



# Year of the Korean War Veteran



2013 is the Year of the Korean War Veteran.

“It is our duty today to pay tribute to more than 26,000 Canadian men and women in uniform who came to the aid of South Koreans during the Korean War, and in particular the 516 Canadians who gave their lives in service to defend the values of peace and freedom on the Korean peninsula,” said Veterans Affairs Minister Steven Blaney.

Throughout the year, which also coincides with the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War Armistice, Veterans Affairs Canada will have a number of initiatives and events that will educate Canadians and honour the legacy of Korean War Veterans.

These efforts will focus attention on a war that for too long has been referred to as the “Forgotten War.” Those who served in Korea did so with courage and distinction, strengthening Canada’s military legacy with victories in battles like Kapyong and Hill 355. Sixty years later, the Republic of Korea has



The Honourable Steven Blaney, Minister of Veterans Affairs, announces the Year of the Korean War Veteran. He is accompanied by Senator Yonah Martin, His Excellency Hee-yong Cho, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea and Korean War Veterans.

proven that Canada’s service was not in vain—today it boasts a strong, lasting democracy, a vibrant culture and a thriving economy. All this is proof that Canadian Veterans made a real and enduring difference.

By marking 2013 as the Year of the Korean War Veteran, Veterans Affairs Canada will bring the accomplishments of this special group of Veterans to the forefront, and grant them the honour they so deserve.

## Hockey Night in Korea at the Imjin Gardens

Canadians will be Canadians, no matter how far away from home they may be.

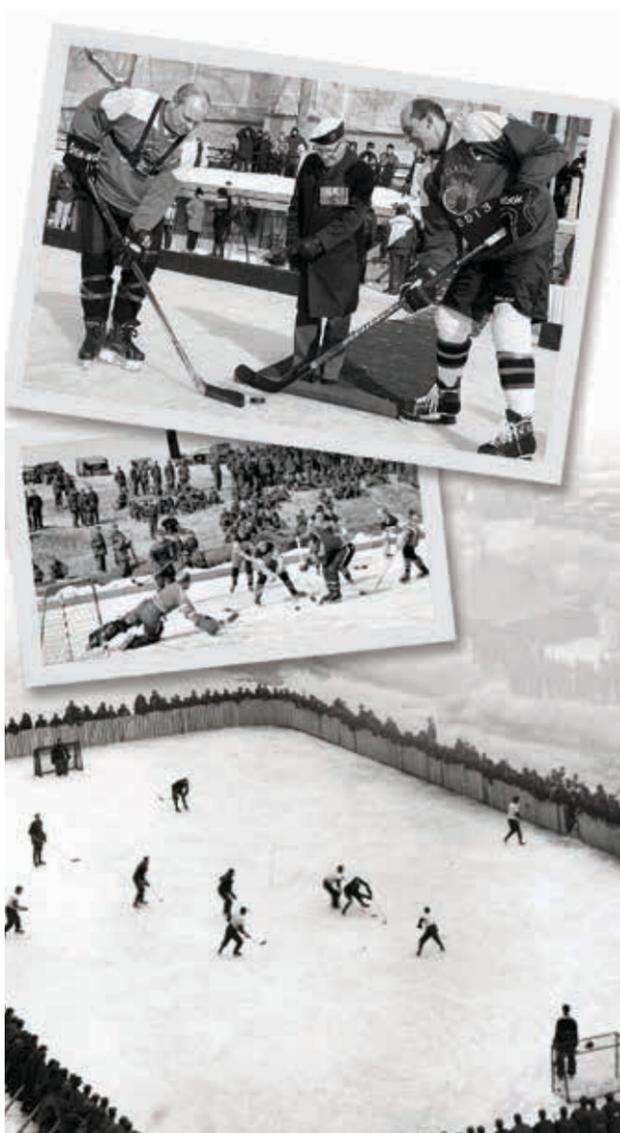
When Canadian soldiers serving in the Korean War were given time away from their dangerous front-line duties, their thoughts often turned to sports. Winters in Korea are harsh and the rivers would freeze as the temperatures dropped. Canadians stationed near the Imjin River decided to make use of all that ice and created a makeshift outdoor rink they dubbed “Imjin Gardens.”

