 1951, General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower, Supreme Commander, Allied Powers Europe, asked for a clear statement from the Canadian government as to whether he had 'the authority to order the troops under his command into action without reference to national governments'. 'He has in mind, for example', said Canadian Minister for External Affairs Lester 'Mike' Pearson, 'a situation where Danish troops might be attacked and he would wish to order the Canadian brigade into action'. Pearson thought that Eisenhower did have the authority, but very carefully left the question unanswered.

Similarly, the RCAF official historian describes the command of 1st Canadian Air Division in 1953 vaguely: 'operational control is vested in the Fourth Allied Tactical Air Force (ATAF) ... commanded by a US officer ... However, the direction of the Canadian Air Division is almost entirely a Canadian affair, because Fourth ATAF is mainly concerned in promoting effective
co-operation and ... assumes full operational command only in an emergency'. The RCAF contribution to NATO is described in terms which emphasize its independence; while acknowledging that when push came to shove, this independence would become no more than a matter of NATO theology.

The physicist Schrödinger posed a thought experiment in which a cat in a box might or might not be killed by a quantum event, but until the box was opened the cat was neither alive nor dead. Like the unfortunate cat, the right of referral might or might not have been in the box, but it was a box which everybody found it convenient to leave shut.

**Korea**

Commonwealth Division was in a command relationship with Eighth US Army which only a few years later NATO would call OPCON. Major General (later Field Marshal Sir) James Cassels, GOC 1 Commonwealth Division, was told:

You will carry out loyally any orders issued by [Head of the United Nations Unified Command, Korea] or by any American Commander subordinate to him under whose command you have been placed...

Commander-in-Chief, British Commonwealth Occupation Force [BCOF Tokyo] will act as Theatre Commander for the purpose of non-operational control and general administration of the United Kingdom, Australian and New Zealand Army and Air Force and Canadian and Indian Army Forces which have been or may be made available to the United Nations for operations in Korea.

So although the term 'command' is used, the second phrase makes it clear that this is a statement of operational control.

This British directive set forth a chain of referral through CinC BCOF (later BCOF/BCFK, still later BCFK [British Commonwealth Forces Korea]) Tokyo (Lieutenant General William Bridgeford of Australia) to the Head of UNC Korea. This chain of referral reported to, among other places, the Canadian Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), Ottawa, via the Canadian Military Mission (CMM) Tokyo. This referral chain was to be used before an order which General Cassels found 'not to accord with the object of the United Nations operations in Korea'. If an order from the Americans would 'imperil the safety of the Commonwealth troops under your Command, to a degree exceptional in war', then Cassels could report through this chain after executing the order.

In Canadian terms, this directive considered the Dominion and Indian contributions to be part of an Imperial force rather than a force contributed by a group of equal UN member states. It is not surprising, in view of Canadian reluctance to be so considered, that when a referral was made, it did not follow this chain.

Notwithstanding the British instructions to Cassels, the Canadian forces' administrative chain went from General Bridgeford (via CMM in Tokyo) to the Canadian COSC in Ottawa and thence to Canadian forces deployed. This reflects the likely path of administrative requirements which, if they could not be met by Commonwealth resources in theatre, would be met from Canada rather than from London or Canberra. The instructions to the first brigadier of 25 Canadian Infantry Brigade Group (25 CIBG) made it clear that he (and not the brigadier at CMM in Tokyo) was national commander of the Canadian contingent in Korea, and that he had unlimited right of referral directly to Ottawa.

Issues of Canadian command in the context of UN control arose before 25 CIBG was fully deployed to theatre. When 2nd Battalion, PPCLI, deployed to Korea, Ottawa held back the rest of 25 Brigade, hoping it could be used to requite Canada's obligation to NATO. Lieutenant General Walton Walker, Commander Eighth US Army, planned to move 2 PPCLI rather briskly into 29 British Commonwealth Infantry Brigade (29 BCIB) reserve near Seoul.
The Patricia CO reported at the time that on explaining to Walker that 2 PPCLI required eight weeks' training before moving into a forward area, he was favourably surprised by General Walker's 'gracious' acquiescence.\textsuperscript{15} The cat had been kept in the box; but after the Koje Island contretemps a different spin was put on this non-incident.

When the rest of 25 CIBG arrived in theatre, in May 1951, the next but one Commander of Eighth US Army, General James van Fleet, wanted the Canadians to relieve a US infantry regiment near Suwon. The battle diary of 25 CIBG makes it clear that this was conducted in a straightforward manner: a warning order was received, the assignment accepted, and a reconnaissance group (R Gp) was conducted including Brigadier John 'Rocky' Rockingham then in command of 25 CIBG and General van Fleet. Again, no referral was made to Ottawa, but again the story of the incident changed after the deployment of Canadians to Koje.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Koje}

The American-run UNC prisoner-of-war (POW) camp at Koje Island, South Korea, went from American control over to North Korean control early in 1952. The Canadian involvement in this incident caused Ottawa to open the box rather violently to demonstrate that Canadian forces were indeed commanded from Canada and not from London, Washington, New York or Tokyo. A thorough analysis of the Canadian involvement has been made by Professor David Bercuson of the University of Calgary; initially presented at Kingston, Ontario, in 1993 as a case study in alliance friction.

Koje Island, Koje-do in Korean, is a large, rocky island off the coast of South Korea near Pusan. A POW camp designed to hold 38,400 was opened there shortly after the Chinese entry into the war,\textsuperscript{17} and by the end of 1951 it housed over 130,000 Koreans and 20,000 Chinese in compounds of 5000 or more prisoners each.\textsuperscript{18} The guard force consisted of 9000 US and South Korean troops, only 60 per cent of the number requested by the camp's parent organisation, US 2 Logistical Command. General Farrar-Hockley notes in the British official history that UN prisoners in North Korea were each guarded by two guards; whereas on Koje Island there were forty-eight prisoners to each guard.\textsuperscript{19}

As Pyongyang gained control of the compound by infiltrating cadres and communications equipment, the US proved unable to resist. On 18 February 1952 a battalion of infantry suffered one killed and 38 injured by POW action, replying by opening fire and causing 200 POW casualties.\textsuperscript{20} The British official history of the Korean War details the story of the capture of US Brigadier General Dodd by inmates of Koje-do Compound 76.\textsuperscript{21} The result was that the loss of control of this enemy POW camp was a well-publicised failure of American forces in Korea. General Mark W Clark, Supreme Commander of UN forces, called the incident 'the biggest flap of the whole war'.\textsuperscript{22}

The US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) suggested that General Clark consider making the American failure to control Koje Island into an international failure by 'employing representative proportion of UN Forces along with United States in this capacity. Having forces from other UN countries share this responsibility has definite political advantages ...'.\textsuperscript{23} Since the guard force on Koje was already under strength, this employment would be in the nature of augmentation rather than replacement.

Clark took up this suggestion and sent the Netherlands Battalion, a Greek company and two British Commonwealth companies to Koje Island. General Bridgeford tasked Commonwealth Division, which told two infantry brigades (28 British Commonwealth Infantry Brigade [28 BCIB] and 25 CIBG) each to find a company to help restore order on Koje. One was B Company, 1st Battalion, King's Own Shropshire Light Infantry. The other one was B Company, 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment (1RCR).\textsuperscript{24}

The command and control relationships which transmitted this order were similar to what one might have found in the Second World War, but wrt smaller. The RCR were under command of Canadian 25 Brigade. The brigade was under OPCON of 1 British Commonwealth Division.
Commonwealth Division was, as discussed above, under OPCON to US I Corps, which was under command of Eighth US Army. Small national units and sub-units in Korea were supplied and equipped by the US. Moving Dutchmen or Greeks from one US formation to another was unremarkable from the point of view of command or administration. Brigadier Taylor at 28 BCIB does not seem to have been concerned with this tasking either.

The order was glaringly inappropriate from a Canadian point of view. Since the First World War, the principle had been maintained: Canadian formations were not broken up. Canadian units fought under Canadian command. Brigadier Pat Bogert's predecessor as Brigadier 25 CIBG, Brigadier Rockingham, had had instructions which recognised that groupings and taskings were a matter for operational command, but told him to preserve the Canadian entity of the brigade. This was not exceptional nationalism: Americans operated along similar principles. Nor is it purely a matter of national pride or mistrust of imperial commanders: resupply and reinforcement become very difficult for a unit or subunit operating with foreign forces. Below a certain level of command (generally division or brigade), national forces were supposed to stay together.

Brigadier Bogert, commanding 25 CIBG, signalled Lieutenant General Guy Simonds, the Canadian Chief of General Staff (CGS) at 15:20 Ottawa time on 22 May (GMT -5 or NATO time zone Romeo; Korea is in GMT +9 or NATO time zone India, where it was 05:20I on 23 May). Bogert's message told the CGS that "on instruction comwel div and by request UN command" he had ordered 'B' Company of the Ist RCR to Koje Island. Brigadier Bogert does not appear to have referred the matter through 1 Commonwealth Division to General Bridgeford in parallel. The company entrained less than six hours later, at about 11:00 hours Korean time.

On the same day in Tokyo, an American UN C liaison officer spoke with Brigadier AB Connelly, Commander, Canadian Military Mission, Far East, 'to inform him of what Clark had planned and to see if he had any objections'. Connelly later claimed that he thought he should consult Ottawa, but was told that 'the UN Command hoped it would not be necessary to consult governments'. Since Connelly believed that Canada's forces in Korea were 'at the disposal of the Unified Command ... [to] go wherever they were sent', he did not insist on a delay to give him time to consult Ottawa. He did, however, indicate that he 'wanted the matter referred to [Brigadier, 25 CIBG,] Bogert'. The chain of referral through Commonwealth Division to General Bridgeford in Tokyo appears to have been ignored again.

Lieutenant General Charles Foulkes, the Chairman of the COSC, did not, according to Bercuson, think there was anything that could be done about the order: 'no objection could be made to this order on military grounds'. Foulkes does not seem to have divined the subtle purpose of the American chiefs of staff in suggesting to Clark that he 'internationalise' the Koje problem. Foulkes later spoke with Chairman of the US JCS, General of the Army Omar Bradley, and came away convinced that Clark had dispatched the non-Americans on his own hook.

At the next level up from General Foulkes, the Minister of National Defence was not so phlegmatic. Nor was the Prime Minister, nor was the Government's eminence grise, Clerk of the Privy Council Jack Pickersgill. Perhaps the top men, Defence Minister Claxton, Prime Minister St-Laurent and the powerful Pickersgill, saw through the American dodge. Bercuson concludes that growing uneasiness with American conduct of the war made defence minister Claxton and foreign minister Pearson uneasy with the idea of being too closely connected with what promised to be a messy American failure. Devoid of Foulkes' soldierly 'wilco' attitude, Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent telephoned his ambassador in Washington and told him to blackmail the Americans: unless the order to Baker Coy 1 RCR was countermanded, 'it would be more difficult to have our people agree to any additional contribution that may be required of them in Korea'.

The North Koreans had gone to a great deal of trouble to get their cadres on to Koje Island. The Canadian Government went to a lot of trouble to get Baker Coy off. The Canadian Government argued first that the order to the non-American units was political; and therefore
should have been cleared through the Canadian political authorities. The second argument was that the Canadian brigade should not have been broken up. The Americans realised that the second reason was bogus: they taunted the Canadians by suggesting that all of 25 Brigade could be sent to Koje.32

In the aftermath of the incident, Brigadier AB Connelly, Ottawa’s man in Tokyo, was not only sent home and forcibly retired; General Simonds took care to rubbish him to at least one prospective civilian employer.33 General Bridgeford’s directive ‘was amended to require explicit consultation with national governments in regard to the employment of their forces’.34 Jeffrey Grey notes that the problem might easily have been averted had the Canadians been more forthcoming with staff officers to serve at BCFK.35

Major EL Cohen’s Baker Coy 1RCR marched into the Koje Island POW camp as ordered by their operational chain of command. The soldiers wore red berets, their cap badges sported big stars, and they sang a Communist marching song, earning them applause from the Communist POWs.36 It was certainly in the interests of the POWs to show that as soon as the Americans were replaced things went back to normal, and the disturbances on Koje Island ceased directly. Quiet diplomacy through the US State Department did not get Baker Coy off the island, nor did a formal diplomatic note, both delivered in Washington and read out in the Canadian House of Commons. After completing the intended period of service at the prison camp, on 14 July, Baker Coy marched away.

With the Koje Island contretemps in mind, earlier interfaces with non-Canadian higher headquarters were rewritten. Lieutenant Colonel Jim Stone, CO 2PPCLI, recalled his ‘gracious’ interaction with General Walker as a confrontation between Walker and the Stone:

[Stone] knew that, with the memory of alleged unpreparedness at Hong Kong in 1941 still fresh in Canadian minds, the Government meant him to resist any pressure that would put his half-trained battalion into action in time to participate in a disaster. Since verbal explanation had not succeeded, he produced his instructions. The Army Commander [Walker] at once agreed to allow the Canadian battalion to proceed with the eight weeks training [the Patricia CO] considered necessary.37

Brigadier Rockingham’s straightforward R Gp with General van Fleet before relieving 65/3 US Infantry Division was depicted differently, post-Koje:

Brigadier Rockingham protested the order, on the ground that his troops would not have sufficient time to prepare for action. Throughout the night, the Chiefs of Staff at [I US] Corps and [Eighth US] Army continued to repeat the order, which the Brigadier continued to protest, suggesting at one stage that he was prepared to be relieved of his command rather than commit his troops before they were ready. Although he did not resort to his direct channel to the CGS on this occasion, he very nearly did so.38

In both cases, Bercuson is inclined to accept the less-confrontational contemporary battle diary accounts of these incidents over the later reminiscences. Even if one suggests that, on the contrary, battle diarists self-censored the confrontational elements out of the on-the-spot accounts; and that later accounts in the participants’ interviews with the Canadian official historian were therefore more accurate; one can see the difference in the way these tales were spun by the participants before and after the Koje Island contretemps.

The Canadian government had been able to finesse the question of national command for forty years. When an unpopular incident in an unpopular war threatened to make the Government unpopular, Dr Schrödinger’s cat had to be taken out of the box and well and truly slaughtered. Clear lines of national command would be drawn to future Canadian deployments.
The experience of Korea demonstrated to Canadian authorities that in order for OPCON to represent credible terms on which to offer small formations to combined command, full command including not only the right of referral, but responsibility for discipline, administration and logistics, had to be clear.

In the squeaky-clean halls of NATO, the relationship between Canada's contribution and both their operationally controlling headquarters and their national command authority was clear. Canadian Forces Europe and its pre-unification avatars were commanded by a Lieutenant General who exercised national full command of Canadians deployed under OPCON to British and American formations. The air and naval elements provided to the Coalition forces in the 1990-91 Gulf War also had the advantage of a clear national command link through the Canadian commodore in theatre, to respective Canadian Forces (CF) Air and Maritime commands. United Nations operations, on the other hand, have always been prepared ad hoc.

Margaret Cecchine Harrell and Robert Howe have published a very concise description of the difficulties of command and control engendered by the conflicting concepts of UN and national control of contingents deployed on UN operations. They identify in particular the pathology that the more requirement there is for rapid response of contingents to the military orders of the UN force commander, the more likely it is that national contingent commanders will make time-consuming reference to national authorities at home. Cecchine Harrell and Howe refer to this as a dual chain of command: one formal chain going through the UN commander, and one informal chain going to national authority. In the Canadian case, the chain of national command has, since Koje, been both a formal chain, and one which Ottawa expects commanders to use.

The first Chapter VI non-observer peace operation was established four years after the Koje Island riots. In the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF, later UNEF I), each contingent was under its own national commander. 'The commander of each unit is militarily subordinate to the commander-in-chief [of UNEF], but is permitted to communicate with his government on questions concerning the contingent'. Once again, we are seeing a relationship to the mission currently described by NATO as OPCON.

The Canadian Contingent commander was given a direct line of command to Ottawa. It is noteworthy that the national contingent commander appears not to have been Major-General Tommy Burns, commander-in-chief of UNEF and senior Canadian officer in theatre, but Colonel Don Rochester, the commander of the Canadian contingent (and a veteran of the operations in Korea). The UN owned Burns (who was serving at the time as COS United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation, Palestine (UNTSO), but the Canadian Army owned Rochester, and only loaned him and his troops to Burns.

This changed with later peacekeeping missions. The accepted practice was to 'doublehat' the senior Canadian officer in theatre as commander of the Canadian contingent. In larger deployments such as the Canadian logistics element CANLOG of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan Heights (UNDOF) or battalion deployments to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) the senior Canadian officer was a unit commander, sufficiently resourced and staffed to function as the link to Ottawa. In smaller deployments, such as the air transport element of the United Nations India-Pakistan Observer Mission (UNIPOM), the senior commander of a transport aircraft was little troubled to act both as aircraft commander and contingent commander.

Problems have, however, arisen when Canadian officers have been appointed to senior posts on UN operations:
Canadian desires and reputation often result in that being a very senior officer, indeed typically a chief of staff, deputy force commander or even a force commander. This often results in an almost impossible situation, most unfair at once to the Canadian troops, the Canadian senior officer and to the UN. We have seen a COS UNPROFOR [Chief of Staff, UN Protection Force, Major-General Lewis Mackenzie] trapped under artillery fire while NDHQ [National Defence Headquarters] was demanding reports of the status of Canadian deployments, and we have seen a Force Commander UNAMIR [UN Mission in Rwanda: Major-General Romeo Dallaire] hunting about in Africa for the French force commander while NDHQ sought his authority to return a C-130 to Canada.  

Since unification of the Canadian Forces in 1968, national command of Canadian forces on UN operations has been vested in the Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff. The National Defence Operations Centre (NDOC) at National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) directly commanded Canadian contingents through the double-hatted senior Canadian officer.  

**Post-Cold War UN Operations**

As UN missions evolved into a different form with UNPROFOR, the theoretical right of referral began to be a factor as it had not been before.

All of the principal troop contributors in the former Yugoslavia, including the United Kingdom, France, Spain and the Nordic countries, have on occasion either refused (or imposed their own conditions on) orders issued by the Force commander. While this practice is hardly unique to the history of peacekeeping, its effects in the unique circumstances of Yugoslavia have made the exercise of full operational control by the Force Commander impossible.

In UNPROFOR and UNAMIR Canadian national command arrangements were better suited to the more leisurely requirements of UNEF and UNFICYP rather than the more rapid tempo of decision-making required by post-Cold War UN operations. As well, the nature of the deployment to UNPROFOR, with two battalion-sized combat-arms units deployed independently with a single service battalion, was less easy for General Mackenzie, COS UNPROFOR, to 'command' as a Canadian contingent. This 'kluge' means of command meant that national command was provided by Canadian NDOC, OPCON by the UN force commander, but operational command by nobody.

In general consistent doctrine is meant to make command and control easier. The Canadian contribution to NATO land forces was configured as a brigade group, with its structure of command and control and its scale of personnel and equipment clearly defined by doctrine.

With UNPROFOR and the NATO Implementation Force/Stabilisation Force in Bosnia (IFOR/SFOR), however, Canadian units deployed at variance from doctrine. Unlike Cold War-Era deployments, which sent formed units with the equipment they were doctrinally expected to have and to use, the Canadian contribution to UNPROFOR and its successors was always equipped with tracked vehicles but had been 'lightened' with more-transportable wheeled vehicles for deployment in UNPROFOR and IFOR/SFOR. Contrariwise, the Canadian Airborne Regiment deployed to Somalia in 1993 after rapid re-roling from light infantry to wheeled mechanised infantry. Ad hoc equipment and organisation taxes already-weak[ened] national command capability.

Deployments in Bosnia were over much greater areas than envisioned by the developers of doctrine. The Canadian battle group's area of responsibility (AOR) in SFOR is roughly 10,000 km2, which under NATO doctrine is a division-sized area. The same was observed by Canadian deployments on UNPROFOR. Again, the counterdoctrinal nature of post-Cold War UN operations taxes national command capabilities.
These strains on traditional means of national command led to the development of the National Command Element (NCE) as a means of staffing and resourcing support for an officer whose primary responsibility was acting as national commander of the Canadian contingent.

The Canadian Airborne Regiment Battle Group deployed as part of the Unified Task Force in Somalia (UNTAF) in OP FORWARD ACTION, 1992. For this operation the Canadian government first deployed an NCE under Colonel Serge Labbé to provide and staff a command link between the Canadian forces deployed under operational control of UNTAF and the Vice-Chief of Defence Staff in Ottawa. It is ironic that, like Brigadier Connelly in Tokyo, Colonel Labbé was a convenient scapegoat for national authorities when the operation experienced difficulties. Colonel Labbé’s once-imminent promotion to Brigadier-General has been postponed indefinitely, and he has been exiled to NATO Staff College in Rome.

A similar cell was set up to command the elements of 5ème Group-brigade mechanisée Canadien (5eme GBMC) deployed to Haiti in 1993. The deployment of a signals company to UNAMIR in 1994 was, on the other hand, not provided with an NCE, probably because of its apparently manageable size.

OP KINETIC, the Canadian contribution to Kosovo in 1999-2000, was a NATO deployment made after the folding-up of Canadian Forces Europe. Colonel Michael Ward was national commander of the Canadian contingent on deployment, supported by a National Command Element in Skopje, Macedonia, which deployed alongside a National Support Element and a two-person National Intelligence Element. The last was required in order to sustain American-British-Canadian intelligence links insulated from NATO’s KFOR intelligence network which included less-trusted nations. The deployment of a fully-staffed NCE provided sufficient command and control capability for the Canadian contingent to retain its engineer capability under national command. The rest of the Canadian contingent was OPCON to KFOR Multinational Brigade (Centre).

**Limited War: Limited Control**

Total war subordinated other considerations to the requirements of victory. When fighting total war it was possible to keep the cat in the box. Multinational operations in total war did show alliance friction, but it was generally managed without direct referral to national capitals.

The founders of the United Nations envisioned standing UN forces given without reservation by member nations to full command of the UN Military Staff Committee. Lester Pearson viewed this as a realistic goal, and through the early years of the Korean War saw Canadian contribution to UNC as the beginning of an era in which the means of war were put beyond the reach of mere national governments. As he became disenchanted with UN command exercised by people like Douglas MacArthur, and in missions called ‘OP KILLER’, it became clear to him that the Utopian vision of supranational control of armed forces had given way to just another set of imperial obligations.

As conscious limitation was imposed on military operations after 1945, the varying goals of nations with respect to collective security and collective defence made it impossible to expect overarching goals to unite national contingents on the battlefield. While the expedient of standard OPCON was developed to enable national contingents to coexist for the purpose of executing operations, it did not replace the requirement of a nation to exercise national command over its own armed forces.

The United States has met this requirement by insisting that its forces remain directly under US command and control. For a nation like Canada, with a maximum deployment in peacetime of no more than a brigade group, this is not an option. Like other small nations, Canada’s forces are generated at home for deployment under others’ command; and other means have had to be found to ensure national command.
The Koje Island assignment was an American attempt to spread the blame for a job poorly done. Sending Baker Company 1RCR to Koje did not unacceptably endanger nor even inconvenience Canadians compared with the alternative of remaining in brigade reserve. The conflict arose from considerations in Ottawa, not from considerations in theatre. The contretemps served, however, as an opportunity for Ottawa to put its foot down: to demonstrate that Canada directly exercised national command over its soldiers; and that operational control was no more than a very limited loan of troops to multinational command.

Canada had bought its freedom within the Empire by lavish and relatively uncritical expenditure of blood in 1914-18. It had confirmed its national independence by insisting on participating in the Second World War on its own terms. Canada could not accept relegation to the role of imperial subordinate in Korea, and thus had to flex its tiny sovereign muscles over the petty issue of guarding Koje Island. The UN was a community of member states, said Canada, and whatever the arrangements were for the World Wars, and however subject Canada was to American and British bullying over contributions to NATO, Canada would retain national command over her soldiers.

When Mike Pearson proposed and Tommy Burns disposed the first UN peacekeeping force in Egypt, the command and control arrangements were shaped by the requirement to keep national forces under national command. The romantic vision of unreserved contribution to UN standing forces had been eliminated in no small part by the Korean War. The resulting structure of UN operations, and especially of Canadian participation in UN operations, has developed in response to the realities of the interests of contributing nations, so clearly demonstrated by Pat Bogert's response to the order to send his people to Koje in 1952.

Endnotes

Professor David Bercuson and his staff at the University of Calgary are gratefully acknowledged for their assistance. The rapid tempo of response from the library staffs at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and the US Command and General Staff College, Leavenworth, is also acknowledged with gratitude.

1. Definition from NATO Glossary AAP-6.
5. Ibid, 163.
8. Canada, Department of External Affairs, Defence Liaison Division memorandum, 'SHAPE'S Authority to Order Troops into Action', 20 December 1951, DEA file 50030-ab-40, quoted in Eayrs, Growing Up Allied, 213.
14. Lester Pearson hoped that the Canadian Army Special Force raised for Korea would not only become Canada's contribution to NATO, but would eventually serve as part of a standing UN force. George Egerton, 'Lester B Pearson and the Korean War: Dilemmas of Collective Security and International Enforcement in Canadian Foreign Policy, 1950-53', International Peacekeeping 4:1 (Spring, 1997), 55.
22. Cited from Clark's memoirs in, inter alia, Fairlie Wood, Strange Battleground, 191.
23. Farrar-Hockley, An Honourable Discharge, 288, citing Foreign Relations of the United States (1984) XV: 210. That this tactic was at least partly successful is shown by Vetter's clear description of the incident as a UN failure to guard a UN camp.
24. Ibid.
28. Ibid, citing US Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) files, Box 318, file CD092 (Korea), Memorandum for Escott Reid (Deputy Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs), 7 June 1952.
30. Ibid, citing OSD files, Box 318, file CD092 (Korea), Matthews to Lovett and attachments, 24 May 1952.
32. Ibid, citing OSD box 318, file CD092 (Korea), Matthews to Lovett and attachments, 24 May 1952.
33. Ibid, citing Simonds papers, Simonds to Donald Gordon, 4 February 1953.
34. Grey, Commonwealth Armies, 156.
35. Ibid, 114.
38. Ibid, 98, citing an interview with Brigadier Rockingham, 17 November 1952.
41. JV Arbuckle, 'Command and Control of the Canadian Forces: Doesn't Anyone Know How to Play This Game?', Canadian Defence Quarterly 24:2 (Winter, 1994), 26-27. Colonel Arbuckle was J3 Operations at National Defence Operations Centre at the time.
42. Ibid, 24.
43. Mats Berdal, 'United Nations Peacekeeping in the Former Yugoslavia', in Beyond Traditional Peacekeeping, 239.
46. Ibid, 9.
47. Arbuckle, 'Command and Control of the Canadian Forces', 28.
48. Ibid.
The history of UN forces in the Korean War has been comparatively well documented by Western scholars, but it is only now, fifty years after the war, that detailed accounts of China's version of events are becoming available in the West. Probably the most authoritative and comprehensive account yet published is The History of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the War to Resist America and Aid Korea, compiled by a team of twenty-two researchers from the People's Liberation Army's peak strategic research and historical institute, the Academy of Military Science.\(^1\)

The authors have based their account on original Chinese material, including archival correspondence between Mao Zedong and his Chinese People's Volunteer (CPV) commanders, unit records, and extensive interviews with surviving soldiers. As noted in the preface, the editors' aim was to compile an authoritative record of the CPV's involvement in the war, both to document a major campaign in modern Chinese military history and to serve as a reference for today's students of the operational art.

The result is a comprehensively researched volume documenting the other side of the Korean War. Every engagement above regimental level is covered, as well as smaller actions of special significance. The book adopts a chronological approach to the task. The political and military antecedents to the war are covered in the first chapter. In later sections, we are presented with an analysis of the operational situation at the beginning of each of the five main CPV campaigns, the conduct of the campaign itself, and finally, a distillation of the operational results and lessons learnt. The annexes contain dozens of fold-out maps illustrating the actions described in the text. The final chapter outlines the operational and strategic lessons to be learnt from the war.

This is a military book written by military men for a military audience. With the exception of the first chapter, the book is remarkably free of gratuitous ideological rhetoric. The authors have been brutally honest about the CPV's performance. Where the authors consider an operational decision to have been questionable, they have said so. Where there were weaknesses in the CPV organisation or equipment, these too are acknowledged and discussed dispassionately.

The Academy of Military Science account has not been published in English. The translation offered here is believed to be a first in the West, but it is far from complete. The translation process itself is not particularly demanding, but it is time-consuming. Korean place names present a particular problem. Military actions are described using Chinese names of nearby Korean villages or hamlets, many of which no longer exist or have changed their names. Despite my best efforts to match the Chinese rendition of Korean placenames on English maps, some places mentioned in the Chinese account remain untranslated. In these cases, I have used capital letters for the transliterated (Chinese) Pinyin romanisation along with a brief explanation of the feature's location derived from context in the accompanying text.

The translation is a work in progress. The work proceeds as I find hours available. I am happy to provide copies of the work to date, as I am to provide access to the original Chinese volume.

Finally, readers unused to Communist rhetoric may find that parts of the first chapter appear to present an ideological view of history at odds with our understanding of it, and that some of the language is politically charged. That is a fact of life, but it is a fact which makes this book all the more interesting because it presents not only the military details of the CPV's involvement in the War, but gives an insight into China's contemporary world view as well.
Nor do the Chinese have a monopoly on ethnocentric accounts of history. The same culturally and ideologically-centric approach is evident in some respected Western studies of the Korean War, as readers of SLA Marshall's historical works will attest. If there are two sides to every story, this is China's side of the story of the Korean War.

**The History of the Chinese People's Volunteers in the War to Resist America and Aid Korea**

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Chapter One

US Imperialist Armed Aggression Against Korea and Occupation of Chinese Territory in Taiwan.

The Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Decides Upon a Strategic Policy of Resisting America, Assisting Korea and Protecting the Nation.

By the end of the Second World War the international situation had changed dramatically. Of the six strongest pre-war imperialist nations, Germany, Italy and Japan had been defeated, while Britain and France were in decline. With the exception of the US, the capitalist system had been severely weakened. Several European and Asian countries had broken free from the shackles of imperialism to establish people's democratic structures as they trod the path towards socialism, which itself had spread beyond the Soviet Union to become an international system. In many colonies and quasi-colonies, people's national democratic revolutions were flourishing and inflicting fierce blows on imperialist colonial regimes. The world had divided into imperialist and socialist camps, and contradictions and conflict between the two great camps was, for a period, a new defining feature of post-War international conflict. National democratic revolutionary movements and socialist revolution had become an irresistible tide of history.

The US imperialists, who had prospered obscenely during the war and faced inflationary pressures afterwards, relied on their massive economic and military strength actively to pursue a policy of aggression and world domination. They were hostile towards socialist nations and people's democracies, constantly interfering in their affairs and engaging in subversive activities and warlike propaganda. The US actively propped up all manner of reactionary forces around the world. By their frenzied oppression of national democratic revolutionary movements, by their colonial and quasi-colonial plundering and enslavement, and by their aggression against other nations' independence and sovereignty they became the chief enemies of democracy and progress and world peace. In their international affairs, socialist and people's democratic nations pursued policies of democracy, progress and world peace. They actively supported national democratic revolutionary movements among colonial and quasi-colonial peoples; they actively initiated the formation of a broad united front for the protection of world peace; and they opposed the imperialists' policies of aggression and war.

In 1949, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the people of China underwent a long period of armed struggle before finally overthrowing Chiang Kai-Shek's US imperialist-backed reactionary KMT regime and establishing the People's Republic of China. The triumph of the people's revolution was the world's biggest political post-War development. It smashed through the imperialists' front in the Far East, it changed the international balance of political power, and it gave a tremendous fillip to international people's anti-imperialist struggles and democratic revolutionary movements. This was a serious blow to US imperialism.

But the US imperialists did not willingly accept defeat. They stubbornly continued in their staunch resolve to pursue reactionary policies which viewed the peoples of China and Asia as the enemy. The US imperialists established over 200 military bases of various sizes throughout the Asia-Pacific, to which they deployed nearly a third of US ground forces, nearly 100 naval combatants and over 1100 warplanes. In China the imperialists continued to aid the remnant KMT forces and obstruct the Chinese people's liberation of Taiwan, and they conspired to carry out armed aggression against the Chinese mainland. The US continued to bolster its military occupation in Japan in an attempt to turn Japan into the main US military base in the Far East. With Korea occupying a strategically important position on the borders of China and the Soviet Union, the US imperialists flatly reneged on the allies' wartime agreement to create a free and independent Korea under a unified Korean government. Instead they split Korea and obstructed the realisation of independence and unification in an attempt to turn Korea into a US colony and to further expand US forward bases through aggression.
On 15 August 1948, the US imperialists installed the Syngman Rhee clique into power in the South as the 'Democratic Government of Greater Korea'. The people of the North responded by establishing the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 9 September, with Kim Il-song as Premier. With the emergence of two different forms of government in the North and South, the North resolutely proposed national general elections, free from interference by outside nations, to establish a central and unified government and to realise self-determination and peaceful unification. This proposal was in the fundamental interests of the Korean people, yet, acting with support from the US, Syngman Rhee unreasonably and flatly rejected it. Firmly maintaining his reactionary policy of 'unification by arms', Syngman Rhee publicly raised a great fuss, saying that 'the split between the North and South must be resolved by war'. On 30 December 1949 in Seoul, Syngman Rhee declared at a press conference that 'North and South must be unified' within the new year, and followed this statement by accelerating war preparations and stepping up armed provocations along the 38th parallel. Facing the threat of war from the Syngman Rhee clique, the DPRK responded tit-for-tat, while at the same time, it too made the preparations necessary to protect the fruits of the people's victory. After this, conflict between the progressive and reactionary forces intensified with each passing day and the situation became increasingly grave.

On 25 June 1950, the Korean civil war broke out.

On 26 June 1950, Premier Kim Il-song issued a statement calling for the entire Korean people and the Korean People's Army (KPA) to strive for Korean freedom, independence and unification by mobilising together in a war to liberate the motherland. Responding to the call, the KPA bravely took up arms and charged southwards.

