



The National Commemoration for the 71st Anniversary of the Commencement of the Korean War

PUKEAHU NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL PARK
25 JUNE 2021

New Zealand in the Korean War

Around 6000 New Zealanders served in Korea between 1950 and 1957: 4700 were members of an army force known as 'Kayforce', while 1300 served around the Korean peninsula on six Royal New Zealand Navy frigates.

The Korean War began on 25 June 1950, when Communist North Korean forces swept southwards across the 38th Parallel, the dividing line between North and South Korea. New Zealand was one of the first countries to answer the UN Security Council's call with combat assistance, providing two frigates and promising a volunteer ground force to serve as part of a Commonwealth formation.

In September, the frigates took part in the UN's successful amphibious landing at Inch'on (Incheon), near Seoul. The operation transformed the war: Seoul was liberated and the North Korean army collapsed. When UN forces crossed the 38th parallel in October, however, Chinese forces, poorly equipped but in vast numbers, responded with a series of offensives, the second of which led to a 'big bug out' of UN forces and the loss of Seoul.

Kayforce joined the Commonwealth formation in January 1951. This 1056-man brigade took part in the operations which saw UN forces fight their way back to and across the 38th Parallel, recapturing Seoul in the process.

In April 1951, when the Chinese launched another offensive, the Commonwealth brigade fought a successful defensive battle at Kap'yong. Between 23 and 25 April the New Zealand gunners provided crucial support to Australian and Canadian troops.

Armistice talks opened in July 1951, but progress was slow. By the end of the year a stalemate had emerged as both sides sought to improve their defensive positions. An armistice signed on 27 July 1953 finally brought fighting in Korea to an end, although no peace settlement was subsequently concluded. A reduced New Zealand force continued to serve in a garrison role in Korea until 1957. Forty-five New Zealand servicemen (including two naval personnel) lost their lives as a result of the conflict, while two other New Zealanders died serving with Australian forces.

The Korean War had a major impact on New Zealand's approach to international relations, focusing attention on the threat of communist expansion in Asia. It also helped New Zealand achieve its objective of a security commitment from the United States, leading to the ANZUS Treaty of 1951.



Sergeant J M Bragg, Gunner D J Humphries and Gunner D J Kelly operating a 25-pounder during the first major offensive of the 1st British Commonwealth Division, Korea, October 1951. Photograph by Ian Chappell Mackley, courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: K-0418



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PUKEAHU NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL PARK

Order of Ceremony

KARANGA

Pekaira Rei, Taranaki Whānui

NATIONAL ANTHEMS

National Anthem of the Republic of Korea
Kathy Nam, Sarah Nam and Sophia Marquez

National Anthem of New Zealand
Anon Vocal Ensemble Trio

OPENING KARAKIA

Peter Jackson, Taranaki Whānui

WELCOME

Major (Rtd) Fiona Cassidy, Acting Chair,
National War Memorial Advisory Council

COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS

The Honourable Meka Whaitiri,
Minister for Veterans

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Chaplain Class 3 James Molony, RNZChD

LAYING OF WREATHS

The Honourable Meka Whaitiri,
Minister for Veterans

and

The Honourable Peeni Henare,
Minister of Defence
on behalf of the Government and
People of New Zealand

together with

His Excellency Mr Sang-jin Lee,
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea
on behalf of the Government and People
of the Republic of Korea

Des Vinten,
on behalf of the Korean War veterans

together with

Air Vice-Marshal Tony Davies,
Vice Chief of Defence Force
on behalf of the New Zealand Defence Force

Melissa Lee MP,
on behalf of the Opposition

together with

His Excellency Mr Leasi Papali’i Tommy Scanlan,
Dean of the Diplomatic Corps
on behalf of the Diplomatic Corps

BJ Clark QSM,
National President, Royal New Zealand
Returned and Services’ Association
on behalf of the Royal New Zealand
Returned Services’ Association

ROLL OF HONOUR

Read by Korean War veterans

Tony Smith
Ron Pocock
Chris Nevill

THE COMMEMORATION

LAST POST

Uniformed personnel salute

The flags of the Republic of Korea and New Zealand are lowered to half-mast head

THE ODE IN TE REO MĀORI

Warrant Officer Class 1 Mario Ropitini,
New Zealand Defence Force

THE ODE IN ENGLISH

Colin Smith,
Korean War Veterans’ Association

ONE MINUTE OF SILENCE

ROUSE

The flags of the Republic of Korea and New Zealand are raised to full-mast head

CLOSING KARAKIA

Peter Jackson, Taranaki Whānui



This National Commemorative Service was arranged by the Visits and Ceremonial Office, Te Tari Taiwhenua Department of Internal Affairs, in partnership with Manatū Taonga Ministry for Culture and Heritage, Manatū Aorere Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Te Ope Kātua o Aotearoa the New Zealand Defence Force.

Command Post personnel of E Troop, 163 Battery, outside their post after one of the first snowfalls of the new year, January 1952. Photograph by Ian Chappell Mackley, courtesy of Alexander Turnbull Library, Ref: PA1-q-311-0675





Cover image: Gun crew of HMNZS Rotoiti, with Able Seaman Robert Marchioni right front, c1950-51.
Image courtesy of National Museum of the Royal New Zealand Navy, Ref: 2013.2.6