

# **Korean War Veteran**

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Veterans of the Korean War*

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*Fallen Comrades alone for so long are visited by those  
who served alongside them*

## **Photographs taken in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery during Commonwealth Revisit Program**

The Korean War Veteran publication has only a few photographs taken by the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs official photographers at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery on April 22, and presents them here as a record of the continuing solemnity and respect these meaningful services convey, and will for many years in the future.

Visiting the graves of Fallen Comrades at the UN Cemetery in Busan is one of the most personally meaningful aspects of the revisit program for most veterans.

We grieve for our comrade soldiers who fell and have been buried there or in other places in Korea for more than these past 60 years. Only during the Veteran Revisits are significant numbers of citizens from the countries of those who fell present to pay their respects and acknowledge their service and their loss.



Veterans capable of marching do so proudly in a column of threes as they move from the administrative area through a ROK Army Guard of Honour to the terraced area above the 11 national graves sections within the United Nations Memorial Cemetery.



Those who cannot join comrades in the march on are taken to the venues by electric carts, or are pushed by MPVA handlers or by heir comrades. These hardy veterans from Australia, except for present day maladies, remain as stolid as they were six decades ago in spirit, and were escorted to the services with love and care.



Her Majesty's Britannic Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, His Excellency Charles Hay, accompanied by British Defence Attache Brigadier Andrew Cliffe, join with a British Fusilier Veteran in placing wreaths and floral tribute for Fallen British Servicemen on the terrace in front of the Flagged Symbolic Area that overlooks the grave plots of 11 different nations.



Brigadier Cliffe and the Fusilier salute while Ambassador Hay stands respectfully at attention before exiting the terrace.



New Zealand's Ambassador to Korea, Her Excellency Clare Fearnley and Defence Attache Group Captain Rod Fortune and Veteran Hugh Blaikie place their nation's wreath and floral tribute at the same memorial site on the terrace. Veterans and their national representatives from Australia and Canada also placed wreaths, but photographs are not available.



The veterans then broke off into national groups to convene at their respective memorials to hold services for their fallen comrades, and then individually visit their graves. The large contingent of Canadian Veterans holds a minute of silence for their 378 comrades who are buried under the ground that they stand on, and for 16 with no known graves who were never recovered from the front, and others who died of wounds in Japan, and six who were lost at sea. They are standing in front of the Monument to Canadian Fallen, which was dedicated on November 11, 2001 and Consecrated during a Veterans revisit in April, 2002.



Canada's Ambassador to Korea, His Excellency Eric Walsh is partially screened by the arm of the saluting veteran that stands between him and Defence Attache Colonel Jeff Drummond. They have just placed memorial wreaths at the base of the Monument to Canadian Fallen. The Veteran second from the left holding the red paper bag is Fred MacDonald from Victoria, British Columbia, the leader of the Canadian Veterans group. Mr. MacDonald's brother, Bruce Merlin MacDonald was killed in action still sitting at his Vickers machinegun position when it was overrun by attacking enemy forces during the Battle of Kapyong on April 23, 1951 – 64 years ago to that very day. Mr. MacDonald may have in that bag two cans of beer. On a previous occasion he has poured a can of beer over the earth at the marker of his brother's grave, and joined him in a devout few moments; the kind he would have cherished has his brother not perished.



British Veterans gather at the British Memorial in their nation's expansive graves section where 885 of their Fallen comrades are buried. Then memorial was dedicated and consecrated during a veterans revisit in 2010. The soldiers in uniforms are present day servicemen from a British unit that served in Korea during the war and played a major part in the May, 1953 Battle of the Hook. Note the soldier holding the axe over his shoulder at the left of the photo. The unit is 7 Battery, now called Support Battery (Battle Axe Company) Royal Artillery. We do not have photographs of Australian and New Zealand Veterans holding their special services at their respective memorials.



A British Army sergeant from the Battle Axe Company visits grave with a Fusilier Veteran during the precious free time following the ceremonies, when veterans can move freely around the grounds and located the places where their Fallen comrades are buried.



Canadian Veteran visits the past at the Monument to Canadian Fallen, after a service was held there and flowers placed by the veterans group and Canada's Defence Attache. The monument stands in the center of the Canadian Grave section, where, for those buried, time has stood still since they fell 60 or more years ago. It was in another century. They would have loved to see the one that succeeded their own. They would have loved to have lived another single day or year. Comrades have thought about them through the years, even though their countries for many years paid little attention to their brave service and sacrifice, or what that service meant to the progress of the world's free nations - and, of course, to the Republic of Korea, which surely would have been vanquished, had they not been there to defend that then fledgling nation.



UK Veteran Arthur Hudspith stands beside British Lion memorial that watches over the 885 graves of British soldiers who are buried in the United Nations Cemetery. Other British soldiers are buried where they fell and, like the many British sailors who were lost at sea, have no known graves. They are

commemorated, as are those who fell from other nations, on the Commonwealth Monument to Those With No Known Graves, which stands near the Monument to Canadian Fallen. The wreath on the left is from the British Government. The one on the right is inscribed: "From All Ranks of Support Battery (Battleaxe Company) Royal Artillery, In Remembrance." Mr. Hudspith is a member of the newly formed British Korean War Veterans Association, which accepts relatives and descendants of veterans and non-related patriotic citizens into its membership.

It is of note that a large group of serving soldiers from 74 Battery, The Battle Axe Company, Royal Artillery, participated in the revisit ceremonies. The serving soldiers arrived in Korea several days in advance of the veterans. Their forbears had served in the same Battery in Korea when it fired to defend the 1st Battalion of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in the fourth Battle of the Hook on May 28-29, 1953. On that night, the four 5.5-inch field guns of the Battle Axe Company fired 1,439 shells onto the enemy formations as they attacked, and in their form up areas. The Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs is considering the possibility of inviting serving soldiers whose units fought in the Korean War to accompany their veterans on future revisits.



A final note that conveys the special, deep, indescribable meaning of the veteran visits to the United Nations Memorial Cemetery. A Canadian Veteran places his

country's flag at the grave marker of his fallen comrade, Trooper Gordon Harry Waldner, who served with the Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians) and was killed in action one month before his 22nd birthday on October 2, 1952. Trooper Waldner fell serving as a crew member in his Troop's Sherman tank. He was born in South Burnaby, British Columbia, on November 8, 1930 and enlisted in the Canadian Army in Vancouver. Trooper Waldner has been buried in that place for 63 years, since that day when all time stopped for him, while comrades continued on without him. But – *comrades have never forgotten him!* Nor should his nation and its future generations.

**Editor's Note - Minister Park Sung Choon, who heads Korea's Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs traditionally travels to the United Nations Cemetery with the veterans. However, on April 22, while they were en route to Busan, Minister Park was flying to Ankara, Turkey, to participate in services marking the 100th anniversary of the landing in Turkey of the Australian and New Zealand ANZAC force in 2015. The Veterans in Korea will also participate in an ANZAC Day sunrise service at the War Memorial of Korea in Seoul.**