With the outbreak of war, the US imperialists, true to their strategy of world domination, could not restrain themselves from armed interference. On 26 June, US President Truman ordered his Far East air and naval forces into battle to support the Syngman Rhee clique. On the 27th, Truman issued a statement publicly announcing the US armed invasion and interference in Korea's internal affairs, and he ordered the deployment of the US 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Strait and the occupation of the Chinese sovereign territory of Taiwan. At the same time, during an absence of China and Soviet Union from the UN Security Council, the US deliberately misrepresented the nature of the Korean civil war and manipulated the Security Council into passing an illegal resolution calling for 'emergency assistance' to the Syngman Rhee clique. The US was nominated to invade and attack Korean forces. On 30 June, Truman ordered Japan-based US ground forces into Korea. On 7 July, the US manipulated the UN Security Council into passing yet another illegal resolution draping the US and other nations' forces in the cloak of 'UN Forces' and naming US Supreme Commander in the Far East, Douglas MacArthur, as 'Commander UN Forces'. In this way, the Korean people's civil war of independence and unification gradually evolved into a national war of liberation against US imperialist aggression.

The heroic people of Korea were not frightened of the overbearing US imperialists. In a broadcast on 8 July, Premier Kim Il-song, on behalf of the people of Korea, expressed his resolve to continue resistance. He said, 'Our people will never again be colonial slaves ... We can never forgive the US imperialists for the monstrous crimes they have committed on the soil of our motherland. We can never forgive them for their barbaric bombing of our peaceful towns and villages and their slaughter of our mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, and our innocent children'. He called for the people of Korea to unite and join all compatriots in a war of national liberation for the honour, freedom and independence of the motherland, and to drive the US imperialist aggressors out of Korea.

The KPA answered Premier Kim Il-song's call, fighting resolutely and dealing the US-led aggressors a heavy blow. KPA forces liberated Seoul on 28 June, took Taegu on 20 July, and captured the commander of the US 24th Division William Dean. Ninety percent of southern Korea had been liberated by mid-August and US and puppet forces had withdrawn into a narrow 10,000 square kilometre strip east of the Naktong River. The US aggressors fought stubbornly with their backs to the sea while at the same time bringing up reinforcements through the port of Pusan as they made preparations for a counter-attack. The war had reached a stalemate.
The US imperialists' brazen armed aggression in Korea aroused feelings of righteous indignation among the people of the world, who stood up to express their opposition. As a friendly neighbour of the DPRK, China could not tolerate the US imperialists' armed aggression in Korea, the serious threat they posed to our security, nor their aggressive occupation of our sovereign territory in Taiwan. On 28 June, at the 8th session of the Central People's Government Committee, Chairman Mao Zedong issued a statement clarifying China's just position:

Each nation on Earth should manage its own affairs. Asian affairs should be handled by Asians, not by Americans. US aggression in Asia is certain to arouse widespread and resolute opposition among the peoples of Asia.

The Chinese people, he said, will 'not be seduced by imperialist riches, nor will they be scared by imperialist threats'. Chairman Mao called on 'the people of China and the peoples of the world to unite, to make ample preparations, and to defeat any US imperialist provocation'. On the same day, Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai announced on behalf of the Chinese government that,

Truman's statement of the 27th and the US Navy's actions amounts to armed aggression against Chinese sovereign territory and is a complete repudiation of the UN Charter ... With hearts as one, the entire Chinese people will fight to the very end to liberate Taiwan from the clutches of the US aggressors.

On 6 July, Zhou Enlai issued another statement from the Chinese government opposing the illegal 27 June resolution passed by the UN Security Council as a result of US manipulation. Zhou pointed out that the resolution was one which supported US armed aggression, which interfered in the internal affairs of Korea, and which destroyed world peace. It ran counter to an important principle of the UN Charter: the UN may not be given authority to interfere in the affairs any nation where those affairs are essentially within the internal jurisdiction of that nation. This was a gross violation of the UN Charter. He also pointed out that the resolution was passed without the presence of the PRC and Soviet Union as permanent Council members; it was therefore illegal and was resolutely opposed by the Chinese people.

At the same time, China was closely watching developments in the Korean war. After the US imperialists began their armed aggression, the CCP Central Committee and Chairman Mao conducted a far-sighted analysis of the fighting in Korea. They considered that the war was increasingly complex and had become a focal point for international struggle. At the very least it had become the focus of struggle within Asia. They assessed the situation as it might unfold in two scenarios. The first was a rapid resolution of the issue. That is, the Korean people might achieve a quick victory and drive the invading US forces into the sea. The second was a protracted war, in which the US would not admit defeat but would continue to reinforce Korea, possibly even mounting an amphibious landing in the north. The conflict would expand into a protracted war. When the KPA fought to the Pusan perimeter and the battle had become stalemated, the Party Central Committee noted clearly that there was an ever increasing likelihood that the war would become protracted and that the US imperialists would expand its scope. The Chinese people must prepare themselves. They also pointed out that we are not afraid of war. Our Party and our Army had twenty-three years’ experience in armed struggle, while the US imperialists faced many difficulties. The US was riven by internal squabbles and even their allies did not speak as one. They also had insurmountable military weaknesses. And yet China had to defend against the irresponsible actions of the US imperialists; that is we had to be ready to fight World War III, to fight a protracted war, and to fight against nuclear weapons.

We don't want to fight you [US imperialists], but if you insist on a fight then you'll get one. You fight your war and we'll fight ours. You use your atomic weapons and we'll use hand grenades. We will find your weak spot. We will come after you, and in the end we will defeat you.⁸
In any event, to avoid being caught short it was necessary to make full preparations. Consequently, as a precaution the Military Commission of the CCP Central Committee quickly adopted a series of contingency measures to protect the security of northeastern China and, if and when necessary, to provide aid to the Korean people in their war against aggression. Even as the American aggressors were retreating pell-mell, the Military Commission met on 7 and 10 July, at Mao’s suggestion, to discuss the formation of a Northeast Frontier Defence Army and to issue the initial deployment orders. These meetings were chaired by Zhou Enlai, a Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission. On 13 July, the Military Commission formally issued a document entitled *Decisions on the Defence of the Northeast Frontier*. The Northeast Frontier Defence Army was formed by transferring the 38th, 39th, 40th and 42nd Corps from the 13th Army, the 1st, 2nd and 8th Artillery Divisions, as well as an anti-aircraft regiment and an engineer regiment—a total of more than 255,000 men. By mid-August this force had assembled and begun training in areas such as Andong (now Dandong), Fengcheng, Ji'an, Tonghua, Liaoyang, Haicheng, Benxi, Tieling and Kaiyuan. (On 6 September, the Military Commission also ordered the 50th Corps to move from Hubei to join the Northeast Frontier Defence Army.) In late August, at the suggestion of the acting Chief of the General Staff, Nie Rongzhen, the Military Commission further decided to support the new force by transferring the 9th Army from the Shanghai region and the 19th Army in the northwest to areas near the railway lines at Jinpú and Longhái respectively. At the same time, the Military Commission decided to build up the special arms quickly, immediately forming four aviation regiments, three cavalry brigades, eighteen anti-aircraft regiments and organic artillery for ten corps. The Military Commission also drew up an air defence plan covering the large cities and industrial bases. Three aviation divisions, fifteen anti-aircraft regiments and a searchlight regiment were deployed around Shenyang, Anshan, Benxi, Beijing, Tianjin, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Guangzhou etc, while some industrial facilities and strategic reserve materials were moved north—away from the southern parts of the northeast region.

At the same time, the Chinese government opened up a diplomatic war. On 20 August, Premier (and Foreign Minister) Zhou Enlai sent a telegram to the Security Council and the UN Secretary General supporting the Soviet proposal for peaceful mediation on the Korean problem and calling for the cessation of all military action in Korea and the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the peninsula. In late August, invading US aircraft began constant violation of China’s territorial airspace in the northeast, bombing and strafing cities and towns such as Andong and Ji’an. Zhou Enlai sent a series of telegrams to the Security Council and the UN Secretary General condemning the US for its crimes in occupying Taiwan and violating Chinese airspace near Korea. Zhou called on the Security Council to sanction the US government for the crime of armed violation of Chinese territory; to take immediate steps to cause the US government to withdraw its forces of armed aggression from Taiwan and other parts of China; to sanction the US for criminally violating Chinese sovereign airspace and for brutally killing and maiming the people of China. On 29 August, after strong demands from the Chinese government, the Security Council placed China’s accusation onto its agenda, and invited representatives of the Chinese government to attend the meeting. This was a major victory in the diplomatic war.

The situation in Korea changed dramatically in mid-September. The US imperialists wanted to reverse their losing position. To its front, the US faced the KPA concentrated on the Naktong River while its rear was empty. On 15 September, after considerable preparation, the US seized this opportunity to land on the western coast at Incheon. The landing was carried out by over 70,000 troops of the 10th Corps’ 1st Marine Division and 7th Infantry Division, as well as artillery, armour, and engineer units sailing in 260 naval vessels and supported by nearly 500 warplanes. After landing these forces advanced towards Seoul and Suwon. On 16 September, ten divisions of US and puppet forces on the Naktong River front launched a counterattack (that is, the US 1st Cavalry Division, 2nd, 24th, and 25th Infantry Divisions and the puppet forces’ Capital, 1st, 3rd, 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions) under the command of the US 8th Army. Facing unfavourable situations on two fronts, the KPA shifted to a strategic retreat. The Incheon force took Seoul on 28 September, while units on the main front reached the 38th parallel on 29 September. At this point, the US imperialists resolved to launch an even greater military adventure—to cross the 38th parallel in an attempt to swallow up the whole of Korea rapidly and decisively.
On 30 September, Premier Zhou Enlai delivered a speech at the National Day session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee, sternly warning the US imperialists that,

The Chinese people love peace, but they never have and never will be afraid to fight against aggression. The Chinese people will not tolerate foreign aggression and will not stand by while imperialists carry out wanton acts of aggression against China's neighbours.

On 3 October, Premier Zhou, again through the Indian ambassador to Beijing, issued a further stern warning to the American imperialists. Outlining China's serious and principled stand, Zhou pointed out that,

US forces are attempting to cross the 38th parallel and expand the war. If this is indeed the case, we cannot stand idly by. We will intervene ... We propose that the Korean situation should be resolved peacefully, and hostilities in Korea must cease immediately. Invading forces must withdraw.

However, the American imperialists underestimated the resolve and might of the Chinese people. Believing that China's just and stern warning was an idle threat, the US imperialists refused to resolve the situation peacefully and continued their massive invasion northwards towards the 38th parallel in an attempt to occupy the entire peninsula by force of arms. On 1 October, in line with instructions approved by Truman concerning the conduct of military action north of the 38th parallel, MacArthur ordered the puppet forces to lead the crossing of the 38th parallel. Later, on 7 October, US forces crossed the 38th parallel in a frenzied push towards the Sino-Korean border. They arrogantly issued their so-called 'ultimatum' demanding that the Korean people lay down their arms and cease hostilities. The arrogance of this was extraordinary.

On 15 October, Truman flew from Washington to the Pacific to meet MacArthur on Wake Island. There they discussed the 'final stage' of the war of aggression in Korea and whether China would enter the war. They underestimated the strength of the Chinese people and estimated the likelihood of China entering the war to be 'remote', and that, at any rate, it would not be a disaster. They firmly believed that all resistance in Korea would end before Thanksgiving, and that the war in Korea was 'in the bag'. After the Wake Island meeting, the enemy dramatically accelerated his aggressive military push toward the Sino-Korean border. At the same time, the US openly fanned the flames of war by stepping up its aerial bombardment of towns and villages in China's northeast. The war took a turn for the worse. The DPRK was in peril, and China's security was seriously threatened.

Under such straitened circumstances, the Korean Workers' Party and the DPRK government requested, on behalf of the Korean people, that China send troops to assist. Filled with indignation, the Chinese people repeatedly demanded to resist the US aggressors with the people of Korea. The peoples of the world universally expressed concern over the situation in Korea. At the time, China had won victory in the war of liberation only the year before and had still not recovered from casualties suffered during years of fighting. China was still in some financial difficulty. Prices were unstable and three to four million urban workers and intellectuals were unemployed, while flood and drought afflicted thirty or forty million peasants. At the same time, land reform was yet to be carried out in the newly liberated areas and small bands of armed KMT and other bandits needed to be wiped out. Although China had over five million brave, combat-hardened soldiers, its navy and air force were embryonic and the army's equipment was antiquated. Under such circumstances, whether to commit troops and whether to do battle with US imperialism was a weighty strategic choice, both politically and militarily.

In late October 1950, Chairman Mao presided over a series of Politburo meetings to analyse the overall situation. The Politburo carefully assessed the difficulties involved. Proceeding from the standpoint of saving Korea from peril, safeguarding China's security and defending world peace, the Politburo decided resolutely on a strategic policy of resisting America, aiding Korea and defending China. The Politburo resolved to overcome all difficulties to raise the Chinese People's Volunteers for battle in Korea. Fighting with the Korean people, the CPV would strike back at the US aggressors.
The Politburo pointed out that it was necessary to send forces under the name of Chinese People's Volunteers to Korea to fight against US and Syngman Rhee forces, because if the entire Korean peninsula were to be occupied by the US and if the Korean revolutionary movement were to fail, then the US aggressors would become more rampant than ever, and this would run counter to the interests of the entire Far East. China's decision to enter the war:

is in the interests of China, Korea, the Far East, and the world. Conversely, if we do not send troops, and allow the enemy to press on our Yalu River frontier, there will be more reactionary bluster domestically and internationally. This is in no-one's interest, and is especially not in the interest of China's north-east. The whole North-east Frontier Defence Army will be drawn in, and we will lose control of our electric power supply to the south ... In short, we think we should enter the war. We must enter the war. It is in our very great interest to enter the war. If we do not enter the war our losses will be enormous.13

After making its decision to enter the war, the Politburo considered the possible changes our entry would bring to the course of the war, and put forward two essential strategic preparatory considerations. It said that since we had decided to fight the Americans in Korea,

First, we must be able to solve the problem. That is, we must prepare to destroy or drive US and other nations' forces out of Korea. Second, since Chinese forces will be fighting US troops in Korea (even though our troops will be known as volunteer forces), we must be prepared for the US to declare war on us. We must be prepared that the US could, at the very least, use its air force to bomb a large number of Chinese cities and industrial bases and the US navy could shell China's coast ... Of these two issues, the most important is whether the Chinese army is capable of destroying US forces in Korea, thus effectively resolving the Korean situation. As long as Chinese troops can destroy US forces in Korea (mainly the US 8th Army, an experienced and effective combat unit) then although the second problem (of the US declaring war) would remain as a serious issue, circumstances would be more to the advantage of the revolutionary front and China.14

At the same time, the Politburo estimated that heavy fighting with the US could force the US into negotiations.

For the initial commitment of troops, the Central Military Commission decided upon twelve divisions from four NFDA corps. Later, 24 divisions from seven armies would be transferred to become the second and third groups committed in stages. The CMC decided that Chinese forces would first 'establish a Korean base area in the mountains north of a line from Wonsan to Pyongyang'.15 Two or three defensive lines would be constructed in the region north of this line and south of the Tokch'on-Yongwon road. The first step was to fight a defensive war destroying only small numbers of the enemy. If the enemy attacked, he would be destroyed piecemeal before our positions. Once we had completed our supply and training tasks and established overwhelming superiority in the air and on the ground, then we were to launch a counterattack coordinated with our Korean comrades to destroy the invading American forces. As well as this, further arrangements were made for the air defence of China: a National Air Defence Preparatory Committee was organised to accelerate territorial air defence work in case the US air force bombed our cities and industrial bases. Four corps were transferred to each of Fujian and Guangzhou Provinces to defend coastal regions against attack by the US Navy, or by Chiang Kai-Shek on Taiwan at the incitement of the US.

At the same time, the Central Committee issued guidance for all Party members and the entire Chinese people to understand the situation correctly and to be confident of victory: not only is it imperative to enter the war, we are definitely capable of winning against US imperialism, because the US is a paper tiger. Although the US is economically superior and is better equipped, its global aggression is opposed by the people of the entire world, and it is isolated. It has military weaknesses: its front is too long, its rear is too distant, its troop strength is inadequate and its morale is low. Its allies such as Britain and France are no
longer powerful while Japan and West Germany have not yet rearmed. The US is no longer the only nation with atomic weapons, and, in any event, these do not make the difference between victory and defeat. Final victory belongs to the Chinese and Korean people.  

These important Central Committee policies established a solid foundation for our army's victory in the Korean war.

On 8 October, the Chairman of the Chinese People's Revolutionary Military Commission, Mao Zedong, promulgated the following orders to form the Chinese People's Volunteers:

1. To assist the Korean people in their war of liberation and to resist attacks by the US imperialists and their running dogs, to protect the interests of the people of Korea, China and the whole Far East, the North-east Frontier Defence Army is to be renamed the Chinese People's Volunteers and dispatched immediately to Korea. The CPV is to coordinate with our Korean comrades to fight the aggressor and win a glorious victory.

2. The Chinese People's Volunteers comprises the 13th Army and its subordinate 38th, 39th, 40th and 42nd Corps, as well as the Frontier Artillery Headquarters and its subordinate 1st, 2nd and 8th Artillery Divisions. The above named units are to prepare for immediate deployment.

3. Comrade Peng Dehuai is appointed to command the Chinese People's Volunteers and to serve as that unit's Political Commissar.

4. The Chinese People's Volunteers will have the North-Eastern Administrative Zone as its rear base. All rear area work, supply matters and matters pertaining to aid to our Korean comrades are to be managed by the Commander and Political Commissar of the North-East Military Region, who will also be held responsible for such matters.

5. As it enters Korea's borders, the Chinese People's Volunteers are to show friendship and respect towards the people of Korea, as well as the Korean People's Army, the Democratic Government of Korea, the Korean Workers Party (ie the communist party), other democratic parties, and the leader of the Korean people, Comrade Kim Il-song. The Chinese People's Volunteers are to preserve strict military and political discipline. This is an exceedingly important political foundation for ensuring that military aims are achieved.

6. It is essential that we assess seriously the complete range of difficulties we might possibly encounter, as well as those we are sure to encounter. In overcoming these difficulties, we should prepare to bring to bear a spirit of the utmost enthusiasm, courage, attention to detail, and painstaking hard work. The current international and domestic situation is favourable to us, but not to the aggressor. As long as all comrades are resolutely courageous, as long as we unite with the local people, and as long as we fight the enemy hard, then final victory will be ours.

After the formation of the CPV, a series of meetings was convened in Shenyang between 9-16 October for all corps level officers and above, as well as divisional level officers. At these conferences, in accordance with instructions from the Central Military Commission and Chairman Mao Zedong, Peng Dehuai explained the current situation in detail. He explained the necessity for China's entry into the war, and he outlined the CPV strategy. He told his officers that the CPV's mission was to offer active assistance to the Korean people in resisting the aggressor, to maintain a base for revolution, and to serve as a base for us to watch for any opportunity to destroy the enemy. Peng Dehuai also pointed out that the enemy had technically superior equipment and that the Korean peninsula was narrow. The sweeping manoeuvre warfare that China's troops had used in combat in their own country would not necessarily be appropriate on the Korean battlefield. We would need, Peng said, to use a combination of positional and manoeuvre warfare:
If the enemy attacks, we will pin him down and stop his advance. When we find his weak point, we will race into the attack. We will plunge into his rear and resolutely destroy him. Our mission is to defend territory, but it is even more important to destroy the enemy's effective strength.

We needed to be tactically flexible. Fixed positions did not need to be defended to the death, and the aim was not purely defensive. The ideal would be to destroy the enemy while still defending our positions.

In addition, Peng Dehuai confirmed that four corps would cross the Yalu simultaneously and assemble for deployment around Kanggye, Huich'on, Unsan, Tokch'on and Maengsan. After the conferences, all units of the Chinese People's Volunteers carried out intense preparations for combat based on the strategy and missions as briefed, and the troops took a mass pledge of loyalty for the coming battle. The vast majority of the officers were righteously indignant at the US imperialists' crimes of aggression, and with morale soaring they resolved that in the War to Resist America and Aid Korea they would uphold the spirit of revolutionary heroism, overcome all difficulties, be unafraid of sacrifice, fight courageously, unite with the people of Korea, defeat the US aggressors, and bring glory to the motherland.

On the 19th of October, just as the enemy was advancing through the Pyongyang-Wonsan line, the Chinese People's Volunteers, in accordance with Chairman Mao Zedong's instructions, began crossing the Yalu at Andong, Changdianhekou, and Ji'an and raced for the battlefields of Korea. The outstanding sons and daughters of China—the Chinese People's Volunteers—under the leadership of Peng Dehuai, and shouldering the glorious historical task given to them by the people of China, began their great war to resist America and assist Korea. Together with their brothers the Korean people, the Chinese People's Volunteers fought courageously and heroically for world peace on the extreme front line of defence against US imperialist aggression.
Chapter Two

Coordinating With the Korean People’s Army in a Strategic Counter-Attack Restoring the Northern Part of the Peninsula to the Koreans

(The Manoeuvre Warfare Phase).

Part 1

An Early Victory—Driving the Enemy Back from the Yalu to South of the Ch’ongchon River (The First Campaign)


Ignoring the Chinese government's repeated warnings, the US Imperialists aggressors continued to drive north along three axes after crossing the 38th parallel in early October. Their plan was that after occupying Pyongyang in the west and Wonsan in the east, they would first advance in the east and the west. After linking up, they planned to conduct a coordinated drive to the Sino-Korean border. To deceive world opinion and to guard against China entering the war, they announced that with the exception of South Korean troops, UN forces would advance no closer than forty miles from the border, the so-called 'MacArthur Line' serving as a buffer.

On October 10, two divisions of the puppet 1st Corps occupied Wonsan in the east, and then Hanghum on the 17th. In the centre, three divisions of the puppet 2nd Corps occupied Yangdog and Songch'on on October 19, while three divisions of the US 1st Corps occupied Pyongyang in the west. On the 20th, the US 10th Corps’ 1st Marine Division and 7th Infantry Division were transported from Inchon and Pusan by sea to waters near Wonsan, where they prepared for landing operations. With MacArthur controlling events from his temporary airborne command post, the US 187th Airborne Regiment dropped into Sukch’on and Sunch’on in an attempt to cut off KPA forces withdrawing north from Pyongyang. At the same time, the US Air Force infringed Chinese sovereign airspace on numerous occasions, bombing and strafing towns and villages in China’s north-eastern frontier region.

At this time, the main strength of the KPA was still cut off in the southern part of Korea and was in the process of turning north towards the 38th parallel. To preserve its strength, reorganise and prepare a future counterattack, the Korean Worker's Party and government conducted a strategic withdrawal of party and government organs in the direction of Sinuju and Kanggye and moved the temporary capital to Kanggye. In this situation, the enemy became even more swollen with arrogance. He underestimated the strength of the Korean and Chinese peoples, believing that the fall of Pyongyang 'signified the complete collapse of North Korea',18 and that almost all organised resistance from the KPA had ceased forever. The enemy believed that China, born as a nation just one year earlier, was weak both nationally and militarily, and that it would not dare to commit troops to Korea. In any event, the enemy believed the ideal moment for China to send troops had passed. MacArthur arrogantly proclaimed that the war would be over before Thanksgiving (23 November). Changing his plans for a coordinated advance in the east and west and for the establishment of a buffer zone, MacArthur ordered his units in the east and west to drive as quickly as possible for the Sino-Korean border, to seize key features along the border, to block the retreat of KPA forces, and to prevent intervention by Chinese forces. He would then occupy everything, destroy the KPA, and extinguish the Korean People's government to achieve his aim of occupying all of Korea and expanding his aggression towards China.

At this point, the aggressor forces numbered 420,000. They had 1,100 aircraft and 300 naval vessels of various types. The ground forces comprised fifteen divisions in five corps, plus two brigades, for a total of 230,000 troops. Of these, there were six US divisions in three corps. Each division of around 12,000 men was equipped with 154 tanks and 352 artillery pieces.
from 57mm to 155mm. South Korean forces comprised 90,000 men in two corps of nine divisions, each division equipped with 219 artillery pieces of various calibres. A further 12,000 troops came from Britain, Turkey, Australia, Thailand, and the Philippines etc. To achieve his strategic aims, the enemy left some of his forces in his own rear to deal with the KPA as it retreated to the north and to deal with guerrilla units. He concentrated ten divisions, one brigade and an airborne regiment (a total of over 130,000 men) and, adopting blitzkrieg tactics, raced in a frenzy towards the Chinese border in the east and in the west, with his main strength in the west.

In the west, this was the six divisions, one brigade and one airborne regiment of the US 1st Corps and the puppet 2nd Corps, both led by the commander of the US 8th Army Lieutenant General Walton Walker. The US 24th Division, the British 27th Brigade, and the puppet 1st Division under the US 1st Corps advanced from the area around Pyongyang and Sariwon along the Jingyi railway line (running from Seoul to Siniuju) towards Siniuju, Sakchu, Changsong, and Pyoktong. The 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions of the puppet 2nd Corps advanced from the area around Songch'on, POYI, and Yangdog in the direction of Ch'osan and Kanggye. The US 1st Corps' 1st Cavalry Division and the 187th Airborne Regiment were located near Pyongyang and Sukch'on as the 8th Army reserve.

In the east, the US 10th Corps commander Major General Edward Almond had a total of four divisions from 10th Corps and the puppet 1st Corps. The US 1st Marine Division and the 7th Division, after landing at Wonsan planned to advanced on Changjin, Kanggye and Hyesan. The Capital and the 3rd Divisions of the puppet 1st Corps advanced along the coastal railway line towards the Tumen River border.

At this time, the enemy was swollen with arrogance, believing he had entered a militarily empty space. Completely lacking in scruples, he raced toward the Chinese border in columns of divisional, and even regimental and battalion strength. As the enemy rushed forward in disunity, he placed puppet army units in the vanguard with the US and British forces following behind. With motorised infantry in the lead, the enemy pressed on, ignoring the eighty kilometre gap opening up between his eastern and western fronts. This reckless approach weakened his military position. The Korean war had become extraordinarily tense.

1. The Chinese People's Volunteers moves into its assigned positions—a timely decision to destroy the enemy in manoeuvre warfare.

On the evening of 19 October, as the enemy was driving north from Pyongyang, four corps of the Chinese People's Volunteers, plus three artillery divisions and one anti-aircraft regiment began secretly crossing the Yalu on three axes and headed for their assigned positions: the 40th Corps crossed from Andong, making for Kujang, Tokch'on and Yongwon. The 39th Corps also crossed from Andong and Changdianhekou. One element headed towards P'ihyon and NANSHUDONG to take up defensive positions while the main force advanced towards Kusong and Taech'on. The 42nd Corps crossed the river from Ji'an and advanced towards Sach'ang-ni and Oro. The 38th Corps followed the 42nd Corps crossing the Yalu and headed for Kanggye. To ensure the army's continued progress, the 4th and 6th Engineer Regiments (later renamed the 14th and the 16th) carried out bridge-building and road construction tasks from Ji'an, Linjiang and Sakchu to Changsong.

Before the CPV entered Korea, we assessed that the enemy would continue to push north after occupying the Pyongyang-Wonsan line, but we needed more time. Therefore, in keeping with the Central Military Commission's strategic objectives, the CPV commander decided that the CPV would adopt a strategy of 'active defence, manoeuvre and positional warfare in combination, and the use of counterattack, surprise attack, and ambush to destroy enemy forces and wear down his main strength'. The first task was to organise defences in good defensive terrain along the line from Kusong, Taech'on, Kujang, Tokch'on, and Yongwon to Oro. This was to prevent the enemy's advance, stabilise the situation, gain us time, cover the KPA's northerly retreat and reorganisation, and create the conditions for subsequent operations.
Based on the enemy's movements at the time, we assessed that before he discovered we had entered the war, he would probably continue his advance and we would face one of three possibilities: first, the enemy would reach our assigned positions before we did; second, the enemy would arrive just after we ourselves had reached our positions, but before we had managed to secure a foothold; or, third, we would contact the enemy while we were still advancing. Consequently, it was necessary to advance in battle order and be prepared to destroy the enemy in manoeuvre warfare at any moment. At the same time, it was imperative that our forces take a series of measures to achieve strategic and operational surprise: we moved at night and laid up during the day, and we maintained strict cover and concealment, operational security, and communications security to conceal our forces' movements and objectives.

After our troops crossed the Yalu, the enemy continued to split his forces and drive rapidly north. On October 20, the puppet 2nd Corps' 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions in the west had reached a line going through Sunch'on, Sinch'ang-ni, Songch'on and POYI, only 90-130 kilometres from our assigned defensive positions at Kujang, Tokch'on, and Yongwon. In the east the puppet Capital Division had taken Oro, Hongwon and other objectives in our assigned positions. At this point, the five CPV divisions which had crossed into Korea had only advanced to locations on the southern bank of the Yalu east of Uiju and south of Sakchu and Manp'o—still 120-270 kilometres short of our assigned positions, and it was highly unlikely that we would beat the enemy to those locations. But the enemy had still not discovered that we had entered Korea. He had split his forces with units and was advancing boldly along several routes. Moreover, the three puppet divisions in the centre were exposed, with an eighty kilometre gap opening up between enemy units on the eastern and western fronts. The situation was ripe for us to exploit the enemy's flawed strategic judgement and his uncoordinated disposition of forces by launching a surprise attack through manoeuvre. This was an excellent opportunity to destroy the enemy in bite-sized pieces. Chairman Mao sized up the situation and made an immediate decision. On 21 October, he sent a telegram ordering the CPV to drop its earlier plan in favour of a manoeuvre war to annihilate the enemy. The telegram said,

It is now a question of seizing an opportunity. It is a question of completing our theatre deployments within days so that we can engage the enemy a few days after that. We will not make our defensive deployments first and then see about attacking later.

As for the deployments to be made, he pointed out that if our first battle was not against the puppet Capital Division and 3rd Divisions in the east, but rather if we blocked the enemy with a division of the CPV 42nd Corps in Changjin while the main strength of the 42nd Corps was deployed to the south of Maengsan (that is, in the path of the puppet 6th Division) to cut the Wonsan-Pyongyang railway link and apply pressure to the enemy at Wonsan and Pyongyang by preventing him from reinforcing to the north, then we would be able to concentrate the main strength of three corps to destroy the puppet 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions one by one. We also needed to ensure that we controlled key points at MIAOXIANGSHAN and at Sobaeksan to separate the enemy in the east and west. At the same time, Mao specifically pointed out that this was an ideal opportunity to destroy three divisions of the puppet army, to win our first battle in Korea, and to begin to turn the war around.

In accordance with Chairman Mao's instructions, the CPV commander lost no time in changing the deployment orders. At 2100 hrs on the 21st, he decided to concentrate three corps in the west to annihilate the puppet 6th, 7th and 8th Divisions. One division of the CPV 42nd Corps and the 45th Regiment of the 8th Artillery Division were to take up defensive positions around Changjin to block the puppet Capital and 3rd Divisions. The main strength of the 42nd Corps was to control the area around Sobaeksan, assess the situation, and extend towards a position south of Maengsan. The 40th Corps was to advance to Tokch'on and Yongwon, while the 38th would move into the area around Huich'on. The 39th Corps was to advance on Kusong and Taech'on, assess the situation and destroy any enemy located there. The CPV commander also recommended to the Central Military Commission that a further corps be dispatched to the area around Andong to plug the gap between Sinuiju and Chongju.
which would be created by the 39th Corps’ advance, to prevent the enemy attempting an amphibious landing behind our flank, and to protect our transport lines. The Central Military Commission concurred, ordering the 66th Corps, which at that time was carrying out production work, into the CPV order of battle. The 66th Corps was to be trucked on the 23rd from Tianjin to Andong, where one of its divisions would defend our communication line from Sinuju to Chongju. The 66th’s main strength would serve as the CPV reserve.

To carry out CPV logistic work, the North-Eastern Military District Logistics Department organised forward logistics posts to direct the work of three logistics units, three transport regiments (with around 700 vehicles), medical facilities for 45,000 personnel, and 30,000 coolies. At the same time, it was decided to establish soldier stations along three routes. The first ran from Changdianhekou, XINCANG, to Pukchin; this route was the responsibility of the 3rd Logistics Unit. The second line from Ji’an and Pyorha-dong to WUPINGLI was the responsibility of the 1st Logistics Unit. The 2nd Logistics Unit was responsible for the line from Linjiang to ZHOUBO and Changjin. Materiel and supplies ran along three lines between the front and the homeland, with distribution at each echelon. Each supply chain stored one resupply of ammunition and one month’s supply of food.

To ensure a good showing in our first battle in Korea, CPV political organs issued a political mobilisation instruction on the 22nd of October, calling on all commanders and soldiers to develop a courageous and resolute combat spirit, to ensure that we were victorious in our first battle, to change the course of the war, and to bring glory to the motherland.

On 22 October, we learned that the puppet 6th Division, then located between Sunch’on and Sinch’ang-ni had received orders to advance towards Sinuju. The puppet 8th Division, which was between Kangdong and Songch’on was to make for Manp’o, while the 7th Division near Songch’on and Sunch’on was to rest and reorganise. We assessed that within a few days the puppet 6th Division would move through Sinanju to Pakch’on and the area to its west, while the 8th Division would advance to the north of Yonghyon-ni. Mao Zedong sent a cable to all CPV units at 0700 hours on the 22nd, saying that to destroy these two puppet divisions it was imperative that our routes of advance avoid the area from Chongju, Pakch’on and Yonghyon-ni and the area twenty kilometres to the north. Otherwise, the enemy might discover our presence too early and either halt his advance or withdraw. Mao pointed out that the best approach to this battle would be to envelop and destroy the enemy around Chongju, Pakch’on and Yonghyon-ni and the area to the north.

Accordingly, the CPV commander decided as follows: the main strength of the 39th Corps would advance secretly to Kusong and northwest of Taech’on, where it would wait to seize and destroy the puppet 6th Division. The 40th Corps would move secretly to the WENJING and Unsan area, where it would wait to destroy the 8th Division. The 38th Corps was to move quickly on Huich’on and coordinate in combat with the 39th and 40th Corps. The 42nd Corps was to detach a division to control Sobaeksan, while its main strength was to move rapidly on to Changjin and JIUJINLI to prevent the eastern enemy from advancing to the north.