The first games were played in 1952. At first, the boards were sandbags and the men had no pads or hockey uniforms. The players just had sticks, skates and wore

their regular military fatigues. Soon, proper hockey gear, wooden boards, heated dressing rooms and even a canteen were brought in.

Tournaments and championships were played, with Canadian regiments playing one another for bragging rights. Hundreds of soldiers from other United Nations Force countries would be trucked in to watch the games, with the sound of artillery fire sometimes booming in the distance. Whatever the final scores were, everyone was a winner by being able to push the war to the back of their minds for at least one day thanks to a little slice of normal Canadian life, half a world away in war-torn Korea.

Veterans Affairs Minister Steven Blaney took part in the historic “Imjin River” classic game on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa in February. He was joined by other parliamentarians, current Canadian Armed Forces members, Veterans and other guests.



## How to Reach Us

Veterans Affairs Canada  
Web site: [veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca)  
E-mail: [information@vac-acc.gc.ca](mailto:information@vac-acc.gc.ca)

### Do you need information on services and benefits?

**Note:** When you call us, please have your VAC client number ready, if you have one.

Canada:

Phone: 1-866-522-2122 (English)

Phone: 1-866-522-2022 (French)

United States:

Phone: 1-888-996-2242

United Kingdom, Germany, France,  
or Belgium:

Phone: 00-800-996-22421

Any other country:

Phone: 613-996-2242

### Do you need information on disability benefit decisions or how to request a review or an appeal?

Call the Bureau of Pensions Advocates (BPA) at: 1-877-228-2250

### Do you need information on remembrance programming?

Phone: 1-866-522-2122 (English)

Phone: 1-866-522-2022 (French)

Phone: 1-800-465-7735 (Hearing Impaired)



### Veterans Review and Appeal Board

P.O. Box 9900  
Charlottetown PE C1A 8V7  
Phone: 1-800-450-8006  
Outside Canada  
Phone: 902-566-8751  
Web site: [www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca](http://www.vrab-tacra.gc.ca)

### Funeral and Burial Information

Last Post Fund  
Phone: 1-800-465-7113  
Web site: [www.lastpostfund.ca](http://www.lastpostfund.ca)

### VAC Assistance Line

Confidential, professional counselling 24/7  
1-800-268-7708

### Office of the Veterans Ombudsman

Mailing Address:  
Veterans Ombudsman  
P.O. Box 18 Stn B  
Ottawa, ON K1P 6C3  
1-877-330-4343  
Outside Canada: 902-626-2919  
Fax Number: 902-566-7582  
Web site: [www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca](http://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca)

## Minister's Message



*Veteran Aimé Michaud, His Excellency Hee-yong Cho, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Minister Blaney, Lieutenant-General (retired) Belzile and Veteran Guy Vachon stand in front of a Sabre 6 aircraft similar to the ones Canadians flew in the Korean War.*

“Lest we forget.” These simple words epitomize one of Veterans Affairs Canada’s most important mandates—to keep alive the achievements and sacrifices made by those who served Canada in times of war and peace.

That is why on January 8 it was my honour and privilege to announce 2013 as the Year of the Korean War Veteran. Throughout the year we will be organizing special events and initiatives to share the Korean War experience with Canadians.

Through these events, we will focus our remembrance on what these Veterans accomplished while fighting in foreign hillsides, braving the rough waters and patrolling the dangerous skies above Korea.

It was a mission most of us cannot fully imagine: the great hardship they endured; the terrible human suffering they witnessed.

Of the 26,000 that served during the war, there were over 1,500 casualties, including 516 who made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their todays so the Korean people could live in a better tomorrow.

By taking time to learn about this war and the achievements of our Veterans, we express our nation’s gratitude toward those whose courageous efforts have given us our legacy.

This year we pay them tribute and prove that this chapter of our history has not been, and will not be, forgotten.

Lest we forget.

