

Korea: then and now

27 July 2018 will mark the 65th Anniversary of the signing of the Armistice between North and South Korea. The Armistice signalled a truce between both countries just over three years after hostilities broke out in June 1950.

New Zealand was one of the first nations to provide support for the Korean War. Roughly 4,700 personnel served in Kayforce, and a further 1,300 Naval personnel also involved. 33 men, including two Royal New Zealand Navy personnel, were killed during the war. A further 12 men lost their lives in the aftermath of the conflict. An additional 79 personnel were wounded, and one member of Kayforce was taken prisoner and held in North Korea for 18 months before being released.

Today, the New Zealand Defence Force has six personnel deployed to the United Nations Command in South Korea. The United Nations Command is a multinational body that was established in 1950 to defend South Korea. New Zealand Defence Force staff responsibilities vary and include leading that Armistice Education Programme, and the planning and coordination of inspections in the Demilitarised Zone.

We want to hear from our Korean veterans

The year 2020 will mark the 70th Anniversary of the outbreak of hostilities between North and South Korea. To commemorate this occasion, the Korean War Legacy Foundation—sponsored by the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Patriot and Veterans Affairs—is launching a special website.

The new website will include interviews with as many veterans as possible from the 21 countries who participated in the conflict. In coming weeks we will be writing to our Korean veterans, to let them know more about this special project and to see if they're available to be interviewed in New Zealand in early December 2018.

If you are a Korean veteran and you are interested in being interviewed for this project, please contact us to register your details.

Photo caption: Royal New Zealand Navy Lieutenant Payton Kaiwai, who served last year as one of the armistice monitors with the United Nations Command on the Korean Peninsula, near the demarcation line separating South and North Korea.

Date

16 July 2018

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