However, the enemy was advancing very quickly indeed. By the 22nd, the puppet 6th Division had already reached Kaech’on and Yongbyon, and the 1st Division advancing north from Pyongyang had arrived at Yonghyon-ni. We were still quite a distance from our positions. To lure the enemy deeper and to give us the advantage in attacking, Mao sent a cable on the 23rd, instructing the CPV commander to issue orders to cede to the enemy all territory to the south of a line through Huich’on, WENJING and Kusong, and to avoid premature contact with the enemy. He also pointed out that the enemy was driving hard, and that to seize the opportunity it was imperative to decide upon a theatre level plan quickly.

On 24 October, the puppet 6th Division in the west occupied Huich’on, and its main strength advanced toward WENJING, Hoemuk-tong and Ch’eson, while the 8th Division moved into an area east of Yongwon and Tokch’on, and continued to drive on Huich’on and Kanggye. The 1st Division and a regiment of the 7th Division was moving towards Yongbyon and Yongsan-tong. The 7th Division was still located between Kangdong and Sunch’on. The British 27th Brigade and the US 24th Division had crossed the Ch’ongch’on River from Sinanju, and were
moving to Chongju and Taech'on respectively. Chairman Mao Zedong ordered the CPV commander to first destroy the puppet 1st, 6th and 8th Divisions before attacking US and British units. He also said we should lure the enemy deep into the mountains before surrounding and destroying him.

At this time, our forces were advancing quite slowly because we were moving at night. The terrain was mountainous and with only a few narrow paths available, our columns often found themselves bunched up. By dawn on the 25th, most of our vanguard units were still 20-50 kilometres from their objectives, although two forward divisions of the 40th Corps had reached locations east of Pukchin (the 118th Division) and north of Unsan (the 120th Division). The 117th Division in the vanguard of the 39th Corps had advanced on Taech'on, and the forward division of the 38th Corps (the 113rd Division) was at Ch'onch'on. The 124th Division leading the 42nd Corps was north of GUTULI [transliteration of a Korean placename south of the Changjin Reservoir and northwest of Sinhung - trans]. The 125th Division had advanced to a position west of Sobaeksan and north of ROUYUAN.

Noting these developments and Mao Zedong's instructions, the CPV commander decided that the 40th Corps and the 42nd Regiment of the 8th Artillery Division would assemble to the north of WENJING and east of Pukchin. There they would await an opportunity to destroy the puppet 6th Division located northwest of WENJING. In the 39th Corps, the 1st Division's 26th Regiment and one battalion from the 25th Regiment, together with the 2nd Artillery Division's 29th Regiment and 1st Anti-Aircraft Regiment, would assemble immediately in an area northwest of Unsan. There they were to prepare to destroy the puppet 1st Division near Unsan as it moved to reinforce the 6th Division when that unit was surrounded by the 40th Corps. The 38th Corps, reinforced by the 125th Division from the 42nd Corps and the 46th Regiment from the 8th Artillery Division, would immediately assemble near Myongmum-dong and CANGDONG north of Huich'on. The main strength of the 42nd Corps and the 8th Artillery Division (less its 46th Regiment) would still position itself south of Changjin at Kot'osu and Pujon Nyong. This would block the enemy's drive north, maintain the wedge between his eastern and western forces, and secure our western flank. The commander also ordered the 66th Corps to cross the Yalu from Andong and advance towards Ch'olsan in preparation for blocking actions against the British 27th Brigade.

As our forces moved forward, Chairman Mao Zedong pointed out in a cable to CPV commander Peng Dehuai that, from a military perspective, the following points would be decisive in the conduct of the war: The first was whether the theatre deployments currently underway would allow us to use surprise to exploit the enemy's complete ignorance, and destroy two, three or even four of his divisions. If we prove victorious in the coming battle, and the enemy redeploy, then based on current military strengths, he will lose the initiative. If we are beaten, the enemy will have the advantage. The second decisive factor was the capacity of the enemy's airpower to inflict casualties on our personnel and hinder our movements, to what extent we are able to move and fight at night, and whether we are able to engage in combat favourable to us even under the threat of frequent enemy air attacks. The third was whether the US would reinforce its units in Korea (such as with five to ten divisions), or whether we are able, by manoeuvre warfare or attacks on isolated strongholds, to destroy a few US divisions and a few puppet ones before the US reinforces. Accordingly, the cable instructed the CPV to strive for complete victory in the war, to maintain a vigorous spirit even in the face of enemy bombing and harassment from the air, and to annihilate several enemy formations before he could bring in reinforcement from the US or elsewhere, so that his reinforcements would not make up for his losses. In summary, ‘We should base ourselves on a solid and reliable foundation, and seek victory wherever it is achievable’. These instructions from Chairman Mao provided the CPV with exceptionally important strategic and theatre-level guidance, which was to prove enormously significant in achieving victory in this campaign and in later battles.
2. Advancing, we make contact with the advancing enemy—and destroy the bulk of the puppet 6th Division.

On October 25, the enemy continued to advance in the west in divisional and regimental strength to a line joining Pakch'on, Yongsan-tong, Unsan, WENJING, Hoemuk-tong and Huich'on, pressing near our 40th Corps positions. The enemy vanguard, the 7th Regiment of the puppet 6th Division, had already driven past our flank and reached the area near Kuch'ang-tong south of Ch'osan on the Yalu River. At dawn that day, our 118th Division, which had arrived at a position to the east of Pukchin, received orders to prepare for early contact. The 118th occupied the high ground to the north of the road between Pukchin and WENJING, and prepared to ambush following units of the puppet 6th Division. The 120th Division north of Unsan was ordered to assign a regiment (the 360th) to take up positions northeast of Unsan near Kangdong, CHAOYANGDONG and YUNUFENG to block any northward advance from Unsan by the puppet 1st Division. At about 0700 hours, the vanguard of the puppet 1st Division, with tanks in the lead, was driving north along the road from Unsan to WENJING when they ran into a heavy frontal attack by our 360th Regiment. At 1000 hours, the vanguard unit of the 6th Division's 2nd Regiment, the 3rd Battalion, and an artillery unit were riding north from WENJING to Pukchin. As they travelled between FENGLIADONG and Yansudong, our 118th Division's 354th and 353rd Regiments attacked the enemy. Employing the tactic of 'blocking the head, cutting off the tail and hacking the body', CPV troops attacked suddenly and ferociously, destroying the enemy in detail. That night, the 118th and 120th Divisions followed up their victory by attacking the enemy at WENJING, taking that objective by the following dawn.

Thus the curtain unfolded on the War to Resist America and Aid Korea. This day, October the 25th, 1950, became the Chinese People's Volunteers' Korean War commemorative day.

6. Conclusion

a. In this campaign, our forces had been thrown hurriedly into battle at an extremely grave juncture of the Korean War. Under the correct leadership and command of the Central Military Commission, Chairman Mao Zedong and CPV commander Peng Dehuai, and with an unequalled spirit of courage and tenacity, we achieved initial victory during 13 days and nights of hard combat. We destroyed over 15,000 enemy, and drove the frenzied aggressor back from the Yalu all the way south of the Ch'ongchon. We put paid to his plan to occupy the entire peninsula by 'Thanksgiving' and achieved an initial stabilisation of the situation. We won time for the Korean People's Army to reorganise, we secured a foothold for our own forces, and we gained initial experience in fighting US and puppet forces. This lifted our confidence of victory and set the scene for later operations. However, we paid a price: we took over 10,000 casualties. The friendly/enemy casualty ratio was 0.62:1.

b. The main command lesson we took from this campaign was that it is necessary to closely monitor developments and make timely adjustments to battle plans based on the changing combat situation. It is necessary to propose new plans and, any time the situation allows, to seize the opportunity to shift from the passive to the initiative. Before we arrived in Korea we had no experience of combat outside China and we were not familiar with the situation in Korea, its people or the terrain. Our equipment was antiquated. Moreover, we judged that the enemy would need time to drive north after seizing the Pyongyang-Wonsan line. For all these reasons we decided that our initial posture would be defensive. We would destroy only small groups of the enemy to check his advance, stabilise the situation and gain time for us to mount a counterattack. Once we entered Korea we discovered that the enemy was advancing rapidly, and it was already impossible for us to beat the enemy to our designated positions and prepare our defences. But the enemy was still unaware that we had entered the war and he continued to rush north, splitting his forces and advancing rashly. The situation was ripe for us to use our campaign-level surprise to destroy the enemy piecemeal on the move. Proceeding from this reality, the Central Military Commission and Chairman Mao Zedong amended the original plan. They decided to commit a portion of our forces to block the enemy in the east while concentrating our own main strength in the west. Luring the enemy in deep, he would be destroyed unit by unit on the move. It was decided to fight puppet forces before tackling US and British troops. Operating under this guidance, our army seized combat opportunities by repeatedly redeploying, even while on the march, in response to changes in the enemy's advance. At the same time, we ordered the 66th and 50th Corps into Korea as a
timely addition to our follow-on troop strength. Once the battle was joined, and noting that the
enemy was advancing in divisional and regimental strength, we adopted the flexible tactic of
annihilating isolated enemy units while gradually expanding our combat successes. When the
fighting began this gave us an advantage as well as the campaign initiative. It also created
the conditions for us to destroy enemy forces in a piecemeal fashion. Noting that after the
enemy had withdrawn to the southern banks of the Ch'ongchon River and blocked our
advance, the CPV commander noted that further opportunities to destroy the enemy had
been lost. Additionally, our supplies of food and ammunition were exhausted and if we
pressed on in the attack we would place ourselves at a disadvantage. A further consideration
was that our full strength had not yet been revealed and the enemy had not been dealt a
heavy blow. It was quite possible that he would launch another offensive. To preserve our
strength for later battle, the CPV commander decided to halt our advance and end the
campaign. Experience proved that this strategic guidance was correct. Not only did this
assure our victory, it created conditions even more conducive to victory in the subsequent
campaign. It also gave us significant experience in how to seize combat opportunities and in
'fighting prudently in the early battles'.

c. This campaign proved that night fighting, close combat, flanking at campaign level and
cutting off the enemy's withdrawal route were all effective means of fighting to our strengths
and the enemy's weaknesses and defeating a well-equipped foe. The strength of the US forces
was their technologically modern equipment, their strong firepower, rapid mobility and air
superiority. Their weaknesses were, first, their attacking spirit was poor, they relied heavily on
their air force, artillery and armour, they were scared of night fighting at close quarters and
they were scared of being cut off and surrounded. Second, since they were highly
mechanised, with heavy equipment and logistic needs, they were greatly reliant on roads and
resupply. They were, as a result, particularly sensitive about their flanks and were frightened
of being cut off by our forces. In this campaign, we brought our own strong points fully into
play, with the widespread use of night fighting and close quarters combat. This not only
reduced our casualties from enemy air and artillery, but it added to the shock effect of our
campaign fighting. At the same time, we used the correct tactics against the enemy's
weaknesses by penetrating, dividing, flanking and surrounding enemy formations. This
proved successful. When our 38th Corps performed a flanking manoeuvre towards Won-ni,
the enemy faltered along their entire front, and beat a hasty retreat south of the Ch'ongchon
River. The facts showed that if our forces carried out bold flanking movements to seal off the
enemy's rear, then it was easy to create chaos in the enemy's disposition of forces—a
condition conducive to destroying the enemy.

d. Although we achieved a great victory in this campaign, we were unable to destroy more
enemy forces. Apart from the spectacular disparity in the quality of equipment, which created
many combat difficulties for us and limited our ability to move quickly and at will in response
to changes in the combat situation, the objective reasons we could not destroy more enemy
include pressures of time, incomplete preparation (in particular, the 66th Corps had been
dispersed and were performing production duties when they were thrown immediately into
battle), unfamiliarity with the terrain and road system, language barriers, mountains and
dense vegetation. Once the enemy had collapsed, he would flee into the hills and forests,
thus escaping annihilation. From a subjective viewpoint, this was our first combat with the US,
and some of our commanders overestimated US forces. They did not thrust boldly with their
main strength into the enemy's rear flanks to cut off his withdrawal route. Some commanders
missed opportunities because they deployed their forces as if to attack an enemy in fixed
defensive positions, rather than a dispersed enemy rushing forward. From a campaign
manoeuvre perspective, if our flanking units had, at the appropriated time, seized and held
Yonghyon-ni and Sinanju, thus severing the enemy's withdrawal route; or if, from a
deployment perspective, we had not deployed the 66th Corps northwest of Kusong but rather
at Taegwan-tong, thus allowing the US 24th Division to come further forward more boldly,
then that division's withdrawal and consolidation might have been slower than it was; or, had
the 66th Corps been deployed within our front northeast of Kusong, it would have been in a
better position to intercept the fleeing enemy. In all these ways, our victory might have been
somewhat larger.

Endnotes


2. Not only did geographical factors see the US escape the ravages of the Second World War, it reaped US$107.7 billion in profits from arms sales. In the five years after the Second World War, the US obtained a further US$200 billion in profits from capital exports, dumping of surplus equipment, and by seizing other nations’ resources. By 1950, US GNP comprised two-thirds of the entire capitalist world’s GNP.

3. A speech made by Syngman Rhee on 31 October 1949 on board the US cruiser USS Shangri-la.

4. From 27 June, over 10 combatants of the US 7th Fleet occupied the Taiwanese ports of Keelooog and Kaohsiung, and conducted ‘surveillance patrols’ and combat exercises in the Taiwan Strait. On 4 August, aircraft of the US 13th Air Force occupied the Taipei air base. At the same time, HQ US Far East Forces established a command organisation known as the ‘Taiwan Investigation Team’ to unify command of naval and air forces carrying out aggression against Taiwan.

5. After the establishment of the People’s Republic of China, the US supported the Chiang Kai-Shek clique to usurp China’s seat at the UN and in the Security Council, thus leaving the People’s Republic without a seat. In opposition to the perverse acts of the US and in support of the PRC’s resumption of its rightful seat at the UN and in the Security Council, the Soviet Union had refused to participate in Security Council deliberations since January 1950, and so it too was absent The USSR did not resume its attendance at the Security Council until August.


7. During the war, we called the South Korean forces ‘Syngman Rhee’s forces’, or ‘Li’s puppet forces’, or simply the ‘puppet forces’. To be consistent with cited publications, the term ‘puppet forces’ is used throughout this book.


9. The Chinese ‘jun’ (STC: 6511) has been translated as ‘corps’ throughout. ‘Bingtuan’ (0365 0957) has been translated as ‘Army’. While other translations are possible, these terms give a realistic indication of the unit’s size and position in the CPV command structure. The CPV formation above divisional level was the ‘jun’ (corps), usually comprising three divisions. Similarly, the 13th ‘Bingtuan’ (13th Army) comprised several subordinate ‘jun’ (corps)—trans.


11. A US festival. Its origins go back to the days of the British colony at Plymouth, in northern America. After reaping a bountiful harvest, the denizens of Plymouth held a celebration to ‘thank God’. This later evolved into a national festival, held on the fourth Thursday of November. In 1950, Thanksgiving Day was on 23 November.


15. Ibid, 347.


17. On 25 October 1950, the Central Military Commission further decided that the command elements of the 13th Army would be reorganised too as part of the CPV command structure, and appointed Deng Hua as a CPV deputy commander and deputy political commissar. Hong Xuezhi and Han Xianchu were appointed as CPV deputy commanders, and Jie Fang became Chief of Staff. ‘Heads of the Political Department, the Logistics Departments and other elements [of the CPV] will remain unchanged’. (NB: The reorganised 13th Army’s command echelon was, in effect, merged with Peng Dehuai’s headquarters.)


21. A telegram sent at 1200 hrs on 19 October 1950 from Deng Hua, Kong Xuezhi and Jie Fang to all commanders and copied to CPV commander Peng Dehuai.

22. Shown on PLA maps as a spot height on an east-west mountain range ten miles south of Huich’on—trans.
In 1951 the Korean War was a year old. John 'Bushy' Burke from Geelong turned twenty that year and enlisted in the Army for fourteen months service in Korea and Japan. As he describes it, his employment to that time had been varied, he had been a 'casual labourer on the waterfront and anything else that was going'. His education was limited to primary school in West Geelong. Recalling his decision to volunteer specifically for service in Korea, Burke wrote:

I was a volunteer. Joined K Force in 1951. I was anti-communist, young, adventurous. And didn't give a stuff for anything. I was told by my platoon commander I was a good front line digger. But out of the line hard to handle.

After his army service Bushy Burke returned to the wharves in Geelong where he rose to high position within the union movement, serving six years as a Federal Councillor with the Waterside Workers' Federation. He 'completed nearly forty years as a wharfie' and was 'proud of it'. Yet Korea remains the greatest experience of Bushy Burke's life and he has been active in the affairs of the Korean Veterans Association (KVA) as a delegate from the Geelong area for many years. Events such as the time a good mate jumped in front of him during a mortar attack and, at the cost of great personal suffering, saved Bushy's life, feature prominently in his account of his war. At one point in his memory telling he addressed the author personally as if that were the only way of conveying his real meaning:

You had to be there Richard. The cold—the stinking heat—the hills—the water. No showers for weeks at a time. And yet I've never heard one vet say he wouldn't do it again. The mateship in action. You always felt safe with another Aussie watching your back.¹

Stanley Bombell, another who volunteered specifically to serve in Korea, was ten years older than Bushy Burke, celebrating his 30th birthday on the peninsula in April 1951. Although a farm worker at the time of enlistment, he had previous military experience, having been a member of the AIF for much of the Second World War. His motives for going to Korea were different in many ways from those of Bushy Burke's:

During four years in the 2nd AIF we were told to train hard for we'd soon be in action against the enemy. Having earned the right to fight, we were denied the opportunity. I had wanted to join the Permanent Army after the War but I felt I was not a real soldier, so I took my discharge in 1946. The outbreak of the Korean war and the raising of a Special Force to fight there gave me an opportunity to see action and, partially, to regain lost face.²

A young man who wanted to fight Communists and participate in an adventure. A more mature man who felt the need to make up for something that had been offered to many but snatched away from him. These memories represent two aspects of a complex situation—why individual Australians served in Korea. A third aspect is suggested by the story of Major General JC Hughes.
At the time of the Korean War Hughes was not a Major General but rather was a 'newly commissioned staff officer' at the commencement of a distinguished military career which was to take him to various battlefields including Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam. As well as being a regular soldier and an officer he differed in other ways from Burke and Bombell. For example, he was better educated, including secondary schooling at a distinguished private school (St Peter's in Adelaide), and had trained at the Royal Military College, Duntroon. In contrast to the more personal accounts of Burke and Bombell Hughes wrote soberly of his reasons for going to Korea. He was going 'to obtain experience in [his] chosen career'. For the young platoon commander the war was a natural career move, a step up a long ladder.  

This essay examines the composition of the force that went to Korea, a force that numbered in all less than 20,000 persons. Approximately 11,200 of these served in the army, 6000 in the RAN and 1115 in the RAAF. As the above selection of recollections from former members of the Australian forces in Korea demonstrates, those who served in that conflict came from varied backgrounds and there was a range of factors behind their decisions to enlist. Previous analyses of Australia's Korean War have neglected such topics as why people volunteered to fight in Korea, the participants' employment history and what it meant to be a member of a force so often described simply as K Force. By focussing on the experiential elements of the conflict—the war as seen by those who comprised Australia's small forces on the peninsula—we can more fully understand the nature of the combat and how traditions forged in earlier wars were manifested and maintained in a Cold War climate.

The material analysed here is derived from a number of sources. These include secondary treatments of the war, or specific aspects of it such as particular battles, for the relatively small scale of Australia's contribution to Korea when compared to this country's contribution to the two World Wars often enables a commentator to focus on small groups of people. The sources also include some published and unpublished reminiscences of veterans, a number of which offer powerful and intimate accounts of individuals' perception of war. A significant contribution to our knowledge of this area comes from the responses to oral and written interviews conducted with former veterans, supplemented by follow-up discussions and in a number of cases by written material submitted by participants. These recollections—sometimes sparse, often rich—provide important insights into areas to which we might otherwise not obtain access.

A note of caution should be sounded here about drawing definitive conclusions concerning Australia's Korean forces on the basis of a restricted selection of veterans' stories. Similar exercises which focussed on earlier wars in which Australia participated have attracted some criticism. For example, Jeffrey Grey has described Robson's study of the origin and character of the 1st AIF as of limited value because of the tiny size of the sample chosen for study. Again, in the case of the 2nd AIF, Barrett's We Were There is a fine and moving account of the recollections of diggers from that war, but without the supplementary work in that field from such as Johnson, Charlton and Barter, or the sustenance provided by campaign and strategy studies, the sheer size of the body of people under discussion raises awkward questions concerning the validity of the analysis. We are more fortunate in the case of Korea. For several reasons we can proceed with some confidence that the analysis will yield some significant perceptions about the veterans. Firstly, the available 'pool' of service personnel in the case of Korea is much smaller than those of the World Wars. Secondly, as far as possible the sample is representative of a wide range of different personal characteristics of the Korean forces—different Service (army, navy, air force); different unit within the main Service in Korea (the army); whether or not the soldier had seen action before Korea; state of origin of the soldier; and finally whether the individual volunteered specifically for Korea or was a regular.

Before examining the Korean situation it is useful to examine the reasons—such as we can discover them—for enlisting in earlier conflicts in which this country has taken part. For the First World War we know who the soldiers were better than why they were there. We know that in 1914, in Robson's words, when 'the recruiting depots opened they received an embarrassment of riches'. Quotas were filled with ease; unless they met strict physical criteria applicants were rejected—at least in the early days of the war before slaughter and...
changing attitudes rendered the task of the recruiter more difficult. Robson stresses the influence of Imperial sentiment in motivating Australian men to offer their lives thus but the analysis ends there. Gammage takes the matter further providing a clutch of reasons why Australians joined up in 1914. These reasons are firstly 'adventure'—'most of that early avalanche of volunteers was roused by a sense of adventure ... many eagerly seized a fleeting opportunity'. Then comes obligation or duty. Both these factors, according to Gammage, were generally expressed in imperialistic terms, Australia's cause and the cause of Empire being often seen as identical or at least closely related. For many, not volunteering was simply not conceivable. In Grey's neat expression Australia 'regarded the war as just and service in it as both obligation and privilege'. As the war progressed hatred of Germany, hatred of 'Kaiserdom', grew more prominent as a factor in enlistment.

Barrett's more probing study of 'the thing to do' in the Second World War establishes a wide range of reasons why men joined up between 1939 and 1945. In several respects the 2nd AIF (despite providing so many of K Force) is less like Korea than the 1st AIF was. The most significant difference between 1939-45 and Korea is that in the former war conscription was introduced in 1943 for the AIF and compulsory call-up for the militia had existed from the commencement of hostilities. Twenty-two per cent of the respondents to Barrett's survey entered the army through this avenue. Many of those who served in the Second World War were not volunteers whereas all who served in the army in Korea were, strictly speaking—even if some members of BCOF in Japan may have felt 'pressure' to volunteer given that all their mates had done so. Barrett concludes that 'for most men what took them into the army was a sense of duty, their Australian nationalism, which easily combined with empire loyalty, the impetus of the Anzac tradition (including its mateship), and the eagerness of young men to prove themselves and have a share of excitement'.

It is now time to turn our attention to Korea and examine the circumstances in which K Force originated. As is well known Australia was prompt in committing air and naval forces to the Korean conflict within a few days of the outbreak of hostilities. The decision to extend the commitment to ground forces was less certain and was more or less made on the run. In fact, an atmosphere of improvisation and expedience permeated the first days of the raising of K Force. The initial announcement from Canberra of the commitment of ground forces on 26 July 1950 was vague, little more than an in-principle statement of intent:

In response to the appeal of the United Nations, the Australian Government has decided to provide ground troops for use in Korea. The nature and extent of such forces will be determined after the conclusion of discussions which the Prime Minister will have in New York.

It is not surprising that most of the significant details were omitted from the above statement. At a political level the statement's authors faced the problem of talking around the Prime Minister in whose absence the decision had been made and who subsequently gave a rather grumpy acquiescence to his colleagues' actions. At the operational level there were major problems. The outbreak of the Korean War caught the Australian armed forces in the middle of a period of major restructuring. There had certainly been no lack of planning for Australia's defence needs under either the Labor or Coalition governments. Demobilisation and return to the civilian work force had commenced before the end of the Second World War and though post-war domestic needs always took priority over those of defence or international commitments there was recognition on the part of both the Chifley and the Menzies governments that the minimal forces of the inter-war period were insufficient for a climate in which imperial responsibilities intertwined with new demands brought about by the advent of the Cold War. Re-equipping of the RAN and the RAAF was planned and in a significant break with tradition, three battalions of a new force, the Royal Australian Regiment (RAR), were established. For the first time in its history Australia was to have regular infantry units. However, despite the elaborate plans for defence re-equipping and much bi-partisan political agreement as to what was required, the reality was that in 1950 none of the services was at full-strength. It has been suggested that part of the problem was that wages in the forces lagged behind those to be found in civilian employment. Possibly too, Menzies' introduction of National Service which was planned for 1951 dissuaded some potential volunteers who
considered that there was little point in joining the regulars when they would experience at least some aspects of the soldier's life through the militia. More significantly, the lack of interest in a military career probably reflected traditional Australian reluctance to serve in the peacetime armed forces. For many Australians armies were created in wartime for overseas service.  

Eventually, the main ground unit selected for service in Korea was 3 RAR then serving as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan. Grey slates bluntly that at this time 3 RAR was at half-strength and was 'under-trained, under-equipped and in no way ready for war'. To add to the state of confusion, for some time after the commencement of the Korean War, this battalion acted under the belief that instead of going to war it would in fact be going home. This situation had arisen because of the decision in March 1950, three months before the outbreak of the Korean War, to bring the battalion back from Japan at the end of the year. Not until early August 1950 were the men of 3 RAR formally informed that instead of returning to Australia they had become this nation's forward fighting unit. Some more confused decision making followed. In July and August 1950 the pressure exerted by the North Korean advance towards Pusan and the Naktong Perimeter was enormous and Australian troops were not there to assist. In such a climate an early decision to send the under-strength troops of 3 RAR virtually immediately to Korea was understandable though this was sensibly rescinded and the Government delayed the battalion's transfer until it had been brought up to strength, had trained more fully and had a new commander with considerable operational experience in the Second World War.

3 RAR's strength was supplemented in two main ways—absorbing intakes from other units of the Regular Army and through volunteers who responded to a recruitment campaign which commenced in August 1950. Thus, a tried and true method of enlisting for an overseas expeditionary force was used once again, though the call for volunteers, as announced by Josiah Francis, the Minister for the Army and the Navy, was couched in a different form from that of the Second World War. Applicants must have reached the age of 20 and be under 40 and the period of service was set at three years. It was essential to have served previously in some section of the Army whether infantry, artillery, signals etc. The situation—with both the seriously undermanned 3 RAR and the threatened UN forces in South Korea—demanded a prompt intake and hasty refresher training of soldiers with prior experience though this 'experience', as we have seen in the case of Stanley Bombell, need not have involved action. A thousand volunteers were called for and by November 1950 this number had been achieved. Thus K Force came to consist of a mixture of regulars and non-regulars, those with experience under fire and those without. In many cases the more recent volunteers, those who had enlisted following August's call, were those with the battle experience.

In these circumstances it is scarcely surprising that the early days in the camps at Puckapunyal in Victoria and Ingleburn in New South Wales could be hectic. Jack Gallaway, a regular already in the army, watched the sudden influx of recruits under the special K Force condition of three years' service including one in Korea. Everything had to be done quickly. Military life had settled into a routine for many soldiers after 1945 but according to Gallaway 'the majority of their newly enlisted comrades were quite unrefined'. He considered that the 'K Force recruits flooding into Pucka from Australia's four southern states retained the attitudes acquired in a rougher environment and there was no time to do very much about it'. Equipment was in short supply and much of it—like K Force itself—was recycled from the Second World War. Even the tan boots provided to the recruits were leftovers from the previous conflict but now they had to be darkened with raven oil. The speed of training was not lost on the new members of K Force. Immediately upon the outbreak of war Max Eberle left his secure job as a linesman with the Bowral Municipal Council in New South Wales as the 'thought of being in a United Nations Police Force had considerable appeal'. A former member of the 2nd AIF he viewed the 'training' he received at Ingleburn as part of K Force with some cynicism. He wrote that:

With the training received within Units of the AIF in the Second World War it was an almost automatic reaction when most volunteers adapted to their military life so readily. Much like riding a bike—once learnt, never forgotten. Not much training was
Preparations for 3 RAR's transmission to Korea quickened. The recruitment campaign had commenced in August 1950, Lieutenant Colonel CH Green, the new commander of 3 RAR, arrived in Japan on 10 September, and a day later the battalion reached full strength. Reinforcements were flown from Australia to Japan, a departure from the slower transport of preceding conflicts, adding to the sensations of speed and urgency, and incidentally providing many individuals with their first plane flight. For some with experience of the Second World War going to war by airliner and by way of a comfortable hotel in Manila was an unexpected introduction to the new conflict. As selection and recruitment continued in Australia the battalion in Japan embarked in pouring rain for Korea on 27 September. When they arrived at Pusan a day later they were received by no less than three bands, one Afro-American, one local and one drawn from their own battalion, and flag waving locals. The first echelon of Australian infantry to reach Korea then transferred from ship to motor transport and finally onto a train for the trip from Pusan to Taegu near the site of much of the previous month's fighting. It was, noted Max Eberle, 'only five weeks since my enlistment day'. As the Communist forces were now retreating from the resurgent United Nations forces some of the men may have shared the belief of their battalion commander that the real fighting was all but over. 'It seems as if the Korean war will soon be over'. Green had written to his wife on 16 September 1950, 'big things are happening right now and the feeling here is that it will not take long'.

Many of the soldiers Green commanded may have been disappointed that in this hectic period of rapid UN successes (between the repulse of the initial North Korean thrust and the Chinese intervention in November 1950) it looked as if the war was effectively over. While a career in the peacetime Army was unpopular it appears that the Korean War with its prospect of 'real' fighting was attractive for many men. Some care must be exercised in making too much of this 'enthusiasm' for war: the numbers concerned are small, very small, when compared with the scale of recruitment for earlier wars in which Australia participated. For example, the Federal Government called for 1000 volunteers in August 1950 whereas in September 1939 the first recruitment target for the 2nd AIF was 20,000. More generally, Niall Ferguson's analysis of one of social history's great 'facts'—the mass enthusiasm for the onset of the First World War—demonstrates that energetic enlistment rates may conceal a range of conflicting factors beyond simple unquestioning support for war. Yet it is true that peacetime deficiencies in numbers were rapidly made up when action in Korea seemed imminent. Commentators have claimed that recruitment to K Force was 'very successful' with volunteers thronging 'the desks of the recruiting offices' and it appears that this claim is justified. The initial quota of 1000 was met easily. When recruiting commenced on 8 August 1950 some men commenced queuing at 4 am at the Royal Park Depot in Melbourne though the doors did not open for another five hours. The Army could afford to be fussy and as a consequence three out of four applicants were rejected, a number of them for possessing criminal records. Photographic evidence is further evidence of this initial outburst of enthusiasm for K Force with pictures of grinning would-be soldiers lining up for the first stages of processing, though one should always be suspicious of staged 'media stunts' of which there were a number in the early stages of the Korean War. It appears too that the Government milked some of this early enthusiasm for volunteering to keep the process rolling after the first objective of bringing 3 RAR up to strength had been achieved. For example, a newsreel from November 1950 shows detachments from all three Services marching through Sydney to promote recruitment as another detachment prepares to depart for Korea. Crowds gave tumultuous and emotional farewells to the troops in the early and later stages of the war. Significantly, those already in the Army tried their hardest for the most part to get to Korea. Those already serving under their original conditions of service which restricted their area of operations to Japan for example, were formally required to 'volunteer' for Korea. One former member of 3 RAR explained this situation:
Volunteered for service in Korea as a member of the Occupation Force and the Australian Regular Army. Almost 100% of soldiers serving with 3 RAR in the Occupation Force volunteered for Korea service. No pressure was placed on members to volunteer & to the best of my knowledge only two men declined.\textsuperscript{32}

Before discussing why Australians volunteered for service in Korea it is important to note that not all Australian participants in the Korean War were volunteers in the sense of enlisting specifically for that conflict. This is particularly true of members of the RAN and the RAAF and it was units from these services who were committed first to the conflict. These were members of the armed forces who went to Korea because that was where their units were sent. For example, Ian McDonald, who served off Korea between August 1950 and October 1951, when asked why he went to Korea stated simply that as a 'member of the permanent Navy [he] was drafted to HMAS \textit{Warramunga} for her Korean service'.\textsuperscript{33} As many of the recollections of veterans emphasise the 'volunteer' nature of the force, with all the resonances this has for Australians aware of the traditions in which the 1st and 2nd AIFs were raised, it is important to emphasise that for many sailors and air force personnel the war was a natural extension of an earlier decision to enlist in a particular service. There is not a hard and fast division between different services. There were regular soldiers who regarded this volunteering business when one was already in the forces as a bit of a fiction and there were personnel in the RAN and RAAF who worked very hard at getting to Korea. Jack Verdon, for example, who was attached to No 77 Squadron at Kimpo, stated that he sought to join to RAAF to get to Korea after the Army had rejected him as medically unfit—'yeah, I was looking forward to it', he affirmed.\textsuperscript{34}

These caveats aside, one of the most significant things that can be said of many Australians who served in Korea—predominantly in the Army—is that they were volunteers, the last in a line of Australian volunteers for overseas service that stretched back to the time of the Maori wars.\textsuperscript{35} The participants themselves make much of this point, thus aligning themselves at the outset with previous Australian volunteer expeditionary forces:

Many of the K Force recruits had been among the AIF's thirty-niners and all of them were similarly sharp of hearing in 1950. When their country sounded the bugle call for volunteers, they heard its first notes. Twice they had heard its clarion call, and these Diggers of K Force were be the last who would ever hear it. When next Australia needed troops for an expedition overseas, they would be found from among the ranks of the Regular Army. Later, when a major commitment was made to the war in Vietnam, the concept of a volunteer force was passe and conscription was deemed to be the way to go.

This was to be the last and final call of the bugle, for them or any Australian, ever. These men .... would be the last of their kind who enlisted under the traditional terms for the Australian volunteer, three years or the duration.\textsuperscript{36}

Why did those who volunteered for Korea choose to go?