The Honourable Steven Blaney  
Minister of Veterans Affairs



## Lieutenant-General (Retired) Charles Belzile

Marking 2013 as the Year of the Korean War Veteran is a step in the right direction, according to Lieutenant-General Charles Belzile (retired), who says it will bring to the forefront a war that for too long has been considered as forgotten.

“I have a feeling that perhaps it (the Korean War) was not considered a serious thing. We were still recovering from WWII and in the years after there was the build up of industrial capabilities and the launching of a lot of peace time efforts to erase the effects of the (Second World) war,” said Mr. Belzile. “I think that was foremost in the minds of people, and Korea just became a little side issue. That is my personal gut feeling.”

Mr. Belzile served in Korea with the Queen's Own Rifles infantry battalion following the armistice, which was signed on July 27, 1953.

He hopes activities and initiatives planned for 2013 will help people understand the significant role played by Canadians in Korea.



“As for the Veterans of the Forgotten War,” said Mr. Belzile, “I think it (Year of the Korean War Veteran) will be a bit of a redemption. They will hear about their war this year.”

*Lieutenant-General (retired) Charles Belzile recounts his experiences following the cease-fire.*

## Year of the Korean War Veteran



*Veterans were front and centre at the Government's launch event for the Year of the Korean War Veteran*

## Canada's Efforts in Korea

Canadian soldiers first joined the battle lines of the Korean War in February 1951 and over the next two and a half years, they saw heavy action in places like Kapyong, Chail'li, Hill 355 and "the Hook."

Thanks in part to the more than 26,000 Canadians who served during the war—516 of whom gave their lives—the people of South Korea live today in a free and prosperous society.

Few episodes in the Korean War were as intense for the Canadians as the heavy fighting during the Battle of Kapyong—only two months after their arrival at the front. The

2nd Battalion of Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry was called up from reserve to the Kapyong valley. Facing steep odds, the Canadians held out against a much larger force and helped to stop the enemy in their tracks. Ten Canadians were killed and 23 wounded in the vicious fighting. The Battalion received the United States Presidential Unit Citation for its members' bravery at Kapyong, a rare honour for a non-American force.

Another outstanding effort from the Canadian fighting force came at Hill 355, a strategically important high ground nicknamed "Little Gibraltar." Canadian soldiers holding the lines there were targeted by enemy troops a number

of times. The *Royal 22<sup>e</sup> Régiment* had just occupied positions close to Hill 355 in late November 1951 when they were attacked. Desperate fighting in the snow, cold and mud left the *Royal 22<sup>e</sup>* with 16 killed, 44 wounded and three taken prisoner. But, they successfully held their ground.

Canadians would also see heavy action in late October 1952. The Royal Canadian Regiment defended Hill 355 against a large Chinese raid. Tank and mortar fire forced the Chinese to withdraw, but this action again took a heavy toll, with 18 Canadians being killed, 35 wounded and 14 taken prisoner in the fighting.



## Remembering the Korean War

Six decades have gone by since the Korean War Armistice was signed in 1953. Canada has declared 2013 to be the Year of the Korean War Veteran to shine a well-deserved spotlight on the brave men and women who left the comfort of home to serve.

Canadians who served in the Korean War are honoured in many ways. The *Korean War Book of Remembrance* is displayed in the Memorial Chamber within the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. This beautiful volume contains the names of 516 Canadians who died in service during the war.

The richly symbolic Monument to Canadian Fallen features a Canadian soldier with two Korean children. This monument is located in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, South Korea, where 378 Canadians are buried. It honours those who died in service during the war, with their names inscribed on its base. A replica of the original statue also stands in Ottawa.

The solemn Korea Veterans National Wall of Remembrance is located in Brampton, Ontario. Dedicated in 1997, the curving memorial is some 60 metres long and

0.6 metres high, and features plaques bearing the names of Canadians who died in service in Korea.

A number of events and ceremonies will be held in communities across the country in honour of those who served in Korea. New tools like the "Canada Remembers" Facebook page also mean that there are more ways than ever to honour these heroes. Also, check out [veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca) to see a calendar of events or to add your event for others to see.



