

Korean War Veteran

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Editor's Note: Many Canadian Veterans and Government officials will remember Sergeant Marc Bellemare from their visits to Korea during period July, 2011 through June of 2014.

Marc also brought the famed Imjin River Cup to Ottawa in 2013 and coached the military team, which was made up primarily of officers from the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, and which played against a team of Members of Parliament and Minister of Veterans Affairs Stephen Blainey. Marc took the cup back again with him and continued his excellent service in Korea.

He virtually bent over backwards to help Korean War Veterans who visited Korea during the April Commonwealth Revisits and the November Turn Toward Busan revisits. His service to them was outstanding.

The Korean Service Medal he is shown displaying is a decoration recognized by Canada's Chancellery of Honours and in two previous cases it has been officially recorded for posterity in the Canada Gazette (Lt. Col Martin Kenneally and Korean War Veteran Peter Seiresen).

The U.S. Army Commendation Medal is also a significant decoration. It is awarded for heroism, for valour in the face of an enemy, or for meritorious achievement, or meritorious service. It ranks just below the Bronze Star in order of precedence. The award is made on authority of a commanding general and in Marc Bellemare's case it would be the four-star general who commanded U.S. Forces Korea and the United Nations Command during his 2011-2014 service in Korea.



Korea Service Medal Army Commendation Medal



Sergeant Marc Bellemare salutes as Member of Parliament Blaine Calkins and a veteran place a wreath at the Monument to Canadian Fallen in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, in July, 2013. MP Calkins' uncle, Sergeant James Alvin Calkins, was killed in action in Korea serving with the 2nd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.

Royal Canadian Air Force

RCAF sergeant recognized for service in the Republic of Korea

[Image Gallery](#)



Shown with Sergeant Marc Bellemare, who is holding his Korea Service Medal, are (left) 17 Wing Commander, Colonel Roy, and 17 Wing Chief Warrant Officer, CWO Robertson.

News Article / April 28, 2015

By Ron Simpson

Canada's military relationship with the Republic of Korea, commonly known as South Korea, dates to the start of the Korean War, on June 25, 1950. It is an extremely important relationship that is not widely known of because we do not have a significant military presence in South Korea. However, Canada maintains very important military relations with South Korea through the Canadian Defence Attaché and the Canadian Defence Attaché Assistant, both of whom represent Canada and the Canadian Armed Forces in Korea.

A resource management support clerk by trade, Sergeant Marc Bellemare is originally from Trois-Rivières, Quebec. He joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1987, and is now posted to 17 Wing Winnipeg, Manitoba, as the financial services supervisor at the Comptroller Branch.

While serving behind the scenes in South Korea with our Commonwealth allies from Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, personnel such as Sergeant Bellemare dedicate their missions to ensuring that those who paid the ultimate sacrifice a world away are never forgotten.

For his service in South Korea as both the Canadian Defence Attaché Administrative Assistant and the Assistant Liaison Officer for Canada to the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC) in Korea, Sergeant Bellemare has received the Korea Service Medal from the Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, and The Army Commendation Medal from the Commanding General of the U.S. Army.

Sergeant Bellemare arrived in South Korea on Canada Day in 2011. Between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2014, during his dual service, he proudly wore a distinct yellow armband that was used to distinguish his service on the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

UNCMAC, which is headquartered in Seoul and Panmunjom, is responsible for supervising the 244 kilometre-long DMZ under the authority of the Armistice Agreement signed between South and North Korea on July 27, 1953. The DMZ serves as a buffer between South and North Korea, and cuts the Korean Peninsula roughly in half, crossing the 38th parallel on an angle, with its west end lying south of the parallel and its east end lying to the north. The DMZ was created as part of the Korean Armistice Agreement between North Korea, China, and the United Nations Command forces in July 1953.

This agreement remains the UN's longest running peacekeeping mission. Canada contributes one colonel (the Canadian Defence Attaché) and one sergeant (the Canadian Defence Attaché Administrative Assistant) who, together, form a liaison team to the UNC and participate in guard post and observation posts inspections, investigations of cease-fire violations, and other events and ceremonies including repatriation of war remains between the two Koreas, and visits by dignitaries and high-ranking military officials.

For three years, Sergeant Bellemare managed and controlled a challenging workload of program support services for the Canadian Defence Attaché which was much more than providing administrative support to the Attaché. Some of his many duties involved carrying out archival research; serving as liaison between the Canadian staff and other foreign attaché staffs; managing the representational responsibilities; maintaining efficient office filing systems and inventory of both domestic and foreign military policy and reference materials;

and planning, organizing and providing logistical and administrative support for multi-national exercises, meetings, seminars, and conferences.

However, it is his duties and initiatives outside the office that deserve special mention. In his role as Canadian Defence Attaché Administrative Assistant, Sergeant Bellemare led and participated in numerous inspections on the DMZ.

UNCMAC has maintained a presence at the DMZ comprising individuals such as Sergeant Bellemare who, in addition to routine inspections, also conduct special investigations not only at the DMZ but also on the Northwest Islands, and monitor the South Korean military live-fire exercises.

Sergeant Bellemare was involved in the planning and logistics of Canadian veterans of the Korean War returning to visit Korea every year in April and November under programs sponsored by the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans' Affairs of Korea and the Korean Veterans Association of Korea. He supported these visits and other commemorative activities through the Canadian Defence Relations Office, on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada and the Department of National Defence.

One of these commemorative activities was the Imjin River Hockey Game Recreation, which was started through his initiative and played in early February 2013 at Seoul City Hall (the first-ever game played at City Hall). Sergeant Bellemare originated the idea in September 2011, during the preparations for the 50th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Canada and Korea, held in 2013. This game honoured the Canadian soldiers who played on a makeshift rink on the Imjin River near the battlefields during the Korean War. Sergeant Bellemare also participated in a similar event on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa, Ontario, during the city's Winterlude festival in February 2013.

During his time as the Canadian Defence Attaché Administrative Assistant, Sergeant Bellemare had the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister of Canada twice, in March 2012 and February 2014, the Governor General of Canada in February 2013, the Premier of British Columbia, several members of federal and provincial parliaments, and several Senators, all of whom visited South Korea and participated in various activities and official ceremonies.

Sergeant Bellemare's exemplary service in South Korea has set the bar high, and with continued dedication from others in the position of Canadian Defence Attaché Administrative Assistant, the Korean War will indeed be the "Unforgotten War".