Reg Saunders, a commissioned veteran of the Second World War who had returned to civilian life but who then found the lure of a new war irresistible, examined with the journalist Harry Gordon the mixture of men Australia sent north after 1950. Some of the types described are familiar from the selection of memories with which this paper opened. Gordon recalls the discussion:

Once I asked him why he had come to Korea. 'Certainly, not because I'm a great patriot', he said. 'I love Australia, but that's got nothing to do with this. And I don't have very strong convictions about Communism. Maybe it's just because I like a certain amount of excitement'.

That was a fairly common state of mind among the Australians in Korea. Because they were all volunteers, unlike the Americans and the British, it was widely felt that they had lofty ideals about the war. Most of them would admit, though, that they didn't. They were there because
they were young Duntroon graduates who were making the army their career, or because
they were Second World War men pathologically unable to adjust themselves to civilian life ... because they simply liked combat, because their wives nagged them at home, or because they wanted to qualify for War Service housing loans. Or for any one of a dozen other motives, some of them a little selfish. 

Factors influencing volunteering for Korea may be broken down into five broad groups. These are the wish for adventure; career advancement; the belief that Communism needed to be repelled; the desire for secure employment; and something rather inchoate and difficult to classify which is here called ‘dislocation’. These factors are not listed in any numerical order though some idea of the relative significance of the different factors may be obtained from consulting Appendix 1 to this essay where the major reason supplied by questionnaire respondents is listed. As the italics in the previous sentence indicate many veterans supply a combination of reasons for going to Korea—overlap between factors is both considerable and predictable.

Before attempting to tease out discrete factors behind volunteering for Korea it is important to note that often specific reasons are not supplied. Many participants simply recorded that they had volunteered and left it at that—the significant fact for many veterans is the volunteering itself, not the reason for doing so. At the time these soldiers felt that by volunteering they were attaching themselves to a tradition. Now, in hindsight, they view themselves as the culmination of that tradition.

A large number of those who volunteered for Korea did so out of a spirit of adventure. This general explanation can be broken down into sub-reasons such as a wish to participate in a war like earlier members of one’s family, a desire for a ‘stoush’, or a wish to make up for limited service in the Second World War (or missing out altogether). The sense of establishing continuity with the Australian military tradition is strong.

Many of those surveyed or interviewed cited as their reason for joining up the wish to be an Anzac or be like the Anzacs or diggers of previous conflicts. For example, in explaining his reasons for volunteering Murray Inwood first described his father and uncles who had served in the First World War, his uncle Roy Inwood winning the Victoria Cross at Polygon Wood:

That's my family history and that's what I grew up with ... So having grown up with military, or Army really, Army stories, all the time, all the time ... and then suddenly the Korean War started. And I could not wait, could not wait. It started on the 25th June and my enlistment date was 27th July ... I was down in Adelaide like a shot.

Murray Inwood's is not the only instance of the wish to add another link to a family tradition. Vic Dey, now active in the affairs of the Korean Veterans’ Association in Victoria, had joined the Army in June 1948. Two years in the forces when war broke out, it took him ‘another two years to transfer from the RAASC [Royal Australian Army Service Corps] to the infantry to enable me to go to Korea. Three brothers, one sister in the 2nd World War, and I just wanted to do my bit’. The links with earlier generations or siblings were occasionally manifested in more idiosyncratic fashion. For example, Major Alec Weaver who had been born in Germany was a lieutenant when he went to Korea in 1953. His family connection with earlier conflicts included an elder brother who fought with the German Army in the Second World War. More common is the young man whose family and the social milieu in which he moved respected Anzac and saw it as something that was a privilege to take another stage.

The wish for a ‘stoush’, the desire just to experience adventure, was also strong. Reasons, motivations, explanations abound in this area and intertwine, yet repeatedly adventure is given as the most significant factor behind joining up. Tasmanian George Hutchinson posed the question to himself—“Why did I serve in Korea?” and answered:
Looking for adventure, travel but this day I still ask myself why did I serve in Korea. But one of the greatest rewards today is having reunions, functions etc with the greatest bunch of mates that ever will be.

Hutchinson's desire for adventure matched that of other veterans. Often the replies under this rubric are laconic, as if 'adventure' is a sufficient explanation. Occasionally as with Ronald Smith, who served with 3 RAR in Korea in 1951-52, veterans were able to expand on their original statements concerning motivation. Like many other volunteers Smith had previous military experience, his service in the British Palestine Police between 1946 and 1948 counting as that vital ingredient of prior service when he applied to join K Force. He states that in 1950 he was:

Working in Papua at the time and was becoming restless. Advent of Korean conflict offered further travel and adventure; an ideal opportunity to further test myself.

Later this veteran expanded upon his reasons for enlistment in a partly satirical, partly realistic attempt to generalise about the reasons why his comrades were there in Korea beside him. In many ways Smith's account resembles that of Reg Saunders though the former's viewpoint is more that of one serving in the ranks rather than that of an officer with much service in the Second World War behind him. Patriotism and political conviction are given short shrift in Smith's analysis. While the Anzac legend is referred in terms of approval the overall emphasis is on mateship and disregard for authority. It is necessary to quote here at length to obtain the full flavour of the original:

My part was relatively minor. I was an adventurer. Wounded at the battle of Kapyong and awarded the Military Medal; wounded at the battle of Maryang San. I like to think I, and my comrades upheld the finest traditions of the ANZACS.

In my platoon there was a hard core of diggers who had served in the desert and N. Guinea during WW2. I learnt a lot from these soldiers. Why did they join K Force? They were bored with civilian life after WW2. Adventurers.

I can't recall any of us having political discussions. In those days the diggers had a healthy cynicism regarding the bullshit produced by the politicians of the day. Indeed, the regimental song of those days had a final stanza:

'We're a pack of bastards,
Bastards are we,
We'd rather fuck
Than fight for liberty.'

I think that rather sums it up.

Well, perhaps not, but Ronald Smith encapsulates one strand of the Australian experience of Korea, a strand that has a long history, that reaches back to Bean and other commentators on the digger of the 1st AIF, was given new life in the Second World War and has been much discussed since. Bean in his description of the digger in 1918 on the Western Front which opens his final volume describes characters who in many ways are like those described by Smith with the former's account of Australian recruits 'drafted in like half-wild colts, many with an almost complete disrespect for custom and authority' and who were bound to each other 'by a tense bond of democratic loyalty—a man must "stand by his mates" at all costs'. The adventurer portrayed by Bean is a paradox like that portrayed by Smith—at the one time a rugged individual and on the other constrained, willingly it seems, within the social coils of mateship. One noticeable difference between the two accounts is that Bean at least attributes some interest on the part of the digger in the purported causes for which the war was being fought—to defeat German aggression apparently—whereas Smith describes a state of total apathy, if not hostility, towards political statements and analyses. (This question of the political beliefs of the Korean participants will be discussed below.) How much Smith, and
other Korean accounts which emphasise the search for adventure and action, are the result of memories and anecdotes being refined over half a century and consciously or unconsciously emulating earlier writers, is impossible to determine. We have seen that some Australian volunteers for Korea were deliberately placing themselves within a military tradition. Perhaps, we can discern a parallel process whereby those remembering the Korean War also place the oral and written forms of their stories within an established tradition—in this case a literary and historical one.45

Making up for missing out on action—or much action—in the Second World War was cited as a reason for enlistment by a number of K Force veterans. Several veterans emphasised this point or returned to it several times in their narrative. Brigadier JJ Shelton, a regular army officer, experienced the frustration of still being in training at Duntroon when the Japanese surrendered. He stated that it "was not easy being an infantry officer who had not seen active service, when a high percentage of all ranks had had combat experience". Upon the outbreak of war in 1950 Shelton with several of his colleagues "kept volunteering for Korea until ... finally posted to 3 RAR". The narrative of another veteran who does not wish to be named and here is simply described as H draws together a number of the components that have been placed together under the heading of 'adventure'. Born in 1927 H successfully enlisted in the army in December 1941, two months before his fifteenth birthday. He lasted only five months in the 2nd AIF before being caught out and discharged as under age. Immediately he turned 18 he rejoined the army, this time legally, and served five years until in March 1950, tired of inaction, he left. He was in New Zealand when the Korean War commenced. H 'had spent five years in the army and had never heard a shot fired in anger during the time'. Finally, the frustrations were over and he 'came back and enlisted in Sydney'. The military was clearly H's métier for he stayed on after Korea to serve in Malaya and then served in the RAAF in Vietnam. H was not alone in his enthusiasm for army life. Mick Everett, now a passionate defender of Korean veterans' entitlements, admitted that in some ways Korea occurred at just the right time—he 'was looking for an excuse to get back to the Army'. Almost exactly the same terms were used by Queensland veteran, James Geedrick, who stated that he 'wanted to get back into the Army ... Korea provided the mechanism'.46

The Australian Government had restricted K Force volunteers in 1950 to those with prior military experience. It is interesting to note that respondents to the questionnaire who had seen action in the Second World War had almost all experienced that action in the last year of the war, for example, in the campaigns at Wewak and Bougainville. Though Gallaway has claimed that many thirty-niners answered the call of the Korean bugle none of the respondents in our study were 'thirty-niners' or had participated in the early Australian actions of the Second World war such as Bardia or Greece.47 Firm conclusions should not be drawn from this limited sample of veterans but one could suggest that an additional element to volunteering for Korea was perhaps a sense on some people's parts that the 'Unnecessary Campaigns' of 1945, costly as a number of them were, did not constitute a 'real' war. This is surmise only. Perhaps the Army in having ample applicants to choose from simply decided to dispense with older soldiers.48

Seeing action could even mean that a man felt that he was truly a member of his social group. Stanley Bombell felt that he was regaining 'lost face' in finally experiencing battle and this sentiment was shared by Dr John Bradley who had graduated MB, BS from the University of Melbourne in 1947 and who found that service with the Citizens' Military Forces—Monday night parades and two weeks camp at Seymour—was insufficient to assuage feelings that 'something' was lacking. Dr Bradley then 'volunteered specifically for Korea' to fulfil the 'desire to see active service' which he 'had missed in World War 2 but which most fellows of [his] age experienced'.49

The second factor influencing volunteering for Korea was career advancement which is recalled as a reason chiefly by those who were young officers at the time of the Korean War. The language used to describe their reasons for serving in Korea is very similar among this group of veterans, often being terse or truncated. The statement from Major General Jim Hughes cited at the beginning of this essay is typical. So is that of Brigadier Phillip Greville whose story combines a number of the themes already discussed in connection with
volunteering—limited service in the Second World War, desire for further experience, the wish to hone one's professional skills. Receiving his commission late in the Second World War, Greville went to Wewak with 2/8 Field Company in July 1945 in the last weeks of the New Guinea campaign. He served in Korea with 1 RAR between April 1952 and September 1953, the majority of this time as a POW after being captured while mending a minefield fence in Samichon Valley. After Korea Greville's career in the Army was to last until August 1980, which included a period as Acting Commander 1st Australian Task Force Vietnam. Greville said of Korea that ‘like most regular officers’ he ‘wanted to serve there’ and when he discovered ‘that RAE was to supply the entire assault pioneer platoon for 1 RAR’ he ‘sought the job’. Adventure, a ‘stoush’, a wish to ‘get stuck in’—these are factors which are not raised in the professional's account. What is raised is the need to ‘get operational service ... very important from a career point of view’.

It appears that there is a shared belief here that reasons for being in a war do not have to be explained at length when one has decided on a profession in which battle is not so much an occupational hazard as the chance to finally test one's training. The opportunity to hone their skills which many young career soldiers saw in Korea was at this level at least vindicated. The junior officers who went to Korea provided the backbone of Australian military leadership throughout the wars of diplomacy that culminated in Vietnam. According to one commentator, a ‘generation of young officers in all three services gained their first operational experience in Korea’.

Brigadier Greville emphasised the importance for subsequent Australian military commitments of the Korean experience. He declared that:

Fortunately the Australian Army believed in training for war rather than training for one situation, so although there were lessons learned from the Korean War they did not overwhelm our philosophies, force structure or equipment. Our commitment to Malaysia [sic] in 1954 and to Vietnam in 1962 ensured that counterinsurgency operations were stressed in our training.

Another significant factor in recruitment to K Force was antipathy towards communism, which was variously expressed as the wish to repel world communism or the wish to protect Australia from communism. We have seen that some soldiers dismissed political talk as so much hot air (which in most cases would be a euphemism). However, we should not take Ronald Smith's statement as evidence that all soldiers lacked interest in political matters or were uninfluenced by political factors in deciding to serve in Korea. Currently research is taking place in the United States concerning political awareness among American soldiers during the Korean War and though this is incomplete one opinion is that references to politics in contemporary diaries and letters are ‘rare’. In Australia the contemporary record is not rich and references to political matters are also rare but this is not always true of the narratives of the veterans examined for this study. What factors are at play here?

The anti-communist factor is almost always combined with other reasons for enlistment in the memories of veterans. Nevertheless the belief that monolithic Communism had to be stopped somewhere, preferably some distance from Australia, was strong. Dick Woodhams was a fencing contractor in Western Australia before he served in Korea with 3 RAR between August 1952 and August 1953. Like many of the soldiers who served in Korea in the later stages of the war he had no prior military experience, except (in Woodhams' case) for school cadets. Korea marked his only experience of war. At several points in his narrative he attempted to unravel the combination of reasons why he went 'north'. He stated:

I joined up specifically for Korea. As a young man I was very concerned about the Communist threat to Australia. I suppose I also enlisted for adventure as I was an orphan. I have never regretted my decision as even though my health is not as good as I would like the mates I made will be with me until I depart this earth.

The question of his motivation nagged at Dick Woodhams for he returns to it several times. Adventure or the need to keep communism at bay—both seemed important. At one point he decided that 'looking back now I suppose adventure was the major reason for enlisting'. But he also declared that 'you have only to compare all Asian countries which were menaced by Communism to see our service was worth it'.
That last sentence of Woodhams raises an important matter. A significant component of the anti-communist factor in veterans' memory narratives is that of retrospective vindication. A number of veterans felt that their decision to volunteer has been vindicated by the South Korean economic 'miracle'. The strongest expressions of anti-communist sentiment are in fact those which are linked to the subsequent economic development of South Korea and the simultaneous impoverishment of the North. The thesis here is that stopping communism on the 38th parallel was a necessary precursor to the current happiness and wealth of our Korean allies. In this view the war was almost a 'good thing' for 'it brought a depressed country (being South Korea) into a competitive industrial country and also one of prosperity'.

Another veteran stated that 'the war in Korea did contain Communism from spreading to the South, and like all countries that have been ravaged by war you only have to study or visit South Korea to appreciate or see the vast difference from then to now of their lifestyles, their industries and exports'. John Lewis, another Korean veteran with experience of other Cold War conflicts (Vietnam), looked back on his time with 3 RAR and stated:

I returned to Korea on a visit in 1995 ... seeing how the southern half of that country has progressed in the last forty years and the high living standards of the South Koreans, as against the obvious poverty of the north. We definitely achieved our goal of preventing Kim Il Sung and Gen. Nam IL from taking over the south with their Communist forces and making them slaves.

What is difficult, perhaps impossible, to disentangle here is how much events since the war have modified memories of the original reasons for enlistment. Korean veterans, when confronted with the question as to why they went away to a war that has now receded from public memory in Australia (and much of the rest of the world) and which was in many ways inconclusive, have one major advantage over those who served in Vietnam (some of whom had served in Korea too). Korean veterans can call upon recent history to help them. The apparent massive contrast between the post-war fortunes of the two Koreas is a powerful tool in shaping memories and also provides narratives, which are often shot through with graphic perceptions of the suffering of the local people, with their ideological justification. As one veteran expressed it: 'Truman's containment doctrine was certainly carried out ... the contrast between South and North Korea today probably justifies the war in retrospect'.

We are faced with the inescapable problem of memory. As we sift through the stories looking for 'the construction of memory' where 'new layers of meaning are added and old identities are reworked or shed' we discover the problem which is perhaps obvious but still significant: 'the evidence for these changes is contained in stories that are related in the present; stories overlaid with retrospective meanings'.

Memory, however, is not always deceptive. 1950 was one of the high points of anticommunist feeling in Australia in the period of the Cold War. The outbreak of the Korean War, following the triumph of the communists in China in 1949, seemed to many in Western societies to mark the commencement of a new and dangerous phase of international relations throughout the world and in East Asia in particular. In the United States the events of 1949 and 1950 helped precipitate a reorientation in defence and strategic thinking that among other things saw America's defensive perimeter extended to include Korea and an increase in defence spending of immense proportions. In Australia too the turn of the decade with accompanying regional tensions and intermittent talk of nuclear war often provided an alarming context for otherwise peaceful activities.

Such states of civic apprehension were not constant, of course. As the Korean War became static, and the newspapers were filled with dreary accounts of armistice negotiations that seemed to stretch on for an eternity, the sense of imminent threat faded and the war started to slip from many people's consciousness. Yet it remains true that in 1950 anti-communism was a strong undercurrent within large segments of Australian society and was a significant influence on young men who volunteered for service in Korea. The victory of the Liberal-Country Party coalition in the Federal elections of December 1949 may be attributed in part to a suspicion amongst the electors that the 'influence' of the Australian Communist Party was growing, and that the conservatives' campaign promise to ban the Communist Party was justified. For many, too, communism wherever it existed was still one entity, emanating
ultimately from Moscow: whether communists were to be found in Melbourne or Korea they were still communists and though the direct chain of command might be difficult to discern Moscow's hand was probably there somewhere. Certainly, Australians for the most part did not question that the Soviet Union was directly responsible for causing the Korean War. And many did not question, especially in the early stages of the war, that Korea could potentially blow up into something worse. Menzies may have been overstating his case for political purposes but he was touching upon real anxieties when he spoke in these terms in Parliament in 1950:

[M]ost of the people of this country believe that Communists are enemies of Australia, and very few people in this country believe ... that this country is neither at war nor in any danger of war. The whole foundation for this piece of legislation is that Australia is in a cold war, if that term means a war in which Australian lives are being lost in action, and is also in a state of imminent danger of what people might call a hot war. 62

To this point, we have discussed several factors for the enthusiastic response by Australian volunteers to the Korean War—the desire for adventure, the wish to advance one's career, the perceived need to repel Communists. There are two other significant factors that require examination: an economic motivation; and 'restlessness' or social dislocation. The link between the two factors is strong and in the following account the difference between them is often only a matter of degree or emphasis.

The narratives of Murray Inwood, a young vineyard worker from South Australia before enlistment, have been referred to several times already. On a number of occasions he stepped back from the description of his own life story to view the Korean War's place in popular memory and to lay bare why it differs from other wars in which Australia has participated. Inwood was reflecting on the differences between the Korean and the Vietnam wars when he stated:

The Vietnam war, if you think about it, is made up of blokes who were very well educated and some who were just average educated. The Korean War was made up of blokes who were, first of all, out of a job, they were Second World War veterans, they were blokes who were Regular Army, and blokes who were looking for adventure. That's the last group that I come into. Now, none of those would really be considered as being a highly educated group. They weren't ... 63

There is an implication in this testimony, and in some of the other soldiers' testimony, that 'restlessness' in some of the participants shaded off into anti-social, fringe or outsider behaviour. Alec Weaver, a regular and an officer, when asked to describe his new charges in Korea, was quite blunt:

K Force was made up of those who couldn't get a job, remittance men, killers and criminals. 64

This, of course, is only one man's judgement and perhaps we can see something of the regular officer in it, perceiving a need to crack down on 'civilian' habits and make them amenable to Army discipline. However, the claims are still worth investigating. First, was there an economic impulse to volunteering for service in the Korean War? Secondly was K Force constituted to some degree of those from the outskirts of Australian society? The period immediately before the Korean War, and just after its commencement, was marked by full employment but high inflation—the cost of living increased by 18 per cent between 1947 and 1949 and by 1950 the inflation rate was at 10 per cent per annum. 65 Post war shortages in capital facilities (eg in building materials) were partly due to import problems and partly due to rationing, although the most notorious (at least in popular memory) instance of rationing, petrol, was abolished by the incoming Menzies government in 1949. Other features of the post-war period have also passed into legend. They include the expansion of immigration schemes to include those of non-British origin and programs of rehabilitation and re-education for returning soldiers. Between 1947 and 1950 Australia received 350,000 migrants, another factor placing a strain on a housing sector crying out for materials. 66 It was an era when government intervention in the economy was expected by the population—a state of affairs which was in no way altered by the change of Federal government in 1949.
Equally well known is the fillip the Korean War provided to the Australian economy. The most notorious of the stimulated sectors was the pastoral industry where the price of wool, detonated by the demand for warm clothing in Korea and massive American spending on Australian products, rose rapidly. The average price per lb at the NSW wool auctions increased from 61.8d in 1949-50 to 140d in 1950-51 and to 190.5d in March 1951. Inflation had been a problem for the Chifley Government—rising wool prices made it an even bigger one for Menzies and his Treasurer Fadden who were faced with a increase in the retail price index in one year between 1950-1951 which was almost equivalent to the increase between 1951 and 1964. Writing in 1970 Menzies lamented the situation his government inherited in 1949, 'a position in which prices were rising rapidly and inflation was making its unhappy mark'. Then the Korean War commenced 'and the great wool boom got under way' fuelled in part by the US State Department giving 'orders that large quantities of wool for uniforms and the like should be bought in Australia in a limited period of time'. Deflationary budgets caused credit squeezes as the government attempted to rein the rises in. High inflation was not matched with high unemployment rates. Male unemployment in this period for civilian wage employees ranged from 2.4 per cent in 1949-50 to 1.5 per cent increasing to 3.9 per cent in the last year of the Korean War in 1952-53. These are of course low figures when compared to the unemployment rate immediately prior to the commencement of the Second World War yet the rise in prices and regional variations meant that some groups were feeling greater pressures than others.

Despite the best of intentions, despite scheme and program, a certain percentage of men seem to have found it difficult to adjust to post-war society. Perhaps, the clue lies in what Murray Inwood suggested above—education. The efforts made by the Chifley and Menzies governments to push through reconstruction training schemes, which one historian has described as having 'a profound effect on Australian society', might not have been appreciated by those with a history of little formal education, low expectations as to social advancement and who perhaps had worked chiefly in labouring/itinerant jobs.

Admittedly, few of the Korean veterans explicitly stated that they joined K Force because they were looking for a job. 'Economic conscripts' are hard to tease out though there is the occasional exception. Charles Cornell from Greenbushes in Western Australia was born in February 1933. A farm labourer after he left school at 14 he promptly joined the army on his 18th birthday in Perth 'owing to credit squeeze (NO JOBS)' before serving in Korea between June 1952 and June 1953. Slightly more cryptic is the statement advanced by Percy Dale of Queensland whose employment history prior to Korea had been remarkably varied, this veteran having been a telegram delivery boy, a railway porter, a labourer on a pineapple farm and a sand miner on the Gold Coast. His fifth job was the Army in which he enlisted when he was 19, joining K Force 'when they needed them not just feeding them' and when he needed 'a steady job'. Even more cryptic is the statement of 3 RAR member, James Geedrick, who described his work before Korea as 'wandering Australia'. An interesting contrast may be drawn with the cohort who joined the 2nd AIF in 1939 who have been described as economic conscripts, refugees in a sense from a state of chronic high unemployment within Australia. It has been pointed out that with the thirty-niners conflicting evidence makes it difficult to judge just how significant the economic compulsion was in early recruitment. The case is similar with Korea. Despite the confident generalisations of Murray Inwood and Alec Weaver few veterans appear to have chosen K Force just for a job.

As far as an economic motive for joining K Force is concerned more significant than unemployment was a background of blue collar/manual work with frequent changes of job. Analysis of veteran responses indicates that the war was a golden opportunity for a group of men unable to find settled employment or settle down to regular employment. Why this was so is difficult to determine. The stories of several we have examined in this essay indicate that some men were perhaps (to paraphrase Harry Gordon) pathologically unable to settle into the patterns of civilian life either because they had got a taste for the army which they had not yet expunged, or because Korea, following so closely on the end of the Second World War, seemed to promise an excitement not possible in civilian employment. This is the restlessness or dislocation referred to above. Other veterans’ stories indicate that permanent employment and the promise of action were a tempting attraction for some men. Such a statement needs to be qualified for one is making a number of assumptions on limited
evidence especially the assumption that inability or reluctance (for whatever reason) to work in one long-term job was a significant factor in enlistment for Korea. Given these reservations it is noticeable that of seventy veterans whose employment details prior to Korea are known more than a quarter had had two or more jobs immediately prior to enlistment in the army. Almost all of these men had been working in rural or 'industrial' jobs—in factories or as process workers or as labourers.\(^{74}\)

Fluctuations in employment prior to the war—that seems to be in the background of many veterans. As for the more extended claims made by such as Alec Weaver about remittance men and criminals (even if we use less colourful adjectives) it is hard, probably impossible, to say. There is an occasional Australian reference to a criminal element who were members of K Force, or who least attempted to enter it.\(^{75}\) One British commentator considered the Australians to have a rather 'soldier of fortune' look, and another—also a British commentator—considered them to be brutal and violent in attack (aren't soldiers supposed to be?).\(^{76}\) One Australian officer considered them to be as dangerous as the enemy, only happy when attacking, less happy when confined to trench warfare, and guilty of fragging (murdering) unpopular officers.\(^{77}\) A British officer who was in command of the brigade to which 3 RAR belonged described the Australians’ evident enjoyment of killing their first enemy:

As the Australians drove them [the North Koreans] off the hills, they got down into the paddy and were hiding in the paddy, in the ditches, everywhere sniping and being an infernal nuisance. Then I saw a marvellous sight. An Australian platoon lined up in a paddy field and walked through it as though they were driving snipe. The soldiers, when they saw a pile of straw, kicked it and out would bolt a North Korean. Up with a rifle, down with a North Korean, and the Australians thoroughly enjoyed it! They did that the whole day, and they really were absolutely in their element.\(^{78}\)

It is noteworthy that this rather unpleasant passage was not written by an Australian (though it is an Australian Official Historian who cites it with evident approval). None of the veterans participating in the current project spoke of their relish for violence or mentioned any criminal tendencies of their own! One occasionally unearths statements, or fragments of statements, emphasising a certain knock-about larrikinism, a certain indifference to the finer social virtues, but even this is relatively rare. Perhaps we are seeing a bias in our sources for we are after all dealing in many cases with men with a strong sense of self-identification as 'Korean veterans', or men who enjoyed long careers in the Army, or those who fall into both of these categories. Therefore we have a population which lays great stress on such military characteristics as training, professional performance under fire and co-operation with allies, or broader personal characteristics such as standing by one's mates which easily can be related to the military factors.\(^{9}\) Jane Ross's analysis of the modern Australian soldier (which she interprets as post-Second World War including Korea) asks—then answers—a crucial question:

But does the military of today perhaps still provide an environment wherein the old-style digger virtues may flourish? Today's regular army is self-consciously 'professional'. Professionals feel threatened by the old idea of amateur soldiers being equal to them in fighting prowess; and modern soldiers are at pains to stress the importance of thorough training.\(^{80}\)

In terms of individuals' motives for enlisting Korea demonstrates continuities and dissimilarities with earlier conflicts. Some factors present in the two great wars are not present because the historical circumstances are completely different. Expressions of fervent nationalism or imperial sentiment are totally lacking in K Force members. However dark was the (potential) nuclear cloud over the world during the Korean War, however dangerous the perceived machinations of the communists, the threat to Australia in 1950 was often seen as distant or as something that the great Powers would have to sort out—possibly through nuclear warfare. In addition, there are factors present in Korea which are not present in the previous conflicts. Most noticeable of these is the desire to advance one's career in the military. The creation of a properly constituted regular army, the advent of a limited war providing the requisite opportunities for practice (and promotion), and the growing sense of a
professional tradition within that army, meant that earlier, more rough hewn, AIF traditions became the stuff of Anzac Day and the fuel for the Anzac legend rather than the inspiration for the modern Australian army.

Yet, this essay has shown that there is considerable continuity in the reasons why Australian men have gone to war, especially in the first half of the twentieth century. A sense of adventure—war, after all, being the ‘great’ adventure—inspired many to go to Korea as it had inspired many to go to Gallipoli or to the Middle East. This was often mixed with a sense that volunteering for overseas service was if not an obligation or duty in the case of Korea then a privilege which if not taken advantage of might be snatched away by an untimely peace.

This essay commenced with brief passages from the memory narratives of three veterans, illustrating the range of factors which induced a relatively small group of Australians to volunteer for fighting in Korea. Let it conclude with a fictional account of an Australian soldier, though a fictional account based on the recent experiences of its author, a former-member of K Force. Perhaps, this passage sums up well how those men, who had enlisted out of a spirit of adventure, intending in many cases to renew the bonds of group solidarity and institutional esprit de corps they had experienced in the Second World War, felt as the Korean conflict dragged on through Static War and protracted armistice negotiations. This account is written in 1958 and is also an early attempt to justify the war and extract out of it what value one could, themes which must be pursued elsewhere. Two Australian soldiers are speaking, Tom Woods and his mate, ‘the tall man’. Woods asks a vital question:

’Why send anyone at all, then?’ Woods demanded after thinking it over for a while. ’Why not all sit down and wait for the bloody war to finish? What’re you trying to prove?’

’I dunno’ the tall man said musingly. ’Perhaps I’m trying to prove along with a few thousand other blokes that the Gooks can be stopped here. And they’ve got to be, you know’. ...

Aloud he said: ’Yes I can justify my actions to myself—and perhaps to you ...

The missus might go crook, though...

’Yeah’, Wood said. ’They think different’. He changed the subject abruptly. ’Feel like a beer?’
## Appendix 1: Korean Veterans—Reasons for Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Reasons for Volunteering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Shelton</td>
<td>Regular Army officer and had served previous term with BCOF. Enthusiastic to go to Korea as being officer without active service was problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Knowles</td>
<td>Had been with BCOF. Enlisted mainly to get back to Japan and for adventure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Land</td>
<td>Was with BCOF and volunteered for Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mick Servos</td>
<td>Had served with BCOF. Rejoined specifically for Korea and to defeat communism. Claims all who served in Korea were volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward (Curly) Schunemann</td>
<td>Volunteered specifically for Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Ward</td>
<td>Volunteed as member of BCOF. Claims almost 100% of 3 RAR in Japan did volunteer though there was no pressure. Two men declined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Woodhams</td>
<td>Volunteered specifically for Korea. Was concerned about Communism. Also for adventure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg McCormick</td>
<td>Saw ad. for ex-servicemen so volunteered specifically for Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jubb MM</td>
<td>Only served with K Force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Ryan</td>
<td>Was with BCOF—volunteered for Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Bates</td>
<td>Volunteered specifically for K force when volunteers with previous military experience were called for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Volunteered as he had spent five years in Army and had never seen action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Harley</td>
<td>Volunteed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Hutchinson</td>
<td>In Army and volunteered for adventure and travel. Best bunch of mates ever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Long</td>
<td>Member of the Regulars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bradley</td>
<td>Volunteered specifically for Korea as had missed out on active service in WW2 which many of his friends had experienced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS Hill</td>
<td>With BCOF in Japan when he went to Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Bombell</td>
<td>Chance to regain lost face and see action after WW2 service had denied him this chance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Burke</td>
<td>Volunteered specifically for Korea. Anti-Communist, young and adventurous and carefree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major-Gen. JC Hughes</td>
<td>New officer and needed career experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian McDonald</td>
<td>Member of RAN and was drafted to vessel for Korean service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Robinson</td>
<td>As regular served wherever he was posted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesley Foote</td>
<td>Volunteered for post-war Korean service, destroying mines etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Had served with BCOF. Volunteered for K Force after twice failing university exams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Green</td>
<td>Enlisted when govt asked for volunteers for Korea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor Dey</td>
<td>Took him 2 years to transfer to Korea bound infantry. Brothers and sister in WW2—wanted to do his bit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Gilligan</td>
<td>Had been in BCOF. Already in Army.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Thomas MM</td>
<td>Already in Army—had to serve anywhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj-Gen RL Hughes</td>
<td>Regular soldier—was posted to Korea.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Charles Cornell
Joined Army because of credit squeeze (no jobs). Didn't volunteer but did not object when sent as reinforcement. No regrets.

Clement Kealy
Volunteered for Korea then transferred to Regulars.

John Godden
Already in Army.

Allan McInnes
Volunteered for Korea, not a member of BCOF.

Norman Glenn
In BCOF. Was required to go to Korea.

Reginald Garrigan
Just says 'volunteer'.

Christian Petersen
Ex-RAN. Volunteered specifically for K Force.

Roy Freeman
In Army—considered it career progression to gain service experience.

William Baldwin
Signed on with K Force for 2 years.

John Portener
Was with BCOF in Japan.

Jack Blankley
Rejoined Army specifically to go to Korea. Only joined when it was obvious that he would see action.

Victor Lowe
Former alcoholic. Had served with BCOF. K Force volunteer.

John Munro
As regular was sent to serve in Korea.

Robert Parker
Had served with BCOF. At time of war was with CMF when govt called for ex-servicemen volunteers. Thought it his duty and did not like Communists.

James Geedrick
Joined K Force 1950. (Specific volunteer?)

Angus Campbell
Was already in Army and volunteered to go Korea.

John Martin
Had served with BCOF. Volunteered.

Ray McKenzie
Service at Cowra, BCOF.

John Lewis
Volunteered.

Kevin Dutton
Special enlistment for two years in K Force.

Norman Grose
As member of RAN was posted there.

Charles Thwaites
Phillip Greville
Officer in Army—professional reasons though had to volunteer like everybody else. POW.

Neil Miller
Was already member of RAN but volunteered specifically for service in Korea. Adventure probably—that's what he had joined RAN for.

William Rowley
Was member of RAN serving with occupation forces.

Ronald Smith
Restless. Travel and adventure, chance to test himself.

Ronald Williams
Already in RAN.

Dorus Van Itallie
Volunteered specifically for 2 year period with K Force.

Max Eberle
K Force specifically.

Peter Balzary
Volunteer for K Force.

Leon Greville
Officer in Army—had served in BCOF—operational service essential from career point of view.