Above: Monument to Canadian Fallen located in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, South Korea.

Above right: Honour Plot of the UN Military Cemetery, Busan, South Korea, March 1954 (SF-9178).

Far right: The Book of Remembrance for Korea.

Below right: United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan, South Korea.

Below: Memorial to soldiers missing in action. Busan.



## Heroes Remember the Korean War



### Luther Ferguson

*"Even today I have more feeling for my comrades than I have for family. These guys are more my brothers than my biological brothers. I don't know if you can feel that or understand that but that's how it is."*



### Stuart Reitsma

*"You have a poncho, you know everybody got a poncho, but when it rained like that you couldn't wear the poncho because you had to throw it over your machine gun, to keep the machine gun dry . . . I don't think that I could honestly sit here and tell you that there wasn't a day that I wasn't afraid."*



### Albert Hugh MacBride

*"I wanted to put flowers on (a) grave in Busan. My wife and I went out to buy some. This guy drove his car to this place and he gave us the flowers for nothing. This is the way they treat you. Forever thankful. So that makes you feel that it was worthwhile."*



### Gerald Edward Gowing

*"We were surrounded on the hills of Kapyong and there was a lot of fire. We were pretty well out of ammunition and out of food too. We did get some air supplies dropped in but we were actually surrounded."*

## 'Imjin River' Classic



(Top) Hockey game participants celebrate as Veterans Bill Murray (left) and Gord Gallant (right) hoist the cup after the Imjin River Hockey game on the Rideau Canal (Red team – CAF, Blue team – Parliamentarians). (Bottom right) Korean War Veteran Gordon Gallant holds the Imjin Cup. (Bottom left) Hockey game on the Imjin River in Korea.



Vol. 11, No. 1

*Salute!* is published by Veterans Affairs Canada. The contents of this publication are subject to copyright. Articles may be reproduced, in whole or in part, with appropriate credit given to *Salute!*, the writer and/or photographer.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome and should be sent to:

Veterans Affairs Canada  
P.O. Box 7700  
Charlottetown, PE C1A 8M9  
Attention: Editor, *Salute!*  
or  
E-mail: [salute@vac-acc.gc.ca](mailto:salute@vac-acc.gc.ca)

Veterans Affairs Canada has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of information at time of publication. However, the Department makes no warranties of any kind regarding this information, including, but not limited to, any warranty of accuracy, completeness, timeliness, reliability or fitness for a particular purpose and such warranties are expressly disclaimed. Health and wellness information in this publication is not intended as medical advice and should not be relied upon as a substitute for consultations with qualified health professionals.

ISSN: 1499-495X

Mailed under Canada Post Publications  
Mail Sales Agreement No. 40064817

Recycle this paper. Share it with a friend.

*Salute!* is available in large print and audio formats. Should you require an alternate format, please contact the Editor. To get more information about articles in this issue, please call our toll-free line: **1-866-522-2122.**