Norm Goldspink
Joined Reg Army to learn plant operating—ended up in infantry.
Keith Eberle  Already serving. Chance for adventure in big war. Had to wire parents for permission.
Richard Garrett  K Force volunteer—2 years.
Ron Perkins  Already in Army. Considered it his duty.
Percy Dale  Joined K Force when they needed them not just feeding them. Steady job. Perhaps also glory or excitement.
James Broderick  Volunteer for K Force—2 year enlistment.
David Irving  Looking for excitement.
Peter Cook  Regular Army officer. Posted to Korea.
# Appendix 2: Korean Veterans—Employment Prior to Service in Korea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Employment Prior to Korea Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James Shelton</td>
<td>Regular Army officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Knowles</td>
<td>Fitter and Turner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Langdon</td>
<td>Bricklayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron Land</td>
<td>Process worker; Army after that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mick Servos</td>
<td>Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward (Curly) Schunemann</td>
<td>Farm hand; Labourer; Plant Operator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenneth Ward</td>
<td>Truckdriver; Farm hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Woodhams</td>
<td>Farm work; bulldozing; fencing; shearing; wool classing; fencing contractor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg McCormick</td>
<td>Boot/Shoe Factory worker; Fire Brigade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Jubb MM</td>
<td>Baker, Station hand, SEC linesman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Neil</td>
<td>Leading chainman, Vic Lands, Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Ryan</td>
<td>Engine assembler at aircraft factory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Bates</td>
<td>Stamp battery operator at NT gold mine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Harley</td>
<td>Upholsterer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Hutchinson</td>
<td>Labourer (shift worker), farm hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Long</td>
<td>Dental technician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Bradley</td>
<td>Medical practitioner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS Hill</td>
<td>PMG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Bombell</td>
<td>Farmer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Burke</td>
<td>Casual labourer. On the water front. Anything else that was going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major-Gen. JC Hughes</td>
<td>Newly commissioned regular officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian McDonald</td>
<td>Victorian Railways lad porter, regular navy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dennis Robinson</td>
<td>Regular army.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesley Foote</td>
<td>Regular army—prior to that a clerk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Green</td>
<td>Medical student (failed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Kealy</td>
<td>Tradesman in glazing, shopfitting, leadlighting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor Dey</td>
<td>Plasterer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Gilligan</td>
<td>BCOF.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Thomas MM</td>
<td>Farm hand and rabbit trapping, NSW Railways, Concord Hospital, Malco Industries (foundry).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maj-Gen RL Hughes</td>
<td>Soldier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Cornell</td>
<td>Farm labourer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clement Kealy</td>
<td>Boiler maker, timber contractor, dairy farmer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Godden</td>
<td>Work for Pool Petroleum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allan McInnes</td>
<td>Compositor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman Glenn</td>
<td>Timber worker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reginald Garrigan</td>
<td>Builder labourer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Petersen</td>
<td>Student and labourer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy Freeman</td>
<td>Army staff cadet, then army officer training K Force recruits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Baldwin</td>
<td>Department of Main Roads, NSW.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Portener</td>
<td>Farm worker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Blankley</td>
<td>Various.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victor Lowe</td>
<td>Wharf labourer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Munro</td>
<td>Motor trimmer-upholsterer, garage hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Geedrick</td>
<td>Wandering Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angus Campbell</td>
<td>Station hand jackeroo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Martin</td>
<td>Farm labourer, Vacuum oil company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray McKenzie</td>
<td>Carpenter, railway sleeper cutter, dairy farm, app steel moulder.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
John Lewis  Prior to 1949 was a farm worker and a timber cutter. Then joined the army.
Kevin Dutton  Milk vendor.
Norman  Junior cabinet maker, stuffing mattress and pillows, making radiators, prospecting, cleaner and fireman (WAGR).
Charles Thwaites  Merchant navy (seaman).
Phillip Greville  Regular soldier (mainly student)
Neil Miller  Bank officer, merchant seaman.
Ronald Smith  Oil rig worker (PNG).
Ronald Williams  RAN as Flight Deck SBA.
Dorus Van Itallie  Farmer.
Max Eberle  Leading hand electrician linesman.
Peter Balzary  Customs agent.
Leon Greville  Regular Army officer.
Norm Goldspink  Labourer in vineyards and wheat and sheep farm.
Keith Eberle  Telegram messenger, postman, exchange operator.
Richard Garrett  Farming.
Ron Perkins  35mm projectionist, battery repair worker.
Percy Dale  Telegram delivery, railway porter, labourer on pineapple farm, sand mining.
James Broderick  Carpenter.
David Irving  PMG linesman.
Peter Cook  Regular Army officer.
Endnotes

1. Questionnaire response, John Burke.
2. Questionnaire response, Stanley Bombell.
3. Questionnaire response, JC Hughes.

4. I have taken my numbers from the Preliminary Nominal Roll though this gives a greater figure for Army personnel in Korea than that given in the Official History which is 10,600. This apparent discrepancy is explained by the fact that the Nominal Roll is not restricted to the period of the war but includes those who served in Korea in the years immediately after the Armistice (1953-1956). Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs, Preliminary Nominal Roll of Australian Veterans of the Korean War (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1999).


7. I have been guided here by Alan Bryman and Duncan Cramer, Quantitative Data Analysis with SPSS for Windows: A Guide for Social Scientists (London: Routledge, 1997), especially chs 1, 4 and 6.


17. There is much confusion in the published sources concerning the dates of the call for volunteers. O'Neill, trusting on a personal communication, states that the Army launched a recruiting campaign on 21 August 1950. Adam-Smith, in an error-ridden passage which has the war start on 25 January 1950, states that the recruiting offices opened their doors on 8 July, almost three weeks before the decision to commit Australian ground troops. Backed by newspaper sources I prefer the description of the recruiting campaign in Lieutenant Colonel Neil C. Smith, Home by Christmas: With the Australian Army in Korea 1950-1956 (Gardenvale, Victoria: Mostly Unsung, 1990), 10-13. See also O'Neill, Combat Operations, 18; Patsy Adam-Smith, Prisoners of War: From Gallipoli to Korea (Ringwood: Penguin, 1992), 712.


22. Eberle, ‘My Korea Service’, 5. Eberle was one of those who found their first flight (in a QANTAS Skymaster) an exhilarating experience.

23. Green, The Name’s Still Charlie, 251. This was one day after the Inchon landing. For a similar belief amongst the Canadians that they would miss out on the action see John Melady, Korea: Canada’s Forgotten War (Toronto: Macmillan Paperbacks Edition, 1988), 47. Eventually the Canadian ground forces went into action in February 1951 when MacArthur’s promises of an early finish to the conflict had long been dispelled.

24. Grey, A Military History of Australia, 196, describes how in 1949 the planned operational brigade—the Royal Australian Regiment—had only 1000 of the 3000 men it needed to be at strength.


29. Adam-Smith, *Prisoners of War*, 379 facing, has a photograph of a long queue of potential K force members which I take to be Royal Park. For an example of a media stunt involving troops in training enthusiastically slaughtering bags stuffed with straw see Eberle, 'My Korea Service', 2. Another (and later) example may be found in Cinesound Review No 1060, 22 February 1952, National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA), Canberra. This is less gory but concentrates on troops in training dashing across creeks and climbing rock faces. In my interpretation of photographic and film evidence I have been guided by John Berger, *About Looking* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1980); Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History. Matthew Brady to Walter Evans* (New York: Noonday Press, 1990), Prologue and ch. 2; Bruce Cumings, *War and Television* (London and New York: Verso, 1992), especially ch. 1.
31. See for example Movietone News, A1159, 3 June 1952 (1 RAR leaving Sydney); Cinesound Review 1114 (3 June 1953) (farewell parade to 2 RAR in Melbourne); Movietone News, A1239, 3 December 1953 (same battalion, this time in Sydney): all in NFSA, Canberra.
32. Questionnaire response, Kenneth Ward.
33. Questionnaire response, Ian McDonald. Also see questionnaire responses from Charles Thwaites and Ronald 'Doc' Williams.
34. Interview with Jack Verdon, 23 August 1996. For two soldiers who thought that 'volunteering' was really a misnomer see questionnaire responses from John Thomas MM and Charles Cornell.
35. Appendix 1: Korean Veterans—Reasons for Service, provides in précis form the reasons for going to Korea provided by 70 respondents to the questionnaire developed for my forthcoming PhD thesis.
38. Interview with Murray Inwood, 3 August 1996. Also see questionnaire responses from Shelton James, H John Bradley, Stan Bombell and Vic Dey. For the story of Roy Inwood, VC, see Lionel Wigmore in collaboration with Bruce Harding [second edition revised and condensed by Jeff Williams and Anthony Staunton], *They Dared Mighty* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1986), 71-72.
39. Questionnaire response, Vic Dey.
40. Interview with Alec Weaver, 4 August 1996.
41. Questionnaire response, George Hutchinson. Also see questionnaire responses from Patrick Knowles, Richard Woodhams, Charles Neil, Jack Blankley, Neil Miller, Keith Eberle (brother of Max cited above but a regular soldier prior to the war), Percy Dale, David Irving and John Burke. For Dave Irving and Bushy Burke also see newspaper interviews in the Age, 15 October 1998. For Irving and Woodhams also see follow-up telephone discussions of 31 January 1999 (Irving) and 9 November 1998 (Woodhams).
42. Questionnaire response, Ronald Smith.
43. The literature on the 'characteristics' of the Australian digger—whether in the First World War or later—is extensive. One of the most useful because it discusses changes in the characteristics over time, and some of the reasons behind these changes, is Jane Ross, *The Myth of the Australian Digger: The Australian Soldier in Two World Wars* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1985). In an area where surmise and generalisation can easily displace analysis Ross's account is well-balanced. On the continuity of the representation (especially in fiction) of the Australian soldier see Robin Gerster, *Big Nothing: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1987).
44. CEW Bean, *The AIF in France 1918, Volume VI of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1942), 5-6.
45. See Peter Burke's discussion of 'schemata' in the transmission of social memories, 'History as Social Memory', in Thomas Butler, ed, *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 97-113, especially 102 ff. Burke is talking about collective or group memory but his treatment of how events or people are represented in terms of other (generally earlier) events or people is illuminating for all aspects of memory representation.
46. Questionnaire responses, James Shelton and H; interview with Mick Everett, 5 December 1996; questionnaire response, James Gedrick.
47. Gallaway, *The Last Call of the Bugle*, 14.
48. A fascinating, often brilliant treatment, of how men in ODC of the 'thirty-niner' battalions (the 2/2nd of the 6th Division) reacted to the 'unnecessary' Aitape-Wewak campaign of 1945 is given in Barter, *Far Above Battle*, 224, 234-35, 242, 254-55. Barter uses the Official History to suggest that the 'uselessness' of this last campaign was a popular sentiment amongst veteran 6th Division members, a sentiment that was not shared by younger, less experienced soldiers on Bougainville and New Britain. Older soldiers also felt that they had done enough. See Gavin Long, *The Final Campaigns* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1963), and for a similar suggestion that 'older soldiers' had had enough of war by 1945, see D Hay, *Nothing Over Us: The Story of the 2/6th Australian Infantry Battalion* (Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1984).
49. Questionnaire response, Dr John Bradley; telephone discussion, Dr Bradley, 24 April 1997.
50. Questionnaire response, Phillip Greville. Brigadier Greville also completed the section on Australian POWs in Korea for the Official History which also provides some interesting details concerning
Australian soldiers’ attitudes to the political questions of the war. See O’Neill, Combat Operations, ch. 23.

51. Questionnaire response, Brigadier Leon Greville, DSO (brother of previous respondent cited, and to complete a family circle, the uncle of Jeffrey Grey).


53. Questionnaire response, Phillip Greville.

54. See H-NET Military Discussion List: Subject: US Soldiers’ Political Views in Korean War (H-WAR@H-NET.MSU.EDU). The opinion that political references were ‘rare’ amongst US servicemen in the Korean War derives from Janet Valentine, a PhD candidate at the University of Alabama whose subject is American soldiers’ experience of that war.

55. Questionnaire response, Richard Woodhams. Also see follow-up telephone discussion of November 1998 and letter to author of 14 September 1997. For similar statements from other veterans (that they volunteered at least partly to fight communism) see questionnaire responses, Mick Servos, John Burke and Bob Parker.

56. Questionnaire response, Keith Langdon.

57. Questionnaire response, William Ryan.

58. Questionnaire response, John Lewis.

59. Questionnaire response, Dr John Bradley.

60. Alistair Thomson, ‘Embattled Manhood: Gender, Memory and the Anzac Legend’, in Kate Darian-Smith and Paula Hamilton, eds, Memory and History in Twentieth Century Australia (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 158-73, at 159. A detailed discussion of remembering and forgetting and the Korean War is the subject of ch 6 of my thesis. A full list of relevant sources on memory will be found there.


63. Interview with Murray Inwood, 3 August 1996.

64. Ibid, ‘NSC-68 and the beginning of hostilities in Korea had a spectacular effect on the Australian economy’. NSC-68 (National Security Council Report No 68) of 7 April 1950 called for a massive increase in American defence spending in order to contain Communism. Accompanying this were changes in American economic policy whereby the United States purchased an increased amount of goods from ‘friendly’ nations.


66. RG Menzies, The Measure of the Years, 98.

67. M. Keating, ‘1939-1951’, in Frank Crowley, ed, A Year of Space, A Chapter in Autobiography (London: Macdonald, 1952, first published 1951), 135; Reginald Thompson, Cry Korea (London: Macdonald, 1952, first published 1951), 164,177. Linklater, a popular writer of the period, was in Korea on a semi-official capacity. Thompson was a highly experienced war journalist whose writings on Korea are among the most compassionate of Western journalists.

68. Eric Linklater, A Year of Space, A Chapter in Autobiography (London: Reprint Society, 1954, first published 1953), 135; Reginald Thompson, Cry Korea (London: Macdonald, 1952, first published 1951), 164,177. Linklater, a popular writer of the period, was in Korea on a semi-official capacity. Thompson was a highly experienced war journalist whose writings on Korea are among the most compassionate of Western journalists.

69. Interview with Alec Weaver, 4 August 1996.
79. I owe this characterisation of veterans who identify themselves strongly as such to Rachel Jenzen whose forthcoming MA thesis (University of Melbourne) on US Marines’ memories of Australia in the Second World War has influenced significant parts of this study. Until the MA is completed see Rachel Jenzen, "Over-Sexed, Over-Paid and Over here"? Cross Cultural Memories of the American Presence in Wartime Victoria’, in Martin Crotty and Doug Scobie, eds, Raiding Clio’s Closet: Postgraduate Presentations in History 1997 (Melbourne: University of Melbourne History Department, 1997), 185-93.


81. AM Harris, The Tall Man (London: Cassell, 1958). Harris wrote another novel set in the Korean War, Grains of Sand (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1968). His first novel, under its original title No Flowering Road, won a literary prize offered by the Sydney Morning Herald though its author afterwards pursued a business career with Myer Stores. Both novels are highly sympathetic to the plight of the Korean citizenry caught up in a murderous war. The Nominal Roll and O'Neill supply details for AM Harris, MM, one of whose trips with Korean agents into enemy held territory in the last months of the war is graphically described by O'Neill. See O'Neill, Combat Operations, 272, 645.
The POWs of the Korean War were the subject of enormous controversy during the fighting and remained so for a decade or more after the end of hostilities. Their fate was the major stumbling block to the successful conclusion of the long drawn-out cease-fire negotiations at Panmunjom; on both sides they provided grist to the propaganda mills; and in the West at least their repatriation at the war's end was followed by a campaign of innuendo and vilification which one authoritative commentator has dubbed a 'march to calumny'. As Albert Biderman observed of this process:

Almost immediately [after capture], these prisoners became the subject of intensive Communist propaganda; they have remained subjects of intensive propaganda ever since.¹

In the postwar period, however, that propaganda was generated almost entirely in the United States itself.

This essay has several aims. First, it recalls some of the experiences of UN prisoners for an age which has almost entirely forgotten them; it examines the postwar debate about brainwashing, collaboration and survival which raged for a decade after the cease-fire, and highlights some problems in the comparisons which were drawn between American POWs and those of other combatant UN forces; finally, it looks at where the Korean POW experience led in terms of the preparation of soldiers in Western armies for possible capture in future conflicts, and poses some questions about its implications for the present. To begin with, however, we need to look briefly at UN administration of Chinese and North Korean prisoners captured by forces of the United Nations Command in order to appreciate something of the enemy's approach to the treatment of UN prisoners in Chinese and North Korean custody.

UNC Prisoner of War Administration

By early 1951 there were 140,000 North Koreans and 20,000 Chinese Communist prisoners in UN hands. Such large numbers of captured enemy personnel posed a potential security problem and were concentrated well to the rear of the UN lines, ultimately on the small island of Koje-do. The compounds built to house them were inadequate for the numbers held while the calibre of the South Korean guards was poor, that of the Americans not much better. The Communists regarded the prison camps—ours and theirs—as extensions of the battlefield, and organised accordingly. A vicious struggle between pro- and anti-Communist factions ensued within the UN camps as the two warred with each other, encouraged by forces outside. When the Americans attempted to screen and count enemy POWs in early 1952 in response to developments in the truce talks, they were met with an armed response and seventy-seven prisoners were killed. The camp and its inmates then became the focus for a propaganda campaign over forced versus voluntary repatriation, with the UN claiming that only 70,000 of some 160,000 POWs wished to return north. There was further violence in April 1952 during which the American commandant of the camp was captured by the militant prisoners in one compound, and was only released after a show of force in which more prisoners were killed. Thereafter, the Communist-controlled compounds were broken up and their inmates placed in smaller, more manageable units while all the prisoners were dispersed across a series of camps on the islands and mainland. There were further demonstrations among those prisoners who had elected to be repatriated, but nothing on the scale of the earlier Koje-do disturbances. At the end of the war, thousands of Chinese and North Korean soldiers opted to stay where they were.
There are three things to say about the experience of Communist POWs in UN hands. In the first nine months of hostilities captured enemy personnel were generally docile. Thereafter organised rival factions began a year-long struggle within the prison camps during which hundreds of POWs were killed. The preconditions for this violence were unfortunately exacerbated by administrative and organisational shortcomings in UN policies which governed POWs. It is clear that initially at least the Americans regarded the task in traditional custodial terms, and as former belligerents the POWs were to be treated humanely until repatriated. When repatriation became an issue at the truce talks, approximately two-thirds of Chinese and one-third of North Korean prisoners indicated that they would resist repatriation; this delayed the signing of the armistice by eighteen months. There is no question that the demonstrations by enemy POWs embarrassed and hampered the UN Command, while they diverted resources from the front in order to contain them.

The US announced at the beginning of the war that it would apply the rules of the Geneva Convention, although neither China nor North Korea were signatories and the US itself had not ratified the 1949 protocols (it did not do so until 1955). In terms of the day-to-day conduct of POW administration the US mostly followed the Convention, at least until the violent incidents of 1952; in fact, the US Army had assumed responsibility for POW administration in September 1950 in order to ensure that all UN contingents abided by the Convention since it was known that the South Koreans often mistreated and even killed captured enemy personnel (the Korean People's Army behaved in a similar manner). The refusal to insist on the automatic or 'forced' repatriation of prisoners was the clear exception to this general proposition: Article 118 of the 1949 protocols specified that all prisoners were to be returned at the end of hostilities, something which was politically impossible and probably morally repugnant to the Truman administration, not least after the experience of repatriating former Soviet citizens in central Europe in 1945. The counter-proposal of voluntary repatriation had both humanitarian and obvious political attractions.

In another area, however, US authorities acted in a manner contrary to the strict provisions of the convention as set out in Article 38. After a pilot project in the autumn of 1950, a program of Civilian Information and Education was introduced into the UN camps in the summer of 1951 aimed at developing 'an understanding and appreciation of the political, social and economic objectives of the United Nations and to assist in various other ways so that they [the POWs] may become better citizens in their own country'. Much of the program was recreational, but there was a core of frankly political material aimed at promoting 'a comprehension of, faith in, and adoption of the concepts, institutions and practices of democracy'. Unfortunately, the instructors were usually drawn from anti-Communist prisoners (some 2500 were so employed), 'qualified Korean civilians' and ROK Army personnel and, when large numbers of Chinese prisoners arrived, by Nationalist Chinese personnel recruited in Taiwan. This latter group in particular appear to have played a significant role in fomenting anti-Communist violence within the compounds and propagandising in favour of repatriation to Taiwan rather than the mainland. In several senses, then, some of the problems in POW administration which the UNC encountered were of its own making. Other factors which contributed to the sum of its difficulties were the linguistic and cultural differences which forced the Americans to rely on ROK and Nationalist Chinese personnel, the tradition of nonintervention in internal POW affairs which was enshrined in the Geneva Convention, and a failure to appreciate, at least initially, the extent to which the Chinese and Koreans would contest control of the POWs themselves.

### Communist Prisoner of War Administration

UN personnel who were captured were initially in the custody of the North Koreans. The North Korean POW Command was supervised by officers of the Soviet MVD and POW administration followed Soviet principles whose essential features were forced labour, intelligence extraction and political indoctrination. The North Koreans routinely used torture and violence against prisoners and there are a number of well-documented cases of American and South Korean soldiers being executed en masse after capture. Many of those who were captured in the early months of the war were already sick or wounded and the treatment they received resulted in the deaths of large numbers, although most died of...
disease or neglect: the deaths of only two British prisoners, for example, can be ascribed definitely to torture. For propaganda purposes the North Koreans set up the Peace Fighters School and recruited for it by offering the alternative of death by neglect in the Bean Camp or Kangdong Caves complex. In fact the Peace Fighters School proved a relative failure: only about sixty prisoners took an active part, and although they were used in the spring of 1951 to stage a 'mass' rally denouncing the UN and demanding peace on Communist terms the Chinese closed the school down after assuming responsibility for all POW affairs on their side by November 1951.  

The majority of United Nations POWs, some 63 per cent, were captured in the first six months of the war, the vast majority, or 92 per cent, in the first twelve months.  The enemy camp system along the Yalu was only set up between March-June 1951, and most prisoners were gradually moved to these camps at the cost of many lives. As a British report on the subject noted, 'this transit period, during which the PW were evacuated on foot, was undoubtedly the worst period of captivity, and the march to the Yalu River was a struggle for survival. A significant number of PW perished from neglect and lack of medical attention during this time'. In the process of evacuating prisoners northwards the Chinese left stragglers, the sick and wounded in transit camps run by the North Koreans, thus increasing the death rate among the prisoners.

Chinese behaviour towards POWs was based on the so-called 'Lenient Policy', which had worked well with captured Nationalist soldiers during the Civil War and with some Japanese captured at the end of hostilities in 1945. Upon capture, prisoners were informed that they were war criminals because they had taken part in an unjust war of aggression against Korea. As such they could be executed, but their captors regarded them as misguided rather than merely criminal, and they would be shown leniency and given an opportunity to learn the truth. If they did so they were regarded as 'progressive', which implied cooperation with Chinese propaganda efforts and brought with it an amelioration of conditions. If they did not they were 'reactionary', putting themselves outside the provisions of the Lenient Policy with whatever consequences might then befall them.

The majority of prisoners were neither heroes nor villains; neither 'progressives' cooperating with the enemy nor 'reactionaries' actively resisting them at the potential cost of their lives. One American study claimed, on the basis of analysing 579 US repatriates, that despite the untenable position in which they were often placed only about 15 per cent of prisoners collaborated with the enemy.  Biderman's careful study notes that the US Department of Defense itself regarded only 13 per cent of repatriates as deserving further investigation of their behaviour upon their return to the United States.  A British report on their own repatriates concluded likewise that approximately 12 per cent of British prisoners 'cooperated actively with the Chinese, both militarily and politically', although it noted another 17 per cent who 'cooperated to a minor degree in the production of propaganda'. Attempts at mass compulsory indoctrination failed, and were met with sufficient resistance on the part of prisoners that they were abandoned, while the officers, NCOs and other 'reactionaries' were screened and held in separate camps from the other ranks. There was a clear hierarchy of camps: Camp 5, essentially a training centre for 'progressives', had the best amenities while parts of Camp 2, which in March 1953 held 371 officers and NCOs, was little better than a penal camp.

This screening process was a mark of the failure of the Lenient Policy, whose leniency was relative in any case. Basically, the Chinese worked on those who had shown themselves in some way amenable to persuasion or threats, or who they felt had particular military knowledge to impart. Aviators especially fell into this latter category. The Chinese required newly-captured prisoners to fill in questionnaires or write an autobiography which they then used to select likely targets for further interrogation and which also provided information, however inadvertent, for use against other prisoners. A network of informers, either 'progressives' or the self-interested who merely looked to better their lot through low-level cooperation with their captors, helped to break down group cohesion amongst the prisoners. Continued non-cooperation, characterised as the maintenance of a 'hostile attitude', could lead to physical duress, often of an extremely unpleasant kind. As a recent study of
psychological warfare in Korea has concluded, 'a tough but non-confrontational attitude was the most successful course. [The former prisoners interviewed] agreed that this took a lot of guts'. The circumstances of captivity in the far north of Korea in the middle of a non-Caucasian nation explains as well why, despite quite a number of attempts, there were no successful escapes from Chinese or North Korean camps, a fact of which much was to be made after the cease-fire. (Generally overlooked in this 'debate' were the 647 Army personnel who were listed as 'returned to military control—escaper', or the air force personnel who successfully evaded capture, as they had been trained to do.)

**Postwar responses to UNC Prisoners of War**

Well before the end of hostilities the British and American governments expressed concern over the fate of men known or believed to have been taken prisoner, and over their alleged behaviour while in captivity. As early as August 1951 the British chiefs of staff stipulated that in handling returning personnel 'the intelligence requirement of interrogation should be given priority over repatriation to the United Kingdom'. Although they were forced to give way, preparations were made nonetheless to interview all returning POWs with a view to gathering details of conduct while imprisoned, evidence for use in possible war crimes procedures against individual North Korean and Chinese personnel, and information of intelligence value. There was some suggestion in 1952, in response to various Chinese-inspired 'peace offensives' utilising POWs, that counter-indoctrination would be required. In a display of balanced good sense the Adjutant General, General Sir John Crocker, noted instead that it would be 'not only thoroughly objectionable but unnecessary to treat them in the bulk as suspects. There must be no prolonged segregation or blatant attempts at "counter-indoctrination" or application of psycho-analyst processes'. Tabs were kept on those men who lent their names to petitions or made broadcasts on behalf of their captors, and whilst military intelligence recognised that a large proportion of men—as high as 40 per cent—'may have been penetrated in some degree or other by Communism', the number of truly hardcore collaborators was consistently very much lower, reckoned in March 1953 at less than 7 per cent.

Returning prisoners suspected of misconduct were not charged, since most had already been discharged, and the intelligence debriefers devoted most of their efforts to accounting for men known to have been captured but who had not been repatriated.

Initially, the response within the United States military was focussed on exploiting the sufferings of American POWs in the propaganda war which accompanied and followed the ceasefire. The US Army was concerned to explain to the American public why the number of those returned by the enemy was well below the number listed as missing in action, and to nullify the impact of the twenty-one who had refused repatriation and opted to stay with their Chinese captors. Few concerns were expressed over susceptibility to Communist indoctrination: 'few US prisoners of war ... returned as Communists or Communist sympathisers', asserted the Army.

Any illusions about any justification for the Communist cause resulting from defection, acceptance of Communist ideology, or collaboration with their captors on the part of a few US prisoners of war must be destroyed ... The American public ... must be accurately informed about the brutal, cold blooded character of their enemy.

The concern over missing personnel was real. The Chinese media had announced that at least one group of aviators would be held back and tried for 'war crimes', and a group of a dozen who had allegedly been shot down over Manchuria were detained for over a year after the ceasefire; one of them, a Canadian airman accompanying a US Air Force mission as an observer, was only identified by name by the Chinese when the delegation at the Geneva conference was asked directly by a Canadian diplomat. In the chaotic fighting of the early weeks of the war, thousands of US soldiers had become casualties and many of these were unaccounted for: on 1 July 1953 US authorities still carried 11,706 personnel as missing in action. Through the return of men in enemy captivity and the careful piecing together of evidence this number was progressively reduced, but at the exchange of lists of missing personnel in May 1954 the Americans still listed 944 men as missing in action, the South Koreans sought details on a further 2410, with an additional fifty-one other UN personnel also unaccounted for.
With the report of the US Secretary of Defense's Advisory Committee on Prisoners of War in 1955, a certain ambivalence had crept in to official views. In one breath the report judged the performance of Korean War POWs as 'fine indeed ... they cannot be found wanting'; in another, it concluded that 'the Korean story must never be permitted to happen again'. A US Army pamphlet on POW conduct, issued the following year, warned that the Lenient Policy had resulted in almost no active resistance to enemy indoctrination, but several pages later declared that the large majority of American prisoners 'resisted the enemy in the highest tradition of the service and our country'.

The widespread view that large numbers of US personnel had collaborated with the enemy, giving rise to the notion of the 'Manchurian candidate', was propagated in the second half of the 1950s principally through the writings of two Americans: an Army psychiatrist, Lieutenant Colonel William C Meyer, and a journalist, Eugene Kinkead. Their writings need to be seen in the context of post-McCarthyite American domestic politics and Cold War concerns, but they had an impact on writers as diverse as Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), and Edgar Friedenberg, the child psychologist, in *The Vanishing Adolescent* (1963), as well as on a number of the still widely-cited general histories of the war by Robert Leckie, TR Fehrenbach, and Harry Middleton. Their claims were refuted in devastating fashion by careful clinical and historical work, often funded by the services themselves, of which Biderman's is the best. But Biderman's book sold only 6000 copies and is hardly known outside a research audience, while most of the rest of the careful studies of Korean POWs were published as government reports or, in the British case, remain classified. The detractors have therefore largely had the field to themselves.

The accusatory case maintained that Korea marked a frightening change in the effectiveness of the American armed forces and, by extension, in American society generally. Here, Kinkead claimed, was 'something new in history' (American history anyway); thousands of American soldiers had collaborated with the enemy against their own country and had abandoned their comrades in such a manner that the death rate among POWs allegedly stood at 38 per cent. There had been no escapes. 'Sinister and regrettable things happened in the prison camps of North Korea', but these could not be ascribed to widespread maltreatment or 'brainwashing', whatever that might be understood to mean. The explanation must therefore be more complex, and more sinister. Kinkead's indictment was levelled especially at the Army, and unfavourable comparisons were drawn with both the US Marine Corps and with certain foreign contingents, especially the Turks and the British Commonwealth forces.

The case mounted against the POWs can be refuted on three grounds: it is bad history; its methodology when dealing with the American experience is sloppy; and the comparison with the other contingents is poorly grounded in evidence. Let us look at each in turn.

The notion that American soldiers in the Korean War lacked something possessed by all earlier generations—the 'something new in history'—will not stand even cursory scrutiny. Washington regularly complained of the 'want of virtue' in many of his command, while Tom Paine coined the famous phrase about 'sunshine patriots' in the process. During the Civil War, 6000 'galvanised Yankees', former Confederate soldiers, switched sides and enlisted in the Union Army, while US soldiers died routinely in the appalling conditions at Andersonville from lack of the will to continue. While POW behaviour in the Second World War was generally excellent in the face of extreme circumstances such as those during the Bataan death march or in some of the worst Japanese prison camps, some US servicemen acted selfishly, occasionally criminally (the central theme of James Clavell's novel *King Rat* [1964]). And very few escaped (less than a dozen of the 25-30,000 held in the Pacific theatre). What American POWs faced in Korea which was new, at least for Americans in the twentieth century, was a concerted attempt by their captors to influence them on ideological grounds.

Kinkead's ability to deal properly with the data on the Korean POWs inspires no more confidence than does his treatment of American military history. Two issues deserve comment: death rates among prisoners, and charges of collaboration and misbehaviour.
Kinkead asserted that '38 per cent of [prisoners]—2730 out of a total of 7190—died in captivity', a higher prisoner death rate than in any other American war. The inference, furthermore, is that it was the fault of the prisoners themselves that the death rate was so high, as if the actions of their North Korean and Chinese captors had no influence on the outcome. There are several things to be said about this. The first is Kinkead's presumption that all men who were declared missing presumed dead had at one stage been prisoners. He asserts the total for US personnel captured as 7190. Only 3326 Army personnel were repatriated. The Army was able to document 1036 deaths due directly to enemy atrocities and a further 2481 whose fate was never clearly determined; on top of that is the 2634 who were known with certainty to have died while POWs and a further 244 who were known to have been prisoners but whose death was presumed rather than established. For all the American services the presumption of death was made for 4735 individuals under the Missing Persons Act. The point of all this is that precise figures on numbers captured and missing, causes of death and proportions thereof are difficult to arrive at, and certainly lack the air of precision with which Kinkead treated them.

The emphasis on death rates obscured the timing of deaths among prisoners, which is important to understanding the factors leading to high mortality rates. As noted already, the great majority of UN POWs were captured in the early months of the war. It should come as no surprise to find that the majority of deaths among prisoners occurred in the same period, nor that in the majority of cases these were the result of enemy action or enemy neglect. Between June and October 1950, 575 died of 1037 captured; between November 1950 and February 1951, 1896 out of 4139; from March to June, 165 out of 975. For the whole of the rest of the war, only twenty-four prisoners died of the 503 taken prisoner. In other words, of 5176 US soldiers taken prisoner in the first eight months 2471 did not survive their initial period of incarceration, something close to half the total.

Again, far from being a new phenomenon, high mortality rates among American POWs had occurred as recently as the Pacific War, although once again extreme precision on the figures eludes us. One source suggests that of 24,943 Americans captured by the Japanese, 8634, or 34.5 per cent, died in captivity. Another gives figures of 26943 and 10031 respectively, or 35.2 per cent. The point is of course that in the face of brutality and neglect on the part of their captors large numbers of prisoners will inevitably die. In the only mass prisoner experience confronting Australians, again as prisoners of the Japanese, 14345 were recovered at the end of the war while 8031 died in captivity, once again more than a third of the total. And however disgracefully some individuals behaved, and several repatriated US POWs were prosecuted for murder on their return, nothing in the Korean experience came close to the depravity which attended the Bataan death march.

Three groups were singled out for praise by Kinkead, as a contrast to the alleged behaviour of Army and Air Force prisoners: the US Marines, the Turks, and the British. As with so much else, Kinkead's use of Marine Corps statistics is sloppy. He fails to note the differing proportion of Marines captured in relatively more benign periods of the war compared to Army POWs; he fails to note the differences between the all volunteer Corps and the less elite Army units; and he entirely misses the fact that whereas the Army conducted post-release investigations of 11 per cent of repatriates, the Marine Corps felt that investigations were warranted in 26 per cent of cases. Furthermore, only fourteen cases went to trial, all Army, from which just eleven convictions resulted.

The Turks, again, were volunteers, while half of those captured were taken during or after April 1951, when the worst conditions of incarceration had largely passed. Contrary to myth, some did collaborate to the extent that they were associated with Chinese propaganda materials, but the language barrier made Chinese attempts to influence the Turks considerably more difficult. The Turks were good soldiers and they performed well in general when taken prisoner, but they are scarcely a good comparison with the mass of US POWs.

Which brings us to the British, about whom Kinkead, curiously, has virtually nothing to say. In some respects they provide a much better comparative group than either of his other 'controls': they were not an elite group (although containing some members of elite units and
some, especially officers, with above average training and experience), they numbered amongst them conscripts and recalled reservists, and the pattern of capture conformed in some respects to that of the US Army.

Although internally the British authorities expressed some concern over the implications of prisoner behaviour, as we have seen, in the final analysis they regarded the performance of British POWs as neither especially good nor especially bad overall. The official public report released in 1955 concluded that in the circumstances the majority of prisoners behaved well, and that many of the 'lapses' were entirely understandable given the alternatives. The officers and NCOs, who made up about 12 per cent of the total, were entirely unaffected by Chinese attempts at indoctrination, and many of them were singled out by the Chinese for special treatment because of their 'reactionary' attitudes; that some of them survived their ordeal is little short of remarkable.

The British experience mirrored the American in various ways. Groups of men were captured early in the war, with predictable results. An officer of the 8th Hussars later wrote of one group of soldiers taken prisoner from his regiment that of those 'who were captured in January 1951 no officers survived ... Conditions were extremely poor at this time and the POWs were living under extremely hard conditions'.29 Most of those British POWs who died in captivity died in this early period. The largest single group of British prisoners were those members of the 1st Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment, taken at the Battle of the Imjin in April 1951, when the unit was practically wiped out. Like the Americans, the British were a varied group; in particular, among the early POWs there were quite a number of reservists recalled to the Army in mid-late 1950 to fill units hurriedly despatched for active service. On the one hand, this meant that infantry battalions were able to function in the field with a minimum of retraining, since they contained many old soldiers. On the other, some at least of these men had cause to resent their return to service. The interrogation briefing compiled on one collaborator noted that he was 'a perfect target for indoctrination being very dissatisfied with his lot. As a reservist he was taken away from his civilian job, and yet he had completed his two years and two months before he was captured'.30 Other testimony points to the steadying influence of these older men, and in one case especially, that of a British soldier who had been a prisoner of the Japanese and had been held in the same area during the Pacific War, of their practical utility in helping their fellows to adapt to their changed circumstances. In the first, small-scale exchange of prisoners, dubbed LITTLE SWITCH, eleven British soldiers received adverse gradings: all but two were recalled reservists, and all but three had been captured in January 1951, during the period of highest death rates among prisoners.31

One factor in the British group, absent among the Americans, which might have predisposed men to collaboration was peacetime leftist political affiliation. Unbeknown to the British Army, a small proportion of those serving in Korea, and of those captured, were members of the Communist Party or associated groupings in civil life. At least six of those who received the most adverse security reports upon release turned out to have been pre-Korean War members of the Communist Party of Great Britain; several of the younger men were members of the Communist Youth League while another, a lance corporal in the 8th Hussars, had a mother who was a Party member. For others still, raised in the industrial Midlands, or the Clyde, or on the coalfields, peacetime politics, while not necessarily Communist, was frequently left-wing Labour. Several of those who were or had been Communists collaborated most blatantly with the enemy, and a couple even assisted the Chinese in interrogating their fellow prisoners. But it was not invariably so. One veteran of the International Brigades in Spain developed a marked antipathy towards the Chinese because of their treatment of Korean civilians, and refused to cooperate. Another, a member of the Party of long-standing and compromised by his actions, was nonetheless described by his debriefing officer (who can have had no sympathy at all with him) as being 'respected as a man by many PW who are opposed to his views. There is no suggestion that he has acted as an informer and there is good evidence that he has saved lives'.32 There is no distinct pattern of collaboration or resistance among British other ranks when analysed by regiment, or by age, or by occupation.
Behaviour and mortality among POWs then had everything to do with the environment in which they were held and the treatment which they received, and nothing to do with an alleged 'softness' in postwar American society. The allegations levelled against them were a product of Cold War stresses in American domestic politics. Britain, where such pressures were much less pronounced and with a quite different political culture, felt no requirement to indulge in witch hunts among repatriated POWs. The dangers, and injustices, of doing so are well demonstrated by the case of Colonel Frank H Schwable.

Schwable was a Marine aviator, the senior Marine Corps officer captured during the war and the second highest ranking American taken prisoner. Shot down in July 1952, he spent almost the whole of his imprisonment in solitary confinement where he was given special attention by his captors, who knew of his rank and responsibilities as chief of staff of the 1st Marine Air Wing. What his captors did not know was that on an earlier assignment he had been a nuclear war planner and possessed detailed knowledge of American plans in the eventuality of nuclear war with the Soviet Union, something which he was concerned the Chinese should not divine during interrogation. He therefore 'confessed' to participation in germ warfare, at that stage the main item on the Chinese propaganda agenda, believing, rightly as it turned out, that having given the Chinese what they wanted they would ease the pressure on him. He returned to the United States to find himself under investigation for criminal collaboration with the enemy, and although no prosecution was attempted (the Uniform Code of Military Justice did not consider giving false information to the enemy to be an offence), he was shuffled off to meaningless jobs thereafter, his career ended by a Marine Corps hierarchy concerned with its image. Schwable's entirely bogus confession is still used by apologists for North Korea as 'evidence' that the United States waged germ warfare in Korea.

**Aftermath**

One consequence of the Korean War experience was the promulgation of Codes of Conduct within the US and other Western militaries, designed to make it explicitly clear to soldiers what their responsibilities were in the event of their being captured. Name, rank, number and date of birth were to be given, and nothing else, and men were enjoined to escape at the earliest opportunity: 'It is the duty of every soldier to attempt to escape', stated a US Army pamphlet, and he was 'never relieved of this responsibility'. At the same time there was a recognition that many soldiers had been unprepared for captivity and had received no training in evasion and escape techniques, and these were instituted on a wider basis than before. In an attempt to counteract some of the effects of Chinese propaganda in Korea, US servicemen were reminded that 'even as a prisoner of war he continues to remain of special concern to the United States; he will not be forgotten'. The Troop Information program was revived and shaped specifically to reinforce what Eisenhower described in September 1953 as 'the fundamental values of America and why they are fighting'. This was followed in 1956 by the 'Militant Liberty' program, originating in the office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W Radford. Not everyone was sold on these programs. One senior Marine Corps officer who had debriefed returning Marine POWs in 1953 thought that what was needed was 'professional competence'. Vietnam was to provide a test of these measures.

The use and abuse of prisoners of war for ideological purposes exposed some of the shortcomings of the Geneva Convention in that its enforcement relied, as it had always done, on the compliance of belligerents if its protection was to be extended to POWs. In the circumstances of the early Cold War period there was clearly some ambivalence in Western capitals over the appropriateness of some of the Convention's provisions—involuntary repatriation being a case in point. In February 1953 the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, M Paul Ruegger, wrote to the British government suggesting that the 1949 Convention be revised to prohibit propagandising by the detaining power among prisoners in its hands, a direct response to events in Korea. The Foreign Office thought it 'too difficult' so close to the events concerned, and in any case believed it desirable to be able to 'instruct' prisoners along lines used successfully with German POWs during the Second World War. 'What is objectionable', minuted RH Scott of the Foreign Office,
is that prisoners should be forced to attend political lectures and the like, and of course it is still more objectionable that (for example) their rations or amenities should be made to depend on proficiency in the subjects taught. The safeguard lies not so much in international conventions forbidding 'indoctrination' but in establishing the right of access for impartial bodies like the International Red Cross.38

The State Department had first suggested exactly this in July 1950, and the ICRC made a number of unsuccessful attempts to get a representative into North Korea in 1950-51.39 The failure of those attempts and, let it be said clearly, the refusal of the Chinese and North Koreans to abide by declarations which they themselves had issued, made the fate of those men held in the enemy POW compounds a doubly tragic one.
Endnotes


3. The Americans were also under some pressure from their allies, especially Britain, to see that the provisions of the Geneva Convention were extended to captured enemy personnel. Army Council memorandum PWCC/P(50)3, 25 August 1950, WO32/14118, Public Record Office, London (hereinafter PRO).


5. A draft JCS directive to MacArthur made it clear that ‘the treatment of POWs shall be directed towards their exploitation, training and use for psychological warfare purposes, and you should set up on a pilot-plant scale interrogation, indoctrination and training centers for those POWs now in your hands in Korea’. The directive was based on the contents of NSC 81/1 of 9 September 1950: *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1950*, vol VII: *Korea* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1976), 782.


12. Minute, British Repatriated POW Interrogation Unit, Tokyo to Under Secretary of State for Air, 20 November 1952; minute. BRPWIU to Air Ministry, 10 March 1953, CRS A2152, KB1073-6G, NAA.


15. Army Council letter 0103/8697 (M11), 28 December 1951, WO32/14555, PRO.


17. Letter, Crocker to Brigadier RH Batten, HQ, BCFK, 8 January 1952, WO32/14555, PRO.

18. Minute, M1 to AG3(B), 24 March 1953, WO32/14555; minute. Cunningham, A19 to Newling, Ministry of Defence, 10 March 1955; DEFE7/1807, PRO.


21. See correspondence concerning Squadron Leader AR Mackenzie, RCAF, shot down 5 December 1952, F0371/110629, PRO.

22. F0371/110629, PRO.


24. Eugene Kinkead, *In Every War But One* (New York: Norton, 1959), published in Britain under the even more damning title, *Why They Collaborated* (London: Longmans, 1960); Mayer's writings and speeches are more diverse, but one scholar notes that over 500,000 copies of his speeches and 100,000 copies of his taped speeches had been disseminated by the late 1960s. Wubben, ‘American Prisoners of War in Korea’, n 5.


27. Kinkead, *In Every War But One*, 17.


31. Analysis based on interrogation reports of LITTLE SWITCH repatriates, CRS A2151, KB1073-11G, part 1, NAA.

32. Interrogation report on Trooper C, 8th Hussars, CRS A2151, KB1073-11G, part 1, NAA.


35. Department of the Army, *FM21-77: Evasion and Escape*, November 1965, 64. See also ‘Conduct of Prisoners of War’, statement by the Minister for Defence tabled in the House of Representatives, 16 February 1956, CRS A1945/T1, 48/2/3, NAA.


38. Minute, RH Scott, 8 April 1953, FO371/105585, PRO.

THE KOREAN WAR 1950-53:
A 50 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

PROPAGANDA, THE MEDIA, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS: THE KOREAN WAR
Stephen Badsey

The Korean War saw extensive use of propaganda on all sides, both within the theatre of war and beyond it; together with systematic psychological operations that were to have consequences for some years after the war itself. It also marked some changes in the manner in which the mass communications media of the western world, most particularly that of the United States, reported war from within the theatre, and the impact of this reporting on the home population. (Given the domination of the United States over the wartime United Nations coalition, many observations about American attitudes may be taken, mutatis mutandis, as being valid for other countries, including the United Kingdom and even Australia. Cases of American exceptionalism are noted in the text.)

1 If the Korean War remains 'the unknown war' in this aspect as in many others, it is largely because these issues and developments, which were given their full weight at the time, have since been eclipsed by the much larger events of the Second World War and of the war in Vietnam. Korea has also been characterised as 'the worst reported war of modern times', an accolade that it shares with almost every war of the twentieth century in its immediate aftermath, in each case usually with some justification.

2 It is one of the unremarkable clichés about all wars that they resemble their predecessors in some respects, and their successors in others. Korea falls extremely well into this categorisation. In one sense its media-military experience was very much a product of the Second World War, particularly in the manner that it was fought by the United States and its allies within the United Nations Command. The relationship of deference given by the reporter in the field towards the government and higher military command which had been established in both world wars had certainly not expired by 1950. Although Korea was categorised as a 'police action' (and later as a 'limited war') few members of either the military or the press acknowledged any real departure from the conventions of the Second World War, particularly as the fighting in Korea carried the fear of escalation to a Third World War. There was in practice no limitation placed on the expectation of the governments of the United States and other belligerent nations that the reporters should also be patriots in their support of the war effort. This was a position very largely shared between governments, armed forces, media and home populations. If, as has been suggested, 'the perceived rights and obligations of the citizen in time of limited conflict might be changing', then this only became evident after a further major war in Vietnam and a considerable exercise in hindsight.

3 The chief news media by which events from the theatre of war were communicated to the home populations were still for Korea, as they had been for the Second World War, the newspaper, radio and to a lesser extent the cinema newsreel. Many reporters, also, as veterans of the Second World War, were comfortable in their relationship with the armed forces, and understood how to work within it. The approach adopted by most reporters was well described by the firebrand British reporter James Cameron, a veteran of Korea and many other wars, in his account of an early incident, 'The Communists were doing their cause no good by excesses of a particularly brutal and idiotic kind: by binding captured GIs and shooting them in the back and leaving them where their mutilated bodies could be discovered and photographed, thus providing the American Press with precisely the propaganda that they badly needed. Less publicised, naturally, were the excesses of the other side, who also shot prisoners in considerable numbers'.

4 This willingness to co-operate in propaganda and to suppress inconvenient facts did not imply complete subservience of the press to the military command, something which was equated in western thought with totalitarian rather than democratic media methods; it implied only an acceptance by the press of a co-operative position within which a degree of negotiation was permitted and expected. If, in the words of one critic, 'the reporters were not prepared to back the war wholeheartedly and without reservation' throughout its course, then this was also in
keeping with the tradition of the two world wars. Despite Cameron's observation, there was in fact a significant debate between the UN higher command and some reporters over the issue of shooting prisoners by the ROKA; a good example of how journalists and the military high command could legitimately disagree on where the boundaries of patriotism lay. Reporters who felt strongly on such issues, and who found that newspapers would not take their material, were often able to get their version out in book form at home while the war was still being fought. Reginald Thompson's *Cry Korea* (1951) and IF Stone's *The Hidden History of the Korean War* (1952) are two of the more famous examples.

The western reporters' attitude towards the military is particularly well illustrated by the MacArthur era of the war. At first there was no military control of the press, and individual reporters made their way to Korea as best they could, filing stories on what they had seen of the North Korean offensive. By the first few weeks there were an estimated western 270 reporters in the theatre. Subsequently, some of their reports of American disasters were criticised by General MacArthur's headquarters, and a temporary ban on reporting introduced, although soon lifted after complaints in Washington to be replaced at Far East Command by a confused system of voluntary regulations. It was the reporters themselves who demanded—at first unsuccessfully—that if this was to be considered a real war and not a 'police action', then when working alongside all United Nations forces they should have enforced military censorship of their work at source. The advantage to the reporters was that, with fixed censorship, they also got consistency, smoother use of military communications, and the reassurance that whatever they filed as stories could not jeopardise the lives of American troops; it was the arbitrary nature of MacArthur's vetting system that they disliked. MacArthur's relaxation of the vetting procedures and adoption of special measures to ensure that laudatory press reports of the successful Inchon landings reached the outside world as rapidly as possible were also entirely in keeping with his behaviour towards the press in the Second World War. Compulsory censorship along Second World War lines was finally introduced in December 1950, and remained in force for the rest of the war. Despite the common belief to the contrary (due to the lax use of the word 'censorship' in subsequent wars), Korea was in fact the last war fought by western powers to see coercive censorship of this kind imposed and accepted.

Later in the war, as the front stabilised, a regular if rotating contingent of about sixty front line correspondents continued to report the war, many of them preferring to go armed in the light of North Korean attitudes towards their supposed non-combatant status. In effect, the only way to report from the front line was temporarily to become a combat soldier as part of a military unit, with all the implications of that action for press impartiality. As well as American and British reporters, it has been noted that 'the Australians were out in force, probably because the Australian government was well aware of how important good relations were with the USA at a time when Britain, the "Mother Country", was beginning its withdrawal east of Suez', or perhaps more simply because of the geographical proximity of the war to Australia, compared to Europe or the United States. However, after about July 1951 the political and military strategies of both sides meant that there was often little new to report, except highly personal experiences of the front line. Together with the cult of deference and the censorship, this had the effect of neutralising conventional mass media reporting of the war, with some unforeseen consequences.

Within its context as part of the Cold War and the broader American political strategy of containment, the propaganda and media side of the Korean War took on a new and important significance, at least after the dismissal of MacArthur in April 1951, and the recognition that there was little prospect of a complete United Nations victory. As Henry Kissinger has correctly observed, 'In measuring America's success in Korea, [Dean] Acheson was less concerned with the outcome on the battlefield than with establishing the concept of collective security'. The onset of the Cold War had led to arguments that the confrontation between East and West would be fought out as much in terms of ideology as by any conventional military methods. This was a position that would increase in importance following Korea, with the 'New Look' strategy of the Eisenhower presidency. Along with this, it was accepted that nothing approaching an impartial investigation of many claims about the Korean War could ever take place, and that 'the truth' would never be established with any degree of certainty. In the context of the Cold War, how both individual events and the war itself were presented...
both to home populations and to the wider world (including the increasingly important post-
colonial ‘third world’); and how the war would be remembered in the short term of the 1950s,
became important as political objectives.

American and other western political leaders also held what seemed to them legitimate
concerns not only as to whether they should subject their peoples to the strain of further wars
of containment, but whether democratic institutions and populations were resolute and
cohesive enough not to collapse under the strain of such wars. The argument that the
American people would not tolerate a ‘die for tie’ strategy was one of the principal criticisms
made of the conduct of the war by MacArthur in his evidence to Congress after his recall. To
the surprise of some of its political leaders, American public opinion held up remarkably well
in the face of being asked to endure an inconclusive war. Developments in opinion poll
techniques and more sophisticated analysis of the results in the 1950s have allowed quite a
good picture of American public opinion during the Korean War to emerge. In particular, it was
the experience of Korea that showed clearly for the first time that a simplistic division into
supporters and non-supporters of the war effort (‘hawks’ and ‘doves’) was entirely inadequate
to describe the types of interaction and shifts in public support that accompany the outbreak,
conduct and conclusion of a war. For example, and against expectations, American left wing
intellectuals as a group supported the war, chiefly as being part of their continuing battle
against Stalinism; while opposition to the war came more from the radical or extreme right
wing in American politics. Support for American involvement in the war from the population as
a whole ran as high as 77 per cent in its first few weeks, dropped after the Chinese
intervention to about 50 per cent, but remained virtually unaffected by any further events until
the end of the war, hardly fluctuating except for a slight rise at the end.

This kind of opinion poll data is directly connected, in terms of an important historical debate,
with the manner in which the American media reported the Korean War in comparison with
the Vietnam War, and the controversial claim that television coverage of Vietnam affected
American public support in some way. Again contrary to common belief it was actually Korea,
and not Vietnam, that was the world’s first television war. The first television service had
begun in Great Britain in the 1930s, but had been suspended for the Second World War. By
the time of Korea, television was beginning to establish itself in the United States, but had not
achieved the degree of penetration and dominance over other means of mass communication
that marked the 1960s, and large areas of the United States had no television reception.
Television news reporting from the Korean theatre of war functioned very much as the cinema
newsreels did, by recording film on location and then shipping it back to the United States.
Given the context of the early Cold War and the tradition of deference inherited from the
Second World War, it is not surprising that government and military authorities believed that
they had less opposition from the mass media during Korea than Vietnam.

However, the most detailed and authoritative of the studies made comparing American public
opinion during the two wars rejects completely the idea of a close connection between
television reporting of Vietnam and its outcome. Instead, the poll data clearly show that
whatever impact television had, it was not enough to reduce support for the [Vietnam] war
below the levels attained by the Korean War, when television was in its infancy, until casualty
levels had far surpassed those of the earlier war. Indeed, what is striking is how closely
public opinion patterns for the two wars resemble each other, suggesting that comparisons
between them as both ‘limited wars’ of the same era have considerable validity when applied
to the attitude of the home population. One further distinctive feature of the Korean War, and
also American attitude not apparently shared by other belligerents, was that at a high point in
November 1951 a slim majority (51 per cent) of people supported the use of atomic bombs on
military targets. ‘In this instance, mass culture and popular attitudes mirrored thinking at the
highest levels of government’.

In terms of defensive propaganda aimed at one’s own people, the greatest efforts of the
Korean War almost certainly came from Mao Tse-Tung’s fledgling People’s Republic of
China. In the course of the war a new government association was created in Peking (Beijing)
to produce newspapers, wall displays and communal readings in support of government
policy regarding the war; this organisation was later estimated as employing more than 1.5
million people. Mobile film projector units were introduced around the country to boost film attendance in China from fifty million to 1.39 billion people, the most frequently shown film being a propaganda picture about the war, entitled Resist America, Aid Korea. In this context it should not be forgotten that Hollywood also produced a considerable number of propaganda films about the war while it lasted, including the John Ford documentary This Is Korea (1950) and the feature film Retreat, Hell! (1952). American feature films made about the Korean War were generally supportive of the war in the later 1950s, just as public support for American involvement in the war rose slightly in its aftermath. It was not until the later establishment of the metaphor of 'Korea-as-Vietnam', exemplified by Robert Altman's classic film M*A*S*H (1969) that films set in the Korean War began to appear critical of the war itself.

Evidence for organised propaganda directed by western governments towards their own people or those of neutral countries at the time of the Korean War (as opposed to open government demands for what was then seen as legitimate support from the media) has only appeared in recent years and is still being evaluated. Among other claims, it has been suggested that American criticism that Great Britain was failing to 'pull its weight' in committing military forces to Korea was offset by the British taking a larger role in such clandestine propaganda activities worldwide. Where such propaganda campaigns existed, in both the United States and Great Britain and elsewhere, they seem to have been directed at the much wider issue of the Cold War as a whole rather than specifically at the Korea issue, very much in keeping with official views of the time; but the evidence remains open to debate.

The Korean War also marked an important point in the development of what are generically called 'non-lethal' methods of warfare. Propaganda, using the word in its widest sense, had been for centuries a weapon of war directed chiefly at one's own armed forces and people, as a means of encouraging them to support the war effort. The concept of propaganda used systematically by countries as a weapon with which to attack the morale of each other's armies and people dates from the First World War, or perhaps a little earlier. In the course of the Second World War this form of offensive propaganda was refined into a more direct form of non-physical attack on the morale and conduct of enemy troops and civilian population, based loosely on the theories of human behaviour of the day. This involved chiefly such methods as leaflets, and loudspeaker and direct radio broadcasts, and was seen very much as something to be practised by people in uniform, and to be kept separate from (if also co-ordinated with) conventional propaganda. By the end of the Second World War the preferred British term for this activity, 'political warfare' (as in the Political Warfare Executive or PWE) had given way to the American 'psychological warfare'—variously rendered as 'psywar' or even 'psychwar', or 'psyop(s)' for psychological operations.

Psychological warfare in this period was closely linked, through such institutions as the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and its successor after 1947, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), with covert or 'shadow' military operations in their much wider sense, and with espionage. Such activities attracted some fairly colourful practitioners (and, sad to say, some fairly credulous writers in their wake), as well as producing considerable amounts of 'disinformation' or propaganda themselves. One problem with studying the Korean War is that although by definition the media coverage is part of the public record, much that was done in the name of psychological warfare is still far from clear. In practice, psychological warfare was also so closely tied up with propaganda in this period that they cannot be easily disentangled. General MacArthur himself is supposed to have told American reporters that they had 'an important responsibility in the matter of psychological warfare'. But just as they reacted against the idea of being under government control, so both reporters and media institutions strongly opposed any attempts to involve them in such activities. The inability of some military figures to make this distinction was also to become a persistent source of friction in military-media relations throughout the twentieth century, starting with Korea.

Conventional western military thought of the day held that major wars were decided chiefly by firepower on the battlefield. Nevertheless, given the immense destructiveness and human cost of such methods, senior Allied commanders late in the Second World War began to take seriously any low-cost method which might induce the enemy to surrender or to fight less
effectively. Psychological warfare, when used in conjunction with conventional military methods, had achieved some successes by the end of the war. In Europe a sustained propaganda and psychological campaign 'to win the war by non-military means' earned praise from Eisenhower for its contribution to victory in 1944-45. Even more impressively, by the very end of the war against Japan, American psychological warfare was starting to produce significant results in the form of battlefield surrenders. This was particularly important, since conventional wisdom held that the gap between western and Japanese cultures, which contributed to the savagery of the jungle and island war, presented an insurmountable obstacle to understanding the enemy, and so exploiting his weaknesses. If American psychological operations could work against the Japanese, there was hope that they could work against the Communist North Koreans and Chinese as well.

In 1950 President Truman created a Psychological Strategy Board in the White House, the State Department created an International Information Administration, and in 1952 a Psychological Operations Coordinating Committee was also established in Washington. American military strategies for both propaganda and psychological warfare were based on a belief that human behaviour, both as individuals and in the mass, was highly volatile and susceptible to outside influence. The prevailing 'stimulus/ response' model of human behaviour was derived partly from behaviourism (then at its height of respectability), and partly from the practical experience of such developing phenomena as advertising and opinion poll forecasting. Changing human behaviour through propaganda and psychological warfare was, in this model, largely a question of identifying individual or mass vulnerabilities, and then targeting those vulnerabilities through various media. It has been fairly pointed out that perhaps no-one in a position of authority ever completely believed in this pessimistic 'magic bullet' view of the human spirit. But the broad ideas behind it provided an intellectually satisfying explanation for the rise through popular support of the totalitarian dictators of Europe before the Second World War, as well as for certain individual preferences and behaviour.

Despite considerable advances in theories of human perception and the impact of the media after the Korean War, the United States' military propaganda and psychological operations campaign in Vietnam was also based largely on the same methods—leaflets, loudspeaker aircraft, radio broadcasting—and measured by the same criteria as in Korea. Although the United States criticised its psychological operations campaign in Vietnam as a failure, this was attributed to poor strategy and planning, rather than to any inherent fault in the underlying concept. Later experiences and changes in ideas about human behaviour have produced a more realistic (or pessimistic) view of psychological warfare. In the words of one practitioner writing about Korea, 'judging the impact of a PSYWAR operation is almost impossible. Often the effects are cumulative, achieving a surrender after repeated efforts co-ordinated with several military attacks. There is usually no immediate and observable link between the cause (the PSYWAR) and effect'. The same conclusion was reached at the very end of the twentieth century by the Australian War Memorial in assessing propaganda in Korea, 'although much effort was put into propaganda on both sides, it is difficult to measure whether it had any real effect'.

In contrast to this later realism, United States' thinking at the time of the Korean War was so imbued with the idea of the psychological 'magic bullet' that commonplace and even obsolescent military behaviour on the part of the Chinese Communist forces was dignified with the name of psychological warfare. This included practices which had not entirely died away—at least in the German and Imperial Japanese armies—in the Second World War, such as the use of bugle calls and other military music on the battlefield, augmented by loudspeakers. A widespread phenomenon which seems to have been unique to Korea was 'Bedcheck Charlie' (also known by more vulgar names). Operating particularly in the war's last six months, these were Chinese light aircraft (characteristically Soviet-made Polikarpov PO-2 biplanes dating from the 1920s) that carried out small air raids often by individual aircraft, dropping bombs and propaganda leaflets on American positions shortly after nightfall. This was seen by the Americans as a deliberate psychological weapon meant to deprive them of sleep, and they resorted to special aircraft tactics in order to eliminate the problem; but it is not clear from the available descriptions that the 'Charlies' were not simply particularly inept conventional raiders.
The first months of the Korean War produced an unexpected crisis of confidence for the United States in its armed forces, made all the worse because it seemed directly related to such issues of propaganda and psychological warfare, and of the ability of democratic soldiers to resist Communism in a war of containment. This was not entirely an American affair, but neither the problem nor the reaction to it by the Americans found many parallels from other United Nations contingents. Within days of capture by the North Koreans, American enlisted men and even officers gave propaganda radio broadcasts on behalf of their captors, denouncing the war. This was not, as was claimed at the time, a phenomenon unique to Korea, that 'in every war but one' United States troops had behaved impeccably on surrender,24 but it had never before attracted such attention. Collaboration with the enemy was rapidly linked to 'bug out fever' in the face of attacks, and 'give-upitis' as evidence of mysteriously low morale among American troops.

At least one principal reason for this low morale and poor combat performance was quite mundane, and was reported at the very start of the war. The United States had entered the Korean War extremely ill-prepared, and sent to Korea troops whose inadequacies in strength, training and equipment made them at first almost easy prey for the North Koreans. Although the situation improved in the course of the war, and some American units sent to Korea were of very high quality, the overall standard remained poor; and men often went into action demoralised and angry.25 This anger at the unpreparedness of American forces was, of course, the story that the Far East Command refused to let the journalists run in the early weeks of the war. In the absence of accurate reporting, speculation took hold that the North Koreans and later the Chinese had some new and terrible psychological weapon with which to turn the minds of American troops. The term 'brainwashing' was first used as early as September 1950 in the United States by Edward Hunter, a journalist and CIA propagandist. Amid considerable exaggerations about the number of American prisoners who had collaborated, the CIA itself was to spend much of the 1950s looking for the secret of brainwashing. Stories of its activities and concerns leaked into the media to inspire, among other things, the satirical novel and feature film The Manchurian Candidate (1958 and 1962 respectively).26

The real North Korean and Chinese achievement in breaking American prisoners owed something to the theories of behaviourism, but more to a tradition of warlordism that had prevailed in China for some centuries, and had been particularly important in the recent civil wars. Captured troops, in the warlord system, were a valuable asset if they could be made to renounce their old masters and change sides. This was accomplished by a combination of intense psychological pressure and physical violence or threats. The Chinese adapted some of these methods in order to identify suggestible American prisoners and employed them for propaganda purposes.27 From the first shock of the radio broadcasts, this issue dragged on to the very end of the war when twenty-one American prisoners and one Briton refused repatriation and demanded sanctuary in Communist China. This number was slight, in the context of the troops involved, but in terms of propaganda and beliefs about brainwashing it had a major impact.

One of the most problematic, and persistent, propaganda claims of the later part of the war from both the Soviet Union and Communist China was that the United States was practising large-scale bacteriological warfare in Korea. The first announcements in February 1952 were carefully timed to co-incide with a temporary failure in the talks over prisoners at Panmunjon, and backed by 'confessions' from American airmen about dropping canisters of infected flies or similar objects over North Korea and China. The resulting controversy is a fine case-study in three enduring truths about the value of propaganda. The first is that it is seldom sufficient to respond to such accusations with a dignified silence, as the United States at first chose to do. The second is the difficulty of replying to what may be a complete fabrication, since if the Americans were utterly innocent, 'how could they provide information on something that they had not done'?28 The third is that a well-mounted propaganda campaign of this kind, if it cannot convince sceptical and impartial observers, can create such a degree of doubt that the truth can no longer be determined. It is known that the Japanese experimented with germ warfare in Manchuria in the Second World War, that the United States took over the research at the end of the war, protecting some of those who had carried it out. Some authors on the propaganda of the war dismiss the Soviet and Chinese claim out of hand, even arguing that it
was cover for a Communist biological warfare campaign instead; others remain not so sure. The issue has never been publicly resolved to the present day. Various claims and counter-claims continue to be made, including the startling suggestion that the pilots' alleged confessions were authored for the Chinese by the British journalist Alan Winnington of the Daily Worker, then the newspaper of the British Communist Party, and Wilfred Burchett of the Paris Ce Soir, both of whom were reporting on the peace talks for the North Korean-Chinese delegation.29

In purely technical and administrative terms, the United States itself was in 1950 better prepared for a propaganda campaign in Korea than for almost any other form of military intervention. Within a day of Truman's decision to intervene in Korea, American aircraft were dropping freshly-printed propaganda leaflets on the advancing North Korean troops; and a day after that the first radio broadcasts were being made in Korean from American bases in Japan. Following the Second World War, in 1947 Far East Command had retained a Psychological Warfare Section, based on the unit that had worked against the Japanese, and in 1950 it consisted of 35 people. Also in 1947 the US Army had decided to retain a small psychological operations unit of 20 personnel, based at Fort Riley as the Tactical Information Detachment. This joined Eighth Army in Korea at the war's start, reorganised as 1st Loudspeaker and Leaflet (L&L) Company, to provide tactical and battlefield propaganda, in co-operation with a number of specialist air units. One of these, 21st Troop Carrier Squadron, 'The Kyushu Gypsies', had the unusual distinction in the latter part of the war of combining crews from the United States, Greece and Thailand, 'making it the only three-nation unit in Korea'.30 The main focus of these battlefield propaganda units was trying to induce enemy surrenders, in which they had some successes.

Strategic propaganda was not provided until much later in the war, by the new 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet (RB&L) Group, sent to Korea from Fort Riley in July 1951, of which the Mobile Radio Broadcasting (MRB) Company was a part. This produced in excess of 200 million leaflets a week, usually air-delivered, and assumed responsibility for the 'Voice of the United Nations Command' radio (originally broadcasting as the 'Voice of General MacArthur's Headquarters!') in Japan. With the war's stalemate, a number of high-profile operations were also mounted of the kind that win applause from fellow psychological warfare specialists rather than win battles. Particularly noteworthy was the widespread announcement in April 1953 that any Soviet or Chinese MiG-15 pilot who would surrender with their aircraft would receive $50,000 and political asylum, under 'Operation Moolah'. The offer was not taken up, but American psychological warfare teams claimed a victory of sorts in their belief that the temptation as well as bad weather grounded Soviet MiG pilots in the last months of the war. (One North Korean MiG pilot defected with his aircraft shortly after the war's end.)