## Explore the 'Land of the Morning Calm'

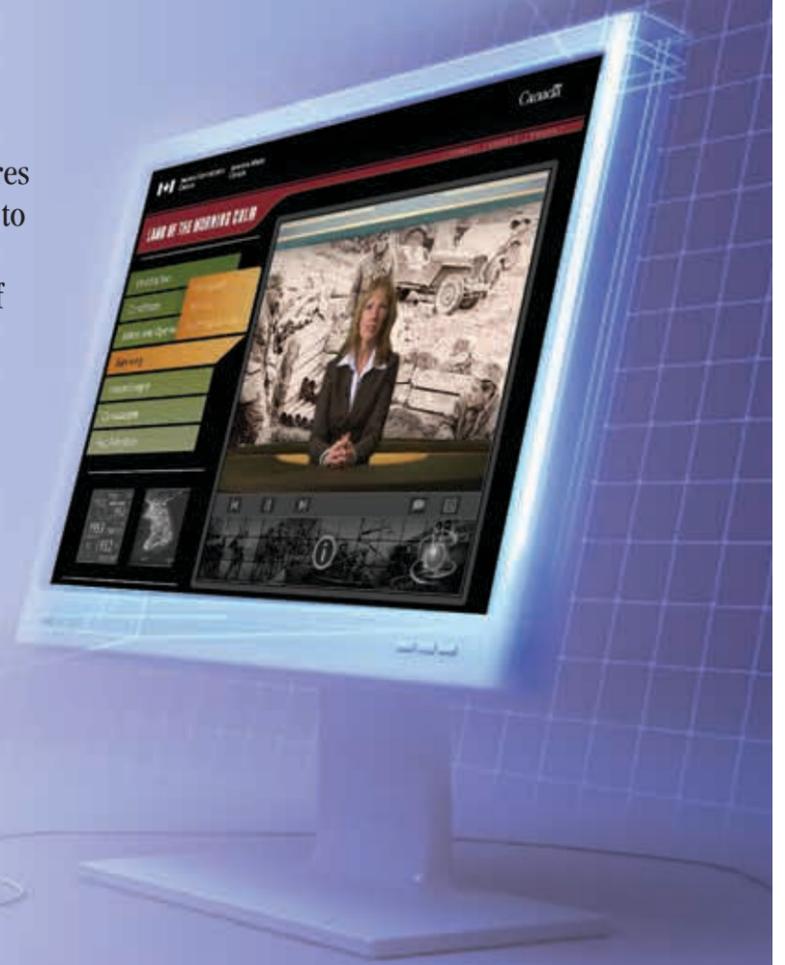
The Korean War is an important chapter in our country's military history. Now, a new way to learn more about Canadian efforts in Korea is just a click away, thanks to Veterans Affairs Canada's interactive, multimedia Web feature, "Land of the Morning Calm."

It offers a wealth of information about what Canadians in uniform experienced during the Korean War and lets you hear it all through the words of those who lived it—Canada's Korean War Veterans.

"Land of the Morning Calm" features an engaging television newsroom style, with a virtual host who guides your way in a journey through Canada's experiences in Korea.

There are several informative features to explore, from time lines to maps to interesting facts about the war, as well as the centrepiece—a series of powerful videos featuring Veteran interviews and historical footage.

"Land of the Morning Calm" is available now on the Veterans Affairs Canada Web site at [veterans.gc.ca](http://veterans.gc.ca). Explore it today.



### Weekend in Honour of Korean War Veterans

To mark 2013 as the Year of the Korean War Veteran, Veterans Affairs Canada will organize activities in the National Capital Region from June 21-23. Events include the launch of a new Canadian War Museum photo exhibit on the Korean War, a viewing of the *Book of Remembrance for Korea* and a ceremony at the National War Memorial.

To register, or for further information, please call 1-613-947-0714 (collect) or e-mail [cr-cs@vac-acc.gc.ca](mailto:cr-cs@vac-acc.gc.ca) before May 3.

## To our Veterans, our Living Heroes ...



We stand on the shoulders of those whose sacrifices and selfless service have given us the very freedoms we enjoy, but take for granted today. We have not earned these freedoms. They have. We live in freedom, but "freedom is not free." Many paid the price of freedom with their lives. A total of 516 Canadians made the ultimate sacrifice in Korea.

Thanks to the service and sacrifices of many, my parents survived the bloody war. But, had they perished along with the millions, I would never have been born. With love and respect, I commit my service to honour their legacy and repay that debt. It will take more than a lifetime to do so.

Minister Blaney has declared 2013 as the Year of the Korean War Veteran to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Armistice (July 27). This year is also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada-Korea bilateral relations, which could not have been signed had Canadians not answered the call to action.

Let us remember the sacrifices that were made throughout Canada's war history.

Lest we forget.

Senator Yonah Martin

## Winterlude 2013



Korean War Veterans Jean-Paul St. Aubin (front) and Lloyd Swick (back) recite l'Acte du Souvenir and the Act of Remembrance, respectively, at this year's Winterlude ceremony to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War Armistice. Jean-Paul St. Aubin (left) and Lloyd Swick (right) salute after laying wreaths to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Korean War Armistice at Canada's Winterlude Festival in Ottawa.