The experience of these units in the course of the Korean War, together with a belief that the Chinese enemy was practising psychological warfare on a large scale, led in 1951 to the establishment in the Pentagon of an Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare, and in 1952 to the creation at Fort Bragg of the Psychological Warfare Center. Significantly in terms of the continued blurring between propaganda, psychological warfare and 'shadow' or 'unconventional' warfare in American thinking, many of those involved in these formations came from an OSS background. Fort Bragg included not only a training school and broadcasting and leafleting units, but also 10th Special Forces Group, the US Army's first 'unconventional warfare' unit. In 1956 the centre's name was changed to Special Warfare Center, and its purely propaganda function downgraded.31

By way of a conclusion, the following observations are offered on the nature of the Korean War, perhaps more as points of departure for further debate than as fundamental truths. Korea was the last war of the twentieth century to exhibit the cult of patriotic deference towards the higher command of the armed forces from war correspondents that had been created during earlier wars of the twentieth century and refined in the course of the Second World War; but at least part of the reason for this was a shared assumption that the fighting in Korea might itself be the preliminary to a much larger war. Because of the adoption of a strategy of stalemate or limitation by the United States on behalf of the United Nations, Korea became the first of a pattern of wars in the second half of the twentieth century in which
representation through the media, both at the time and in the war's aftermath, would become increasingly important as a war aim. The Korean War saw for the first time the issue emerge of the relationship between the conduct by armed forces of clandestine military activities, and the attitude of the armed forces towards their own country's mass media; the continuing problems evident in this issue may be traced to the blurring of the distinction between propaganda, psychological operations, and military-media relations that occurred at the time of the Korean War.

Endnotes

1. For comparison with other countries and their attitudes towards the war, the Australian War Memorial website award-winning online exhibition on the Korean War, launched in the year 2000, includes a section on propaganda and psychological warfare. See website http://www.awm.gov.au/korea visited on 1 September 2000.
2. 'The unknown war' is the subtitle of Jon Halliday and Bruce Cumings, Korea, The Unknown War (London: Penguin, 1990). See their own comments on propaganda and the media, and also Cumings' very personal account of making a television history of the Korean War in the 1980s for an American network: Bruce Cumings, War and Television (New York: Verso, 1992).
8. Derrick Mercer, Geoff Mungham and Kevin Williams, The Fog of War: The Media on the Battlefield (London: Heinemann, 1987), 250-4. See also (forthcoming) Stephen Badsey and Philip M Taylor, 'The Experience of Manipulation: Propaganda, the Press and Radio', in Peter H Liddle, John Bourne and Ian Whitehead, eds, Lightning Strikes Twice, vol II (London: Harper Collins, 2001). Although it is often loosely stated that 'censorship' has been operated by the United States or other western powers in military operations since Korea, what has actually been used is voluntary prior security review, a related but fundamentally different activity.
22. Australian War Memorial Website exhibition 'Out in the Cold' (see Note 1).
23. Pease, Psywar, 131-36.
27. Pease, Psywar, 147-53.
30. Pease, Psywar, 29.
THE KOREAN WAR 1950-53:
A 50 YEAR RETROSPECTIVE

AUSTRALIA’S WAR IN KOREA:
STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVES AND MILITARY LESSONS
Michael Evans

In Samuel Fuller's well-known 1951 film about the Korean War, The Steel Helmet, there is a scene in which an American GI asks his sergeant, 'How do you tell a North Korean from a South Korean?' The sergeant replies, 'If he's running with you he's a South Korean. If he's running after you he's a North Korean'. This exchange reflects the moral and physical paradoxes that have made the Korean War the so-called 'forgotten war'. Unlike the Second World War with its clear-cut enemies and its moral crusade for decisive victory, Korea seemed confusing and indecisive. The conflict was partly a civil war; partly an East-West ideological struggle; partly a United Nations police action; and partly an inter-state conventional war.

Korea was probably the most important transitional conflict of the twentieth century. It was both an epilogue to the post-Second World War era and a prologue to the new age of the Cold War, and as such the conflict reflected both old and new. For instance, the actual fighting in Korea seemed to recall not only the Second World War but also the First World War. Soldiers were confronted by stark terrain and by a stalemate that recalled the trench conditions of the Western Front in 1916. In its early stages, the war seemed to be an extension of the Second World War—symbolised by the fact that the United Nations (UN) forces were led by one of the titans of twentieth century warfare—Douglas MacArthur. Yet MacArthur's doctrine of 'there is no substitute for victory' was rendered obsolete by new Cold War restraints on the use of military force. The Korean War was the birthplace of the doctrine of limited war and was fought against a background of atomic weapons, new jet aircraft and new psychological warfare techniques.

MacArthur's dismissal in 1951 became a metaphor for Korea's character as a war without great heroes—a confusing, limited, difficult and seemingly thankless conflict. The war failed to capture the Western imagination: there was, for America, no Sergeant York and no Audie Murphy and, for Australia, no Albert Jacka and no Diver Derrick. Films often serve to register a war in the popular imagination: whereas the Second World War produced Sands of Iwo Jima, a reverential salute to the Second World War in the Pacific, Korea produced the grim and harrowing Pork Chop Hill, a movie about the futility of combat in Korea.

By 1951 the future seemed to belong not to flamboyant Caesars like MacArthur but to more prosaic military technicians such as Matthew B Ridgway. Such military technicians had to learn to wage limited war in which there would be no vanquished and no victors. In April 1951, at his first press conference, the new commander of the US Eighth Army, General James Van Fleet, was asked by an American correspondent: 'General what is our goal in Korea?' Van Fleet replied, 'I don't know. The answer must come from higher authority'. It was an answer MacArthur would never have given. In this way, in Korea, the realities of a new age came to outweigh the values of an old era.

Looking back over a half century we can now see that Korea was emblematic of the emerging Cold War—a sort of film noir war—murky and ambiguous. Male American teenagers sensed this ambiguity with their famous 1951 catch phrase: 'Boys, there's two things we gotta avoid: Korea and gonorrhea'. Korea was remarkably modern in its character. As a UN war it anticipated the model of the 1991 Gulf War by some forty years. The conflict showed how the UN should work against a dangerous rogue state and yet, how it could not work, because of the global ideological rivalry of the Cold War. The multinational response to aggression in Korea brought troops from North America, Australasia, Europe and Africa together to fight communism. Marxism-Leninism has since passed away as a world force but the legacy of the international security cooperation which began in Korea is today a staple of UN peace enforcement missions from Bosnia to East Timor.
Where does Australia fit into the broad background sketched? What was the meaning of this curious and seemingly unique war for Australia? This essay seeks to answer these questions by exploring three interrelated areas. First, by way of background and context, it analyses the significance of the war in Korea as a catalyst in the shaping of Australian strategic thinking to meet the demands of limited conflict in the new Cold War age. It is argued that Korea was an important factor in focusing Australian strategy towards the use of force as a tool of diplomacy and in defining the Asia-Pacific as Australia's unquestioned area of strategic concern. Second, the essay examines the way in which Australia used the instrument of military force in Cold War conditions of limited war. Although all three services were represented in Korea, the roles of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) have been dealt with elsewhere. This study concentrates on the role of land forces in what was, after all, predominantly a land war. It argues that the deployment of Australian troops in Korea was important in both establishing the integration of Australian diplomacy and strategy in Cold War conditions as well as creating the professional foundation of the Australian Regular Army.

Korea reinforced both Australian security and the Australian military's reputation for tactical excellence. The conflict provided the Regular Army with its only experience of twentieth century conventional war. Above all, and to use a boxing analogy, Korea established the tradition of Australia punching above her weight in international security. The modern notion of Australia as the agile middleweight fighting beside the friendly heavyweight was firmly established in Korea. Third, the essay looks briefly at the politico-military legacy of the Korean conflict for Australia. It argues that the conflict was crucial in helping to integrate Australian foreign and defence policies in order to exploit the peculiar political climate of the Cold War. Indeed, Korea began an era in Australian security that lasted for twenty years and ended only with the withdrawal from Vietnam in the early 1970s.

The Background and Significance of the Korean War to Australia

The Australian foreign correspondent, Richard Hughes, wrote in September 1952 that the Korean War had no soul. It is true that for most Australians Korea is much less significant than the Second World War. It is the shadow war that fits between the Second World War and Vietnam—two twentieth century conflicts that resonate powerfully in the national consciousness. For many younger Australians, Korea is a conflict that one associates with the American television series *M*A*S*H*.

Yet Korea was, in many ways, a more significant transitional war for Australia than it was for the United States, for two reasons. First, Korea occurred at a time when there was considerable debate over the relationship between defence and foreign policy in Australian official circles. There were sharp differences in outlook between the Liberal-Country Party coalition that had just assumed office and its Labor predecessor. The Korean War proved to be an important catalyst in defining the role of defence in foreign affairs for the next twenty years. Second, Korea became the last war Australia was to fight in the twentieth century outside of South-east Asia. Before the Korean conflict, Australia accepted in principle at least, a commitment to fight in the Middle East as part of a British Commonwealth strategic plan. Korea helped to create the Australia, New Zealand, United States (ANZUS) security treaty and, followed as it was by Malaya, Borneo and then Vietnam, established that Australia's primary area of strategic interest was the Asia-Pacific region.

The Debate over Defence and Foreign Affairs

The Korean War occurred at a time of transition from Labor to Liberal rule in Australia and at a time of important strategic redefinition. In his magisterial official history, Robert O'Neill argues that in 1950 there was little division between the major political parties on defence matters. He believes that any difference between the Menzies Government and the Chifley Opposition on defence policy 'was essentially one of priorities rather than principle'. In terms of fiscal spending on defence and in constructing new postwar military forces O'Neill is right; there was bipartisanship on the need for restrained spending and on creating a balanced military force structure. In addition, despite differences in emphasis, there was also a broad consensus on both sides of politics about the necessity for security co-operation within the framework of the British Commonwealth.
However, beyond these procedural issues, the principle of using military force as a component of diplomacy was fiercely contested in Australian politics after the Second World War. Between 1945 and 1949, the Chifley Government developed a foreign policy whose main feature was one of idealism based on a notion of liberal internationalism. The main architect of this vision was Dr HV Evatt, the Minister for External Affairs. In Evatt's world view, Australia's security was to be found not through bilateral alliances, but through internationalist liberal principles and collective security as demonstrated by his presidency of the General Assembly of the UN in 1948. It comes as no surprise, then, that the Chifley Government established what has been referred to elsewhere as 'the Labor tradition in Australian foreign policy'—a tradition that can be traced from Evatt in the 1940s to Gareth Evans in the 1990s. The basic principles behind this approach were, and in many ways remain, a preference for a broad foreign policy combined with a narrow defence policy—or put more simply international diplomacy but continental defence. As Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant wrote in their important 1991 book, *Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s*, foreign policy is multidimensional in nature and should not be inhibited by questions of defence policy.

The Liberal and Country parties challenged the Evatt vision of internationalism. Leading figures from the opposition such as Percy Spender and Paul Hasluck possessed little faith in multilateral diplomacy, which they often likened to a form of larrikinism. These men believed that Australia had to rely for its security on bilateral relationships and that in shaping a usable foreign policy questions of defence and military force remained fundamental. As Spender once put it, all that the United Nations offered Australia was enlightened arbitration not lasting security. The Liberal Party's scepticism towards the role of idealism in international affairs can be traced from Robert Menzies to John Howard.

At the end of the 1940s there was a modern philosophical division in Australian foreign policy between idealism and realism. While Gareth Evans and Bruce Grant have argued that the dichotomy in Australian foreign policy between realism and idealism can be exaggerated, these terms are useful as a means of understanding the significant difference between the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and the Coalition regarding the use of force as a tool of foreign policy during the late 1940s and the 1950s. This difference was magnified and complicated—some might say distorted—by the growing shadow of the Cold War. The onset of the Cold War was of much greater concern to the Liberal Party than it was to the ALP Government. To the Liberals, the events of 1947-49—the outbreak of communist insurgency in Malaya, the Greek civil war, the Berlin airlift and the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)—signalled the looming failure of the UN in managing international conflict. Evatt disagreed with this analysis of international relations. As David Lee has noted, to Evatt, 'the Cold War resulted not from innate and irreconcilable differences between the great powers, but from reformable defects in the international mechanisms for solving disputes'.

In February 1949 the differences between Australian idealist-realist philosophies were illuminated in parliament. The Opposition leader, Robert Menzies, described Evatt's approach to international security as one of treating the principle of justice and the practice of using force as if they were complete opposites. Menzies argued that force and expediency were elements of statecraft that could not be lightly rejected. He pointed out that the Berlin crisis had not been solved by appeals to international justice but by the expedient of using Western air power. Accordingly, international aggression could not be checked by the UN but only by the Western powers led by the United States acting in unison. When the Menzies Government took office in December 1949 its realist approach ensured that Australia would try to seek security in the bosom of the West, specifically the Americans, rather than relying on the UN. However this was no easy task. In 1949 the political conditions for Australia to secure itself within an American-led Pacific alliance were largely missing.

At the end of 1949 American attention was fixed firmly on Europe. Washington did not seem to demonstrate much interest in an Asia-Pacific security system. Australia had attempted to seek security within the British Commonwealth through the Australia-New Zealand-Malaya (ANZAM) defence arrangement in the late 1940s. However, ANZAM came with an uncomfortable price tag: namely involvement in British strategic planning in the Middle East.
The British security link always risked drawing Australia away from the Asia-Pacific into the Middle East so threatening a repetition of the Singapore catastrophe in 1942. And yet, and this is an important point, given the weaknesses of the UN combined with the absence of security arrangements with the United States in the Asia-Pacific, the British Commonwealth remained Australia's only real option for security co-operation.

In 1949 Spender and his fellow realists in the Menzies Government did not see defence self-reliance as practical. They believed that an independent defence policy would be too expensive and would blunt economic development and ultimately only encourage a form of Australian isolationism. As Menzies put it in September 1950: 'Australia's defence policy must be part of a world democratic defence policy, or it will be nothing'.

Resolving these conflicting problems was a testing challenge. As David Lee has argued, in its search for security the Menzies Government inaugurated what he terms 'the critical turning point in the history of Australian foreign policy'. This turning point was largely forged between 1950 and 1954 and involved a deliberate decision to loosen security ties with Britain and to concentrate on building new links with the United States. In this process, the Korean War played a crucial, indeed a defining role.

The Role of Korea in Australian Strategic Thinking

The Korean War helped bring about a convergence in Australian and American security thinking. From the Australian perspective, the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 was a reminder to the Menzies Government that the nation's fundamental security concerns were focused on a different side of the world from those of its principal ally, Britain. From the American perspective, the victory of Mao Zedong's communists in China in late 1949 followed by North Korea's aggression against the south drew American interest back into the Western Pacific and East Asia. The outbreak of the war in Korea convinced the Truman Administration that containment had to be extended to Asia as well as Europe. The convergence in Australian and American policy stemming from the Korean War allowed the realists in the Menzies Government led by Spender to begin the process of relegating the ANZAM relationship between Australia and Britain to second place in Australian security.

It is a supreme irony that the Menzies Government, so often derided as 'British to its bootstraps' should, in the wake of Korea, have completed the reorientation of Australian security towards the United States. Although this reorientation had begun under John Curtin in 1941, it became decisive only in April 1951 with the signing of the ANZUS pact. Although Australia still accepted a British Commonwealth commitment to defend Malaya in the 1950s, the American-dominated ANZUS and later the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO)—rather than the British ANZAM arrangement—became the main vehicles for security co-operation in South-east Asia.

Conflict in Korea served to reinforce the conviction of the conservative realists in the Liberal Party that the defence aspect of foreign policy was, in Cold War conditions, a fundamental aspect of international statecraft. As Menzies put it in September 1950, 'the foundation of foreign policy is defence policy. The truth of that statement ... has been demonstrated abundantly ... in respect of Korea'. The Menzies Government sent Australian troops to Korea because it served Australia's purpose during negotiations towards the ANZUS pact with the United States. In short, Korea gave Menzies the opportunity to integrate defence policy and foreign policy in a quest for an Australian security system.

On 22 September 1950, as the war in Korea raged, Menzies noted that unlike the Japanese, the Communist powers, China and Russia, were not great maritime powers. Their capacity to threaten Australia physically was limited. However, as great land powers, they could do great damage to Australian interests. For this reason the Australian Army had to become a tool of diplomacy. As he put it,
The principal purpose of an Australian Army is not to repel a land invasion, but to co-operate with other democratic forces in those theatres of war in which the fate of mankind may be fought out. In brief, and I say it quite bluntly, an Australian Army raised only for service in Australia would, in all probability, be raised for no service at all. It would be the equivalent of a wooden gun. And the democratic world cannot afford to have its common front weakened by the withdrawal into useless isolation of some of the best troops in the world.\(^\text{26}\)

The above words represent a classic exposition of the Australian conservative realist position in the Cold War. For the Menzies Government, the Korean War served to confirm all the beliefs of the Coalition's realists in the importance of alliance politics and the weakness of the UN in collective security. In this respect Korea helped in setting the course of Australia's foreign and defence policies for the next twenty years.

The contrast with the ALP's more idealistic philosophy towards foreign and defence matters came when the Menzies Government launched a recruiting campaign for the Australian Army. The Government decided to enlist from only those individuals who were prepared to serve overseas. Opposition leader, Ben Chifley, immediately opposed this move and, in a letter quoted in parliament, he wrote that under his immediate post-Second World War Labor administration, ‘the very foundation of the [Australian Permanent Military Forces] was the military defence of the continent and the islands placed under Australia's authority’.\(^\text{27}\) He went on to state that the Coalition Government's decision to recruit volunteers willing to undertake overseas duty was in his view, ‘detrimental to the efficient defence security of our country ... The Opposition cannot participate in recruiting on the basis of the entirely new obligations of the personnel to render military service anywhere in the world’.\(^\text{28}\) Nonetheless, despite these very real differences between Menzies and Chifley on defence policy, it is important to note that the ALP never opposed Australia's involvement in the Korean War once Australian forces were committed to the UN cause.

**The Nature of the Korean Conflict: Australia and the Land War 1950-53**

The Korean War was overwhelmingly a land war with the US deploying six army divisions and one marine division. Despite the application of overwhelming air power and apart from the amphibious landing at Inchon, the most decisive events of the war were land actions. The latter included the initial North Korean invasion; the battles of the Pusan Perimeter and the Chongchon River in 1950; and the various allied and communist offensives and counter-offensives during 1951; and the static war of 1952-53.\(^\text{29}\)

This is not to deny the important role played by air power in the Korean War. UN aircraft were used to pound North Korea to disrupt logistics and movement and undoubtedly weakened the communist war effort. However, aerial interdiction alone was insufficient to contain the huge communist armies. The war in Korea proved what the Russian air theorist, Alexander de Seversky, had foretold in 1942, namely that, ‘total war from the air against an undeveloped country or region is well nigh futile; it is one of the curious features of [air war] that it is especially effective [only] against the most modern types of civilisation’.\(^\text{30}\) In Korea, UN troops were still needed to restore the *status quo ante* on the 38th parallel. After 1951, General Ridgway's strategy was one of firepower attrition. He sought to stabilise the UN military line by using continuous tactical pressure and occasional set-piece battles in order to try to force the communists into negotiation.\(^\text{31}\)

It was against this strategic background that Australian troops were committed to Korea in July 1950 in the form of the third battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment (3 RAR), consisting of 39 officers and 971 other ranks. The battalion, brought up to strength by members of the first and second battalions of the regiment (1 and 2 RAR) and by special enlistment volunteers, arrived in September 1950 during the UN drive into North Korea. It is only possible here to provide a snapshot of operations in Korea to convey the flavour of the war. The Australians were attached to the 27th Commonwealth Infantry Brigade (and later the British 28th Brigade) and saw action at Yongchu (the battle of the Apple Orchard) and at Chongju in October 1950 and then at Pakchon in November in the wake of the great Chongchon encirclement battle launched by the Chinese—an action that sent MacArthur's forces into headlong retreat from the Yalu River.\(^\text{32}\)
The third battalion’s immortal moments in Korea came first at Kapyong in April 1951 and then at Maryang San in October 1951. These two battles were exceptional unit actions and represented the baptism of fire for an Australian Regular Army (ARA) that was barely four years old. Kapyong and Maryang San remain the ARA’s only conventional war experience during the twentieth century. Both battles showed that the diggers of the Cold War could match the exploits of both the 1st and 2nd Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and that the Anzac tradition was in good hands.

Yet, it is probably true to say that until recently, the two Korean battles have inspired less literary interest than say, Long Tan, during the Vietnam War. Lex McAulay’s popular 1986 book, *The Battle of Long Tan: The Legend of ANZAC Upheld* with its running quotations from Shakespeare’s Henry V, is arguably far better known. While it is unfair to compare wars and battles—each have their own unique setting and character—it is arguable that the significance of Kapyong and especially Maryang San have only been recognized outside of the veterans’ circle during the last decade. In 1991 the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General John Coates, observed of Maryang San that the battle lacked proper public recognition. ‘The performance of 3 RAR’, he noted, ‘is still not widely understood. Maryang San has not received the literary or commemorative recognition afforded to other battles fought by battalions of the RAR’.

**Kapyong, April 1951**

For Australian troops the battle of Kapyong was a rearguard defensive action followed by a fighting withdrawal. The battle occurred in April 1951 when the Chinese advanced towards Seoul and overwhelmed the Republic of Korea (ROK) 6th Infantry Division so forcing the 27th Commonwealth Brigade into a defence of the Kapyong Valley. The third battalion of the RAR, along with the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, a New Zealand artillery regiment and a company of American tanks, engaged a Chinese division.

The Australians faced night attack on their position on Hill 504 and were then exposed all day in relatively open fire from all sides and cut off from other battalions. The third battalion used rearguards and close artillery support to slow the Chinese advance followed by a fighting withdrawal. Overall, 3 RAR’s battle with the Chinese at Kapyong became a conventional all-arms battle with both the forward companies and battalion headquarters engaged in a continuous 24-hour action. The Chinese advance on the Kapyong Valley was halted for a cost of 32 Australians killed and 59 wounded and 3 RAR received a US Presidential Unit Citation for its action.

**Maryang San, September-October 1951**

Lieutenant General John Coates has called the battle of Maryang San ‘a post-World War II classic’. There is little doubt that the battle was a brilliant example of a battalion action involving a series of deliberate and quick attacks followed by consolidation and defence against counterattack. The exploitation of surprise, the use of complementary actions, the implementation of support fires and the coordination of all arms were impressive by any standards. In particular, the quality of tactical decision-making by the Commanding Officer of 3 RAR, Lieutenant Colonel FG Hassett, is justly regarded as exceptional and remains a model for all Australian officers to study and to analyse as a battalion battle.

Maryang San took place as part of OPERATION COMMANDO under which the 28th Brigade was to seize high ground—notably Hills 317 and 217—on the Imjin salient. Hassett and his officers were tasked to take Hill 317 held by two Chinese regiments. It is important to note that, prior to 3 RAR’s attack, this objective had been assaulted unsuccessfully by two American battalions. The Americans had failed largely because they had not used surprise and had relied on daylight movement. Hassett was determined to avoid the mistakes the Americans had made. First, he decided to utilise high ground by using the technique of ‘running the ridges’—originally devised in New Guinea during the Second World War—by attacking along a wooded ridge running from the east to the summit of Hill 317. Second, 3 RAR was to advance under cover of darkness, seize a number of intermediate hills and then assault Hill 317. The final phase of the operation involved elements of 3 RAR linking up with a British battalion at a knoll on the ridge called the Hinge.
The battle was a sustained offensive that lasted for five days from 3-8 October 1951. The action unfolded as a series of rifle company and platoon firefights with fire support coming from artillery and tanks. The enemy was pinned frontal and was attacked on his flanks. Despite night movement and later fog, Hassett showed particular skill in combining accurate supporting fire with well-timed infantry assaults to dislodge the Chinese from the summit of Hill 317. Once this was accomplished an Australian company had to hold the Hinge area against artillery bombardment and three fierce attacks by a Chinese battalion.  

During the battle of Maryang San, 3 RAR destroyed at least two Chinese battalions. The Australians counted 283 enemy killed; thirty prisoners taken and several hundred more either killed or wounded. Australian losses were twenty killed and eighty-nine wounded. The intensity of the battle can be gauged by the fact that 3 RAR's supporting artillery fired 50,000 shells while the Australians expended 900,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, and used some 12,000 grenades and mortar bombs during the fighting. It was an impressive victory against a numerically superior enemy in a strong position. As O'Neill puts it, 'the victory of Maryang San is probably the greatest single feat of the Australian Army during the Korean war'.

The Static War, January 1952-July 1953

Apart from actions such as Kapyong and Maryang San, Australian troops participated in 'the strategy of the static war' waged from January 1952 until the ceasefire in July 1953. Troops from 3 RAR (and later 1 and 2 RAR) were part of the 1st Commonwealth Division (comprising the 28th British Commonwealth; 29th British and Canadian 25th Brigades) that was deployed on the Jamestown Line to defend two pivotal bastions in the approaches to the Imjin Valley, the massive Point 355 Ridge and the Hook. The static war with its fixed defences of trench lines, bunkers, barbed wire and minefields recalled the tactics of the Western Front and of Tobruk. It was methodical warfare with maximum use of supporting arms—including air superiority, artillery and machine guns.

As part of 28th Brigade, the Australians became masters of aggressive patrolling to deny enemy penetration of UN lines. The Australian battalions used multiple small standing patrols in front of the defences at night—particularly in the mouth of gullies and gaps. These were supplemented by fighting patrols and ambush patrols that ranged deeply into no man's land to lie in wait for the enemy. All patrols could call in artillery fire support or assistance from stand-by forces within the line. Between June 1952 and February 1953, the guns of the Commonwealth Division fired some two million shells on the Chinese positions during the static war. This type of fighting was relentless and bloody. In July 1953, only days and hours before the ceasefire, Australian troops took part in fighting around the Hook in which UN artillery fire killed some 3000 Chinese troops.

Australia and the Diplomatic and Military Legacy of the Korean War

The Korean War cost Australia 339 dead, 1216 wounded and twenty-nine prisoners of war most of whom were soldiers. For Australia, Korea provided the model for what Jeffrey Grey has called ‘the wars of diplomacy’ of the Cold War era of the 1950s and 1960s. These wars embraced the use of limited Australian military involvement in Korea, Malaya, Borneo and later Vietnam as a means of maximising the diplomatic basis of national security. These deployments reflected the realist conviction that, as Spender put it in March 1950, ‘a nation’s foreign policy must ... be closely integrated with that of defence’. Australian diplomacy must be ‘principally and continually concerned with the protection of this country from aggression and with the maintenance of our security and our way of life’.

The integration of Australian diplomacy and strategy began in Korea. Although Australia's military contribution was physically small it had great symbolic and diplomatic value in the negotiations for the ANZUS Pact in 1951—an alliance which has since become the sheet anchor of Australia's security. Conflict in Korea reminded the Menzies Government that the prime danger to Australia's national security lay in Asia. The extension of the American security umbrella to the Asia-Pacific allowed Australia to pursue a strategic policy in which
national security was guaranteed by the United States in a way that did not affect Australia's economic development. This was no mean achievement for a middle power and it set the parameters for foreign policy and defence decision-making until the end of the Vietnam War.53

Using this perspective, it is clear that the Korean War was a watershed in Australian history in the sense that it marked the decline of the Anglo-Australian military connection and the maturing of the Australia-US bilateral relationship. This reality was obscured for much of the 1950s by the nature of Australian culture as reflected by Menzies' personal Anglophilia, by the continuing ANZAM connection and by Australia's military assistance to Britain during the Malayan Emergency.54

In purely military terms, the Korean War also had a major impact on the development of the Australian Regular Army. Over 7500 troops served in Korea and the conflict gave the Army valuable experience of battalion operations while providing many junior and middle-ranking officers and NCOs with useful combat experience.55 When the next major test, Vietnam, confronted the Australian Army there were company and battalion commanders available who had learned their craft as platoon leaders in Korea.

The great question, however, remains: was the struggle for South Korea worth the loss of Western life in general and of Australian life in particular?56 The American combat historian, SLA Marshall, who experienced the two world wars, Korea and Vietnam, once described the Korean conflict as 'the century's nastiest war'.57 He may have exaggerated but there is little doubt that, in the 1950s to many Australians and Americans, the Korean War seemed to have been a thankless and inglorious task. The fact that the Korean War was a bellum justum—the use of force to put down wrongful action—was a poor consolation to those Western soldiers who went home to changing and often indifferent societies that were yet to come to terms with the reality of limited war. As one GI wryly put it, 'we went away to Glenn Miller. We came back to Elvis Presley'.58

Yet the war achieved much. As one American scholar has observed, the communist aggression against South Korea was so brazen and threatening that it persuaded the United States to undertake the global role that proved essential to defeat revolutionary Marxism-Leninism.59 From a post-Cold War perspective we can see clearly now that the Korean War secured ANZUS for Australia; probably saved Taiwan from communism; helped Japan's economic recovery; assisted the morale of the Philippines; and perhaps hastened the Sino-Soviet split.60 In 1953 little of this was understood in either Australia or the United States. Indeed, the preservation of South Korea under the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee did not seem to have been a great accomplishment. Again with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the thriving South Korean state, an Asian Tiger economy, is the direct result of the UN's resistance to aggression in 1950.61

Had the UN failed to intervene in Korea in June 1950 the whole of the peninsula would have fallen prey to the dictatorship of Kim Il-sung, the Great Leader, and his strange juche (self-reliance) philosophy. There can be no greater contrast in the quality of individual life today than that between Kim Dae-jong's elected government in prosperous South Korea and the sclerotic regime of the Dear Leader, Kim Jong-il, in North Korea with its imbalance between military strength and economic stagnation.62

Australian participation in the Korean War, then, did help to save South Korea and this was a noble achievement. Sadly however, the successes of Korea are often overshadowed by the failure of Vietnam. As Max Hastings has noted, Korea is frequently viewed as a military rehearsal for the subsequent American disaster in Vietnam.63 There can be no doubt that the lessons of Korea were more successfully absorbed by Asian communist revolutionaries than by American strategists. Chinese and Vietnamese military theorists learnt two great military lessons in the Korean conflict. First, they realised the folly of fighting the West on its own terms in major conventional warfare. Accordingly, the war of human waves in Korea gave way to the war of the flea in South-east Asia—that is, Maoist people's war—in which revolutionary subversion was used to foil Western air power; jungle space was employed to blunt Western firepower; and political mobilisation made to substitute for Western industrial mobilisation.64
Second, communist strategists recognised the Achilles Heel of Western democracy at war—impatience. The factor of time in war, they reasoned, must always be against democracies in arms. So it was that, when the war in Vietnam began, China—unlike the United States—avoided becoming embroiled in a protracted ground war.65

Ironically, all the seeds for American and, by extension, Australian failure in Vietnam were sown in Korea. The problems of supporting local autocrats like Syngman Rhee occurred again in Vietnam with the Thieu government. The ineffectiveness of the ROK Army was repeated with the weak performance of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Like MacArthur who underestimated the impact of Chinese arms in Korea, General William Westmoreland underestimated the military skills of his North Vietnamese communist enemy. As in Korea, the difficulties of using air power in a limited war against a peasant army reappeared in Vietnam. Lastly, the strategy of Korea—the employment of firepower attrition—was employed unsuccessfully by Westmoreland in the very different geographical and political conditions of South-east Asia.66

In Vietnam, then, all of Australia's diplomatic finesse and combat prowess could not compensate for the flawed strategy of its great ally the United States. The Vietnam experience was a useful, if painful, lesson for Australia's conservative realists in the limitations of alliance security.

Conclusion

The frustrations surrounding the Korean War are sometimes characterised by quoting General Omar N Bradley's famous 1951 statement that the struggle represented 'the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy'.67 It is important to note that Bradley was referring specifically to MacArthur's miscalculation in driving across the 38th Parallel—an action that precipitated China's entry into the war.

By way of contrast, it is interesting to consider General Matthew B Ridgway's December 1950 view of the war in Korea. Ridgway assumed command of UN forces that had been badly mauled and demoralised by the ferocity of the Chinese offensive. As part of his measures to restore morale Ridgway reminded UN troops that the issue at stake in Korea was not about territory but about values and specifically, whether Western values could defeat communist ideology. He went on to state:

Real estate is here incidental ... The real issues are whether the power of Western civilisation ... shall defy and defeat communism; whether the rule of men who shoot their prisoners, enslave their citizens, and deride the dignity of man, shall displace the rule of those to whom the individual and his individual rights are sacred. The sacrifices we have made, and those we shall yet support, are not offered vicariously for others, but in our own direct defence. In the final analysis, the issue joined right here in Korea is whether communism or individual freedom should prevail.68

Only since the end of the Cold War have many in the West come to fully appreciate Ridgway's wise words and to understand that those who fought for South Korea have been, as one Australian newspaper recently put it, 'forgotten heroes'.69 It is fitting, then, that the last words on Australia's role in the Korean War should belong to Sir William Keys, a distinguished Korean veteran and a former National President of the Returned Services League. At the dedication of the long-overdue National Korean War Memorial on Anzac Parade in Canberra on 18 April 2000, and only days before his death, Sir William spoke for all Australia's Korean veterans when he said:

We now have a special memorial to those who served and died in the Korean War. It is an enduring reminder of a most gallant effort. Our greatest memorial, however, will be our contribution to the establishment of a free and democratic, stable, progressive and productive nation in the vital area of North-East Asia that has not only done much for [South] Korea, but so much for the whole region—and so very much for Australia'.70
Endnotes

12. In September 1947 Hasluck commented that Evatt's approach represented 'a larrikin strain in Australian foreign policy—a disposition to throw stones at the street lights just because they are bright': Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives* (hereinafter CPD [Rcps]), vol 193, 24 September 1947, 177.
14. There is no single work on what PA Mediansky has called 'the conservative style in Australian foreign policy.' There is, however, considerable evidence to suggest that such a style has been important in the Liberal-Country/National approach to international relations. See PA Mediansky, 'The Conservative Style in Australian Foreign Policy', *Australian Outlook* 28:1 (April 1974), 50-56, and Alan Renouf's discussion of the philosophical divisions in Australian foreign policy in Alan Renouf, *The Frightened Country* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1979), 16-29.
17. *CPD* (Rcps), vol 201, 15 February 1949, 263-75.
18. Ibid.
32. Ibid, chs 1-4.
34. In the early 1990s the Australian Army recognised the importance of both battles and commissioned monographs by Lieutenant Colonel Bob Breen, *The Battle of Maryang San: 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. Korea, 2-8 October 1951* (Sydney: Headquarters Training Command, 1991), and

35. Foreword by Lieutenant General HJ Coates AO, MBE, Chief of the General Staff, in Breen, The Battle of Maryang San, vi.


37. The best accounts of the battle can be found in O'Neill, Combat Operations, ch 6, and Jeffrey Grey, 'The Regiment's First War: Korea, 1950-1956', in David Horner, ed, Duty First: The Royal Australian Regiment in War and Peace (Sydney; Allen & Unwin, 1990), 81-85.

38. Ibid.


43. See O'Neill, Strategy and Diplomacy, 188-99.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid, 200.


47. Ibid. See also Ron Hughes, 'The Static War', in Pears and Kirkland, Korea Remembered, 189-96.


52. CPD (Reps), vol 206, 9 March 1950, 622-23.


56. UN Forces suffered 142,000 casualties during the Korean War, the vast majority of which were from the West. For example, the Americans lost 33,269 killed and 105,785 wounded and Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand a further 1263 killed and 4817 wounded.


58. Ibid, 409.


60. See the work of such scholars as Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century (London: Macdonald, 1990), and John Lewis Gaddis, We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).


65. For the Korean War's impact on the conflict in Vietnam, see Sandler, The Korean War: No Victors, No Vanquished, 263-70.

66. Ibid. See also Hastings, The Korean War, ch 18.


70. For the full text of this speech see Sir William Keys AC, OBE, MC, 'Memories of Korea', Journal of the Royal United Services Institute of Australia 21 (June 2000): 10.
As long ago as the mid 1990s a number of Australian Korean War veterans had begun the processes of publicly commemorating the Australian participation in the Korean War. As other contingents of serving personnel had before them, they were determined to have a memorial set in place on Anzac Parade, Canberra, the avenue which ties the Australian Parliamentary Triangle (and specifically both Parliament Houses) to the Australian War Memorial, a physical metaphor for one aspect of the foundation of the Australian nation—its military history. Those original moves in the mid 1990s came to fruition on 18 April 2000 when The Australian National Korean War Memorial was dedicated. This essay provides a brief history and analysis of the processes of design, evaluation and building of this newest memorial.

**Another Forgotten War?**

Titling this essay 'Another Forgotten War Remembered', may appear to be an appeal to the slightly controversial or disrespectful—but that tone should not be read as humorously ironic. If ironic at all it should have an edge of lament or melancholy, for indeed it is the case that for most Australians and large numbers of the other participants (chiefly the USA) the Korean War is the most substantial of those many wars, conflicts units and individuals who have for whatever reason cast themselves or been cast as forgotten. More forgotten even than the Vietnam 'generation'. Indeed recently in Australia, as part of the publicity campaign surrounding the National Memorial, the Korean veterans themselves discussed the issue of whether or not they wanted to maintain this forgotten 'image'. They decided to keep it, despite the advice and attempts of some senior members of their various organizations and committees to put, as it were, a more positive account of the Korean War into this 'new' public domain, in association with this, their new memorial.

Forgotten-ness of such major events as large wars seems to have become a kind of virus within the post-Vietnam period. It is as if the public memory lapse about Vietnam which seems to have followed the fall of Saigon in 1975 became an epidemic which virtually erased all other memories of wars which preceded Vietnam. When the memory dam of Vietnam broke, equally it valorised all other recollections, memories, and a huge nostalgia. But instead of seeing these phenomena as perhaps parts of those natural cycles of public forgetting, remembering and rehabilitating which follow huge historical movements, forgetting and memory lapse became something more in need of and abetting the processes of validation. Once forgotten, the more emotionally powerful and validly remembered, it seems. It might be argued that the cycle adumbrated here, beginning with forgetting, is contentious. Instead of forgetting it might be more reasonable to see the public tendency of forgetting the immediate memories of a war (won or lost for that matter) as merely a kind of social rationality—the need to get on with the after-war life (politics, economics and so forth)—and not to continue to live the intra-war life. That is, it is not so much forgetting as putting aside or a turning away from. Being forgotten is by comparison much more emotionally powerful than a turning back. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that it should be contagious. But it follows then that not all cases may be so clearly part of the memory loss as claimed.

'A poor sort of memory that works only backwards'

In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, the White Queen opens Alice's mind to the possibility that memory need not work only retrospectively. While Carroll, Oxford logician, was playing with the philosophical questions of memory, the late twentieth century has realised the possibility of remembering forwards. Certainly memory is often evoked in circumstances of constructing events for a future audience.
In filmmaker Spielberg's recent *Saving Private Ryan* there is evidence of a kind of extraordinary appropriation of the loss of military historical memory to the Second World War. Behind the obvious and literalised memory of saving Private Ryan is a less obvious and more dubious metaphorical meaning in the film's saving of that particular theatre—D-Day at Omaha Beach. It might be observed that Spielberg revivified and indeed 'realised' into popular memory Omaha as the event of the Second World War—as the moment when the USA saved western values, indeed western civilization as 'we' know it. For many outside the USA such a claim is not merely rehabilitating local and national memory. It is claiming all of it—a globalizing sweep. Not so much the request 'you must remember'—which would allow the local, the national, the other ethnicity—Spielberg's view (and his is reflective of other issues of memory in the globalized postmodern world) demands more: 'You must remember *this* and *this* only. US history is the history. Forgetting leads to a collective though specific remembering.4

By contrast, and perhaps quite rightly, the broader demographic of Australian Korean veterans (and the use of the word 'veterans' is itself a loaded term indicative of a post-Vietnam ecology) wanted to keep their 'forgotten-ness' at the forefront of the memorialising process. Being forgotten has, I would argue, become a badge of some distinction within some populations of serving personnel. What effect that badging has within the process of the choice of the memorial design, its building and status within the community, will be at least one point of discussion the memorial may encourage in the future.

What kind of memory then has to rise literally as concrete and steel from the past, and whose past? By definition many now just in primary school and younger do not and are unlikely to share the pasts of their grandparents or beyond. Such is the rapidity of cultural change that the connectedness of and between generations up to and including the Vietnam generation seems threatened if it is not already disconnected. True, every generation has made the same Socratic lament about the education (or rather its lack) of the youth that follows. The late twenty-first century enfolds that general lament within the perception that the newer media of hypertext, Web and Net seem destined to fundamentally alter cognitive life. Where once upon a distant medieval time the impact of the new technology—the book—was loudly touted as a threat to the mnemonic habits and skills of the old world, the Net threatens it seems far more.5 Perhaps. It remains to be seen. Yet, conjectures of some kinds can be made about the effects of such things on, of all things, memorials. What kinds of memory? It seems that considerations of the kind of gaps between the serving personnel and those who have forgotten them necessitate, or at least guide, the criteria of how to set up and design memorials in the late twentieth century. At the least one can observe such criteria in the last three if not more memorials along Anzac Parade: namely the Vietnam, Service Nurses' and the Korean memorials. Each in their own way opts for the memorial as installation—as a miniature museum—at once more than monumental and commemorative, more than celebratory, more than educative—yet these memorials combine all of these elements, and then some, to create 'environments'.

The 'complete' visitor to such memorials cannot just contemplate and remember the events, the dates, the people, they are invited to have a kind of experience—to participate in and, momentarily at least, to understand what the events were like. Such memorials in some ways do not encourage the practice of remembering simply; for most of their visitors now and in future the memory will have to work forwards to construct memory, not re-construct it. Such memorials are in some ways simulations. This view is arguable and of course not of necessity a negative comment about the role and status of these memorials. It is a view of them supported by the way the memorial competitions and designs are designed, decided and executed.

**A National Competition**

On 18 April 2000 The Australian Korean National Memorial was dedicated, the culmination of just on four years of committees, design competition and judging and then just under a year of construction, all at a cost of about $1.5 million. The complex design is another magnificent contribution to that curiously Australian sweep of monuments, statues, memorials and
celebrations of the Australian history of military duty, both in war and peace, which appears along Anzac Parade. In the light of Canberra’s designers, Anzac Parade can be read as a summary of Australia’s military involvements—a ‘paragraph’ as it were, syntactically connecting the Australian War Memorial to the Parliamentary Buildings of the triangle across the lake. A ‘summary paragraph’ to be sure, and ‘curious’ because it consists of a series of discrete monuments nestled within their own niches along the two sides of the Parade. But also Australian in the quiet reticence of their nestling—there is no strident militarism here. The better then, that at last (and timely enough) Korea joins the memories along this avenue; that the paragraph is the more complete by their addition.

The Australian National Korean War Memorial Project

The Australian National Korean War Memorial (ANKWM) Project formally began before 1996 with lobbying for a suitable site along the acknowledged axis of the nation’s service history—Anzac Parade, Canberra, and with site dedication in April 1996. As always the National Capital Authority (NCA) acted in an administrative and supervisory role, ensuring that the memorial fit within the overall plan not only of Anzac Parade but more widely within the Canberra devised by the Burley Griffins.

The location chosen for the memorial was on the western side of Anzac Parade, opposite the Service Nurses’ Memorial. A judging panel was established and drew up a set of criteria for the type of memorial desired. The national competition was announced in April 1997. As is usual for these competitions overseen by the NCA the competition was constructed as a limited two-stage structure; submissions would be judged by a ‘panel of assessors’ set up by the larger committee. Stage One was set in train in April with interested parties being given not only a substantial booklet (some fifty-one pages) of guidelines but also other matters which included an Information Folder describing the Korean War; the Australian involvement; the purposes and philosophy of the project; where the site was; and the complete set of rules.

From that initial interest the panel selected no more than twelve who were then asked to continue in the two-stage competition. That twelve would then be culled and as many as five chosen to submit to the second stage. The timetable was, to put it mildly, tight. The opening phase began on 23 June. That was the date competition entry closed and Stage One began. The committee chose its first twelve. Not quite five weeks later on 24 July the Stage One winners had to resubmit their more substantial briefs in which they could modify and enhance their designs on the basis of further information. On 24 July Stage One judging began and three weeks later on 14 August the twelve were culled to a smaller number—no more than five—and these five had a chance to resubmit even more material as Stage Two opened. They had another five weeks to tailor their new versions with a deadline of 18 September. Then followed another three weeks for assessment. Rather than announcing the winner at the end of this process, the designated ‘winning’ entry had to meet the approval of other committees—that is, the choice of the assessment panel had to be ratified so to speak by the full committee and the project assessed for its fitness for the nation’s capital, by other government bodies. None of this a mere formality; the timeframe allowed eight weeks, with a public announcement expected on 4 December 1997. From then it was up to the committee to organize funding and then the building. That took much longer.

At first as usual the site was marked and a sign announcing the winning design, builders, auditors and management was put in place. Soon too, the site was dedicated. At this occasion a number of large boulders given by the Korean Government were placed as an interim monument, in 1998. At that time it seemed very likely that any winning design would include these in its ‘new’ plans. Building began in mid-1999 and progressed rapidly to the memorial dedication on 18 April 2000.

That in summary was the timeframe. It was tight, even more so when the requirements of the entrants set out in the booklet are looked at. Stage One entrance was relatively simple: only a small amount of documentation from prospective entrants was required. This included:
Drawings:

- sufficient to describe the form and intent of the proposal, and should include:
- a site plan (1:100) and more detailed plans if needed and most importantly, 'pictorial representations of the proposal, either by way of perspective drawing, photo-montage or photographs of a model, (p 9)

All of this was limited to no more than two A1 sheets using one side only, a formidable task in its way, one might observe. But more was required. As well as the drawings the entrants needed to submit a 'Descriptive Statement', which at least had to address the design criteria, describe the materials and method of construction, and give an 'opinion' of the budget, especially as to whether it could be built within the limit of $1.5 million, and last, an A3 sized reductions of the A1 drawings. All of this to be on no more than ten A4 typed sheets, plus the A3 additions. (p 9)

Those designs judged suitable for more consideration were then asked to provide considerably more detail. Stage Two submissions were required to submit drawings—at least but not restricted to:

- 1:100 scale plan, elevations and sections at 1.50.
- architectural detailed drawings sufficient to 'provide information to fully assess the design intent and buildability (sic)', (p. 9)

All of this on no more than two A1 sheets. But by this stage the needs were even more complex. The NCA and the committee had made 'a realistically coloured, three-dimensional, 1:50 scale [base] model' of the Anzac Parade site and required that entrants build a model of their submissions which could be inserted into the 'base model' template. A separate set of instructions was provided to Stage Two entrants to help with the insertion of the model. So the NCA and the committee required drawings, a model and more: a 'Design Report' which had to expand and elaborate on the Stage One material where necessary; provide much more detailed cost estimates including all fees; a tighter idea as to the chronology of the building process; indications of post-building maintenance and management; and a set of reduced A3 copies of the Stage Two drawings. The descriptive material was again to be typewritten on A4 sheets, but there was now no stated limit to the word length of the submission.

What is listed above is just the amount of data to be taken in as to how to present the submission. These are just the formal requirements. The 'content'—the actual individuated design elements—were also constrained or rather guided by a set of design criteria set in place by the NCA and other government regulations, building constraints and so forth, and by the guiding principles which the larger committee wanted to see as fulfilling the needs of the Korean veteran community. Previous criteria set out in the booklets detailing the Vietnam and Service Nurses’ memorials demonstrate that there is a 'vocabulary' (and possibly even a syntax) of such memorials, at least in Canberra, while at the same time the competitors are allowed extreme latitude: the design might include this or it might include that, but it need not follow all criteria. However to some eyes the criteria might well read as a check list to which many entrants usually comply by explaining how their design meets the criteria or, and rather more edgily, how their design does not need to meet the criteria because it has done something better. In fact the winning design team in the Korean case did actually address each criteria point by point even when redirecting some of the criteria's emphases.

The Design Criteria

The booklet begins with the 'Commemorative Purpose of the Memorial':

The Memorial has two interrelated purposes which constitute primary considerations in its design and siting:
• The memorial is to honour those Australians who died and commemorate those who served in the Korean War 1950-1953.

• It should communicate a message that is inspirational in content, relatively timeless in meaning, and re-presentative of noble, heroic and patriotic virtues. (p 11)

Rather than prescribe the form of the memorial the booklet urges 'competitors' to 'interpret and develop' their own wide ranging approach to meeting the design criteria. Yet the committee invited combinations of architectural, sculptural, artistic and/or landscape elements, and specifically mentioned lighting, stairs, raised areas, carved inscriptions, appropriate commemorative plaques, relief or three-dimensional sculpture, and flagpoles (p 11). The winning design has all of these and more.

However these points are not all that are listed in the guidelines. Under the heading 'Design Objectives and Limitations' the committee listed several more points; seven under the subheading 'Intent':

1. the memorial must address the stated commemorative purpose;

2. it may reflect the environment and conditions in which Australia served, featuring aspects such as the harsh climate, cold, mountainous terrain, trenches, the sea, the sky. It should endeavour to capture the sentiments of a small force, remote from its homeland and culture in the presence of a malevolent colossus;

3. give prominence to RAN, Army, Air Force personnel and units and to the Red Cross and Salvation Army;

4. recognise 22 other countries involved and give special status to the Republic of Korea;

5. it should be reflective of the 1950s era and uplifting in character;

6. it should be monumental in scale to fit in with Anzac Parade;

7. a dedication inscription is to be incorporated. The wording is:

IN MEMORY OF THOSE AUSTRALIANS WHO DIED IN THE KOREAN WAR 1950 TO 1953 AND IN HONOUR OF THOSE WHO SERVED.

THIS WAS THE FIRST OCCASION WHEN MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS HAD BEEN CALLED UPON TO REPEL ARMED ATTACK AND TO RESTORE INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY (pp 11-12)

There was still more information—another seven points under 'Form and Disposition' and another eleven under 'Siting and Landscape', and even more points allocated to materials. These spelled out quite rigid details, sometimes about specific choices, sometimes about other matters. Here are a few:

• To be successful the selected design must work at several different levels: It must be of appropriate dimensions for the monumental scale of Anzac Parade, yet it must be legible to the passing motorist and also have an intimacy at the pedestrian scale.

• Sculpture, murals, mosaics and other art forms if proposed may be 'figurative' (representational) or 'non-figurative' (abstract).

• If there are figures—1.5 times life size is deemed appropriate but 1:1 is acceptable if it fits the total composition. (p 13)

The winning representational figures are about 1.3 metres tall.

• The memorial should not be taller than the tree canopy (15 metres), (p 13)
The boulders are mentioned: ‘Some or all may be included but they need not be used’. They were used of course.

- There must be three flagpoles. (p 13)

And last among a few other points to do with access there is almost a last comment:

- that the memorial should be sensitive to potential public misuse. (p 13)

Despite its slight hint of subversive usage, the design point refers of course to consideration of how to avoid and repair damage and to overall conservation, that is to the materials used. A seemingly slight point, in the long run for such memorials this is an issue that weighs heavily on the way the designs are executed and often costed. In many cases such as the Vietnam Memorial this point may impact on the way various elements are made and indeed whether or not various elements could be incorporated at all.10

Added to the quite detailed (even long) descriptions of essential elements, the booklet contained a substantial ‘essay’ of historical material which was amply illustrated throughout with maps and historical and contemporary photographs of the Services, all of which were to assist in putting a fuller understanding of the purpose, significance and location of the memorial before prospective competitors. Not least in light of the ‘forgotten’ nature of the war, the booklet attempted to provide a summary but considerable history for prospective entrants.

**The Chosen Design**

The winning design was created by a Melbourne team of artist Les Kossatz, sculptor Augustine Dall'ava, architect Sand Helsel, and draughtsman David Bullpit. Their design is quite complex, incorporating landscaped areas, architectural features, figures and abstract designs. It in fact makes an environment into and around which the visitor can, indeed is invited, to move. Looking from the front edge the visitor is immediately confronted by the large obelisk in the centre foreground (see photograph 1 below). To the left the visitor can see the three flagpoles along the left edge of the forecourt. The forecourt is covered in a ground red granite pebble. From this forecourt a ramp in the shape of the Commonwealth service badge rises slowly to the back of the memorial space, where a low rectangular building seems to rest on the upper edge of the ramp; the two edges of the building do not in fact rest on the ramp but are projections in space (see photographs 1, 5, 7). The low building has an opening in the front through which a boulder is visible (see photographs 5, 6, 7). On the walls of the building are service badges and scrolls listing various units and all twenty-one of the countries who formed the UN alliance. The roof of the building consists of a light greenish translucent glass dome, oval in shape—in fact in the form of the UN forces' insignia (see photograph 5). To each side of the rising ramp and in front of the front wall of the building are two 'forest' areas, consisting of two sections of stainless steel poles of 4.5 metres' height, of some 339 in number, symbolic of the number of Australian casualties. These poles are more or less orthogonally laid out but with a number of elements winding through them. Within the fields or forests there are placed figures; two in the right or northern forest, one in the left or southern forest; and winding pathways to get to the boulders and small plaques with dedicatory and other information also placed within the forests (see photographs 2, 4, 8). The figures represent all three services, uniforms and corps activities appropriate to a full(ish) sweep of Korean events, though there is an emphasis on the hostility of the colder environments in the uniforms depicted (see photographs 2, 4). Inside the building, which on first sight resembles a suburban backyard shed to some extent, one more of the Korean boulders serves as a plinth or commemorative cenotaph, while the inner walls house a number of plaques and information elements such as reproduced letters, maps, quotations of importance and more unit photographs (see photograph 3). To the right (north) of the obelisk though a little behind it is a small raised shelf on which the sign 'Korean War 1950-1953' appears (see photograph 7).
The Dedication Pamphlet quoted some of the design team’s own views, observing first in particular Les Kossatz’ view of the memorial:

The Australian National Korean War Memorial acknowledges and honours the sacrifice and service of the Australian Armed Forces in the Korean War 1950–1953.

The Memorial is a time capsule that marks the significance of the alliance of those members of the United Nations who responded to the call to repel armed attack in the interests of world peace.

Monumental in scale and ceremonial in plan, it will be a permanent reminder of the Australian commitment to peace in our region and around the world, to inform and serve as a model for future generations.

This is both a memorial and a shrine.¹¹

The 'Introduction' (pp v-vi) gives a few more details as to the nature of the design and how the designers thought it should be read:

The Memorial is a symmetrical composition whose design character is reminiscent of the 1950s period when the Korean War was fought. A Monumental Wall shows the names of the twenty-one countries that were committed to the preservation of the independence of South Korea, and which, as member nations of the United Nations, deployed combat or medical units to Korea. A central walkway leads to an oval-shaped, semi-enclosed Contemplative Space, comprising panels of stainless steel which present graphic images and messages to give an understanding of the war. A boulder from a Korean battlefield is located in the Contemplative Space and serves as a ceremonial focal point.

On either side of the Monumental Wall and Contemplative Space are fields of stainless steel poles set in a grid plan, interspersed with additional Korean granite boulders and three sculptural figures representing Australian sailors, soldiers, and airmen who fought and died in the Korean War to restore the Republic of Korea.

The memorial uses monochromatic tones in the white-grey-silver range to make a subtle but effective reference to the harsh climatic conditions experienced in Korea (p v).

As well as meeting many if not all of the design criteria, cleverly, the chosen memorial has elements which echo some of the other memorials along Anzac Parade. There are larger than lifestyle figures echoing the Army Memorial to the north, a commemorative wall which seems like both the Vietnam and the Turkish memorials, while the inner space of contemplative ease recalls both the inner pull of the Vietnam memorial, the Service Nurses’ glass green walls, and the dome of the Australian War Memorial itself. This echoing texture adds to the effect of the memorial, contextualising it in more ways than many of the others. A strong point.

Some Analysis—Some Evaluation

At first sight the shed-like construction which houses all of this sits a little uncomfortably on the back of the ramp. Indeed the hanging edges are somewhat disconcerting, but this perceived tension may be a point on which future reactions will develop. Perhaps it argues effectively that such memorials should not be comfortable, and thereby trivialised as they become too easily accepted as just newly striking or just beautiful. Certainly inside the shed-building, looking at the plaques and up through the dome is a moving and magnificent experience. The dappling light effects of the Canberran late autumn have proven delightful, and it is likely that spring and summer lights will likewise demonstrate the full effects of the shed’s environmental mimicry—its symbolic mimicry of Korean meteorology (see photographs 2, 3, 8). From the front the uneasy balancing act of shed on ramp remains. By contrast the figures and boulders are placed in a sweet asymmetricality on either side of the
central wall and obelisk. The two fields of steel poles—a kind of abstract forest and also symbolic of the casualties—are the most powerful element, at least symbolically. The designers see the poles as a continuation of the eucalypt canopy and also in a way as a shielding of the memorial from the surrounding suburban housing of Canberra. These poles provide an almost literally ‘amazing’ effect—a kind of pixel-ating or fragmenting of the figures and boulders and also the less in-focus background of trees, houses and other parts of the memorial as one circumambulates the whole memorial. This satisfies that design criteria of mimicking the environment through allowing the full effect of the play of light. Additionally and as a bonus to the beautiful luminous effect, the symbolic fragmenting of the figures and the other elements points at the very problematic nature of the desire underpinning the Korean memorial itself (see photographs 2, 4, 8). Here fragmentation mirrors—indeed speculates upon—the very nature of military memory, as partial, broken, torn and fragmented. For this alone the winning design stands as a brilliant solution to the plethora of criteria and for the need as installation to allow its visitor an experience cognate to the war.

The major central feature of the forecourt, the huge twelve-odd metres high obelisk, the right height to fit the canopy, certainly dominates the memorial (see photograph 1). Indeed, so far thrust forward in the niche is the obelisk that there may be a feeling that the Korean memorial announces itself very much more forcefully in the whole Parade than any other memorial so far. It is also worth observing that in the vocabulary of memorials as they are now refracted by a sufficiently feminist view, the Korean obelisk certainly answers the general sense of a feeling for the 1950s, that is if we are to accept the verticality of the obelisk as pre-eminently masculine. Can it be otherwise? In some ways the inter-quotations of other memorials begs and answers that question. The Service Nurses' memorial directly opposite the Korean memorial was presented by its designers as a professedly feminine memorial—its nurturing femininity is to be symbolically argued through its fundamental horizontally. Assuredly the Vietnam memorial designers saw the inviting inner space of contemplation as notionally about a nurturing femininity as well as referring to a merciful warriors' code. It could be observed that the Korean memorial more certainly asserts a 1950s' type masculinity—capturing a prefeminist style of memorial imagery. The designers' own description admits that the obelisk 'protrudes into the gravel forecourt and is highly visible to the passing motorist'. An unintended understatement it would seem, if not unintended en-gendering.

Other elements are quite cleverly functional and symbolic: The inclined plinth is shaped like the Commonwealth Division Badge, and the roof is oval shaped and reprises the form and grid of the UN symbol. It forms the symbolic umbrella of the project. And finally the designers note that their chosen colour range is of a white grey steely monochrome referring to the harsh environment of the Korean conflict.

**No Longer 'Out in the Cold'**

The Dedication of the memorial took place at 10 am Tuesday 18 April 2000, in the presence of the Governor-General, Sir William Deane, AC KBE, also the Patron-in-Chief of the ANKWM Committee, the Prime Minister, John Howard, MP, and many other Australian parliamentarians, military personnel and ambassadorial staff from South Korea and other allies. The Presiding Officer, Rear-Admiral Ian Crawford (Rtd), was also the Chairman of the Australian National Korean War Memorial Committee.

The whole ceremony and march past of Korean veterans was broadcast live by the ABC, although the broadcaster underestimated the duration and cut off the last elements of the march past in their live broadcast, allowing only ninety minutes when about 110 were needed. Of the 17,000 Australians who served, and were eligible to march, a conservative estimate would have had an audience and marching personnel numbering between 15-20,000 on the day.

As well as the standard array of prayers and dedicatory speeches natural to such occasions, the prayers and speeches had a particularly strong focus on service and sacrifice. And unlike a number of occasions involving military matters in the late 1980s and 1990s, politics—at least realpolitik writ large—had for once been left behind, and the ceremony focussed on the
troops and memories. A number of striking features of the ceremony stood out. The audience and parade both were notably filled with large numbers of UN service personnel and their friends and families. Indeed the large Korean contingent passed out huge numbers of hand fans in Korean colours. But there was also a wondrous Korean appearance within the ceremony as Professor Choi Jung-im, of Dong Guk University, Korea, performed 'Dance of Peace' on the rising badge ramp.

More nationally, Brigadier Colin Kahn, DSO, who had been such a central presence in the Vietnam memorial process as well, read a well known poem pertinent to the occasion: Private PJ Paterson's 'To The Boys We Left Behind Us'. Large numbers of books, pamphlets and other printed material were also distributed. Among these the War Memorial and the Veterans' Affairs Department jointly published a small book, Out in the Cold: Australia's Involvement in the Korean War 1950-1953. Written by historian Ben Evans, the 92-page booklet extends the information contents of the competition booklet and is part of the Commemorative Programs including the 'Their Service, Our Heritage' series, of the Department of Veterans' Affairs in 2000.

Speculating About Spaces

The post-modern memorial is essentially a spectacular space in which the visitor is to some extent required to participate. They require the visitor to perform—she is invited into their environments, has to move through and experience all of the elements, make up then some kind of narrative from those elements. They do not just celebrate known events, they recreate them newly for most of their visitors—their interactants; they refashion the memory for those who need more than memory—for those who need simulated memory, or rather, their memory re-simulated. By definition this is the experience for most of their visitors after the effects of the dedication have passed. Once the Korean veterans themselves have gone for all subsequent visitors the memorial is a space of either older style museum-like experience, to look merely at objects—figures, badges, photographs—or mimed machinery, or to be invited to partially experience a simulacra of the otherwise elsewhere 'sacred site'. These memorials are in this sense interactive, like much modern installation art.

These memorials are interactive in another and probably more lasting and satisfying way. We could again say this: the axis of Anzac Parade inscribes the military narrative connecting the War Memorial to the Parliamentary triangle as symbolic of some aspects of a national image. If that is accepted then the various memorials and monuments, even shrines, can be read as paragraphs within that narrative of Australian military history. The variety of memorial, monument and statue along the parade speaks another series of narratives—partial narratives of course, derived from the history of art or rather that specific part of it that speaks in the vocabulary of public monumental or 'sacred' special space art. And those narratives are reflective of their own times of construction as much as their designers desire them to be reflective of the times which they commemorate. So the Korean Memorial is clearly aimed at being reflective of the 1950s, but is equally or more clearly a late twentieth century memory of the 1950s.

Reading the Parade as a chronological unfolding of the events cannot therefore work in any real sense, since not only are the various niches not laid out in any chronological manner, but each individual niche defies a simple temporal reading. Indeed as interactive or installed recreated events they can only ever hope to argue that history is happening now for the present and only ever 'becoming' visitor. The past is erased. In addition to formal inconsistency the niches are not consistent in other ways—some memorialize theatres of war, some not even whole wars, some units, some larger service organizations over a hundred years of service. Moreover all are more or less set back in the niches hidden partly within their canopies. True, they are legible as one drives or walks past, but this is hardly full interaction—for that the visitor has to walk down or up or even weave through the parade and the niches. Looking from the Australian War Memorial south (down) along the Parade little of the individual memorials can be seen.
One way of reading the Parade as a chronological unfolding of the events is disallowed by the parade itself. The niches which house the memorials do not have a particular order; indeed they aren't consistent in other ways—some memorialise shorter periods or small theatres, some units, some services over one hundred years. Furthermore the niches are all set back in their canopies. True they are more or less briefly legible as you drive or walk past but again you have to interact with them, have to move down or up the parade and through the individual spaces if they are to be more than spectacular. Looking from the Australian War Memorial to the Parliament most of the memorials cannot be seen.

This hidden-ness need not be seen as a negative evaluation. On the contrary: what one has along Anzac Parade is a very Australian way of presenting this kind of thing. It is fundamentally reticent, subdued. Moreover the fact that the whole of the Anzac Parade is placed within, and seems to grow organically out of, the local urban space means that apart from that large axis of the Australian War Memorial to Parliament there is an almost more important embedding of the memorials and their symbolic values within their typical communities—suburban Australia. Australian service personnel may have fought to establish and maintain the democracy symbolised by the Parliament but the nearby housing is rather more pertinently the very literal thing itself they fought for—home and hearth. With that in mind (perhaps whimsically) it may be more important not to see the tree canopy and the forest or field of poles as contiguous if not absolutely continuous with the suburban architecture behind rather than screened off from it as the designers seem to feel. In that way the box-like construction—the shed—that forms the rear feature of the Korean memorial is emblematically a small bungalow which in time will blend in with the suburb of Reid a narrow street away. Its uneasy tension atop the rising badge-shaped ramp is resolved into the domestic. There's nothing more Anzac than that.
Photographic Identifications

All the photographs are digitally modified images created by Hugh Donald of CMR, ADFA, after original digital images taken by Jeff Doyle. The dates are given to indicate (to the extent that B&W images can) the seasonal play of light that is very much a part of the design.

Photograph 1

Frontal view of the Australian National Korean War Memorial taken from the middle of Anzac Parade, Canberra, facing due West. Photograph taken in mid April 2000.

Photograph 2
Close-up of the cast aluminium figure of the Airman in the northern field of poles, with one of the Korean boulders, plaques and walkways visible behind him. The 'pixellating' light effects and the 'grey-white steel' colour tonality are also evident. Beyond that the tree canopy and the suburb of Reid are visible. Photograph taken in mid April 2000.

*Photograph 3*

Close-up of one of the engraved steel panels inside the contemplative space. This photograph shows the collage of 'typical' Korean images chosen to provide both educational and heritage values. Photograph taken in mid April 2000.
Close-up of the cast aluminium figure of the Sailor loading a shell clearly showing the winter combat uniform. The beautiful patina of the figures is clearly visible, and behind him the field of poles, a Korean boulder, and a dedication plaque can be seen. Photograph taken in mid April 2000.
The external walls of the contemplative space with their unit badges and scrollwork. In the middle of the image the inside of the contemplative space is visible, with another Korean boulder acting as a focal point for ceremonial occasions. Above it the elliptical oculus, open to the sky, can be glimpsed. Photograph taken in late October 2000.

Close-up of the ceremonial cenotaph-like boulder inside the contemplative space. Above and behind it on the engraved steel walls are the inscription and a Korean dedication. Photograph taken in late October 2000.
Detail of the northern exterior walls of the contemplative space. In this image the 'hanging' or suspended effect of the contemplative space construction can be clearly seen. In front of the space, to the right of the ascending badge-shaped plinth is the lettering identifying the memorial. Photograph taken in late October 2000.

Detail of the southern field of poles in which three of the Korean boulders, the winding pathways and another dedicatory plaque are visible. Photograph taken in mid April 2000.

2. A number of letters in the National Capital Authority Papers devoted to the Australian National Korean War Memorial competition document these exchanges.

3. There are large numbers of popular films, novels, and other documents as well as numerous academic publications which support this argument. The most obvious Vietnam 'memory lapse' texts are the Missing in Action and Rambo films, and the many Oliver Stone films devoted to aspects of the Vietnam conflict. For Australia Peter Pierce, Jeffrey Grey and Jeff Doyle raise the issue of memory loss as a totalling metaphor throughout their Vietnam Days (Ringwood: Penguin, 1991). The title makes a pun on the Vietnam 'Daze', Grey and Doyle pick up the argument with other extended examples in their Vietnam: war, myth and memory (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992); Doyle, Grey and Pierce add even more material in Australia's Vietnam War (College Station: Texas A & M Press, forthcoming 2001). A fine analysis of the US situation can be found in Keith Beattie, The Scars That Bind: American Culture and the Vietnam War (New York: New York University Press, 1998).


6. The NCA Booklet. All subsequent quotations are from this booklet and their pagination will be cited in the body of the essay.


8. In execution there were 21 countries listed.

9. In the eventual Memorial a shortened version of this wording was used.

10. In the case of the Vietnam Memorial the polished and photo-incised granite tesserae of the rear photowall fulfil the design brief for representational elements. A single issue one might think. In execution the quality and cost of the tesserae—each comprising an individual image and totally unique geometry—meant that conservation was a chief issue of the design element. The solid engraved glass panels of the Service Nurses' Memorial similarly provided a challenge—the panels not only needing to provide a tight translucent glass finish but needing the impact resistance capacity to withstand a considerable blow.

11. See Order of Service: The Australian National Korean War Memorial (Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Veterans'Affairs, 2000), iii. All subsequent quotations are from this source and will be cited in the text.

12. See the NCA Competition booklet for the Nurses' Memorial design criteria, which stressed the need for feminine elements, while the competition winners' own description stressed the ‘horizontal-as-feminine’ elements throughout their design.

13. NCA pamphlet quoting the designer's submission.

14. Private PJ Paterson, 5 Platoon, B Company, 1 RAR, is the nephew of AB 'Banjo' Paterson. The full text is reproduced in the Order of Service pamphlet.