



ANGLO - KOREAN SOCIETY

Newsletter June 2010

Joint Presidents: H.E. The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Choo Kyu Ho
Dr. Robert Hawley CBE

Chairman: Sir Stephen Brown KCVO

From the Chairman:

Dear Members,

As we commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, my thoughts return to one of the most moving duties that I undertook each year during my time as British Ambassador at Seoul.

As many of you will know, every year British veterans of the Korean War are invited by the Korean authorities to return to Korea. The well organised programme takes place in April. It coincides with the famous battle of the Imjin River in April 1951, when 29th Brigade held up three Chinese divisions, for three days, winning enough time for other UN forces to regroup to defend Seoul.

The veterans return to "Gloster Hill", the site where 1st Battalion, the Gloucestershire Regiment, won their place in history. By tradition the Embassy's Defence Attaché recounts the action as it was fought, occasionally "corrected" by comments from those who were there on the day.

Afterwards the veterans move to "Gloster Valley", where the permanent memorial is sited for a ceremony of remembrance. After the notes of the bugles and the Padre's words have died away, some veterans retell their stories over a packed lunch. Others find a quiet moment to reflect.

The veterans programme includes a visit to the UN War Cemetery in Pusan. Many of you will have visited it but when the British veterans arrive in April each British grave is marked with a Union flag, placed there by local school children. The sight is most moving and sets the tone for the service that follows.

In 1997, the service included the burial of an unknown British soldier, whose remains had been discovered in North Korea and repatriated across the DMZ at Panmunjom with full military honours.

No return by the veterans would be complete without a reception at the British Ambassador's residence. Pam and I found this to be one of the most moving and enjoyable events we had to organise. Every veteran had his tale to tell.

In 1999, the veterans return coincided with HM The Queen's State Visit to Korea. Many British and Commonwealth veterans had the unique honour of meeting Her Majesty at a reception on the Residence lawn. On a sunny April day with the azaleas in bloom, this was a truly once in a lifetime experience.

For me, my predecessors and successors, the annual return of the veterans was always a moving event. It was also humbling to listen to the stories of the veterans and to try to imagine the horrors they had seen and the hardships they had endured.

I was always struck by those returning for the first time. At the end of the war in 1953, they had left a country, largely unknown in Britain, that was totally devastated by three years of savage and brutal fighting. They returned to Korea some 40 years later to find an unbelievable transformation into one of the world's leading economies with a lively and secure democracy. All the veterans I met felt that their sacrifice and that of their comrades had been worthwhile.

I will leave it to others this month to tell you of what the Society has been up to in the first half of this year and to whet your appetite for what is to come.

Stephen Brown



50 Years of Friendship, Understanding and Cultural Exchange 1956-2006
www.anglokoreansociety.org.uk



PAST EVENTS

Annual General Meeting - Tuesday 9 March 2010

This year's AGM was held in the main hall of the Korean Cultural Centre in Northumberland Avenue. The proceedings were accompanied by the roar of motorbike engines, part of a somewhat noisy demonstration against parking charges taking place outside the hotel opposite. This did not deter the speakers at our meeting who all succeeded in making themselves heard extremely well.

The Chairman opened proceedings by welcoming the 42 members attending, and then presented his report on the many and varied activities of the Society during 2009. This was followed by Treasurer George Harvey reporting on the healthy state of our finances and membership.

Social Events Secretary, Sylvia Park, introduced the AKS programme of events for the coming year with members Martin Day and Matthew Jackson adding their contributions. Sylvia encouraged members to sign up for the events already announced as tickets were limited and going fast. She also asked for more suggestions from the members.

The final report of the evening gave a detailed account of the activities of the British Korean Veterans Association during 2009 and was presented by their Chairman, Colonel George Gadd. It was lovely – and sometimes moving – to hear the Association is still going strong with over 3000 members, and to know that the annual commemoration visits are still so welcomed by the Korean hosts and population.

The last item on the agenda was the election of members standing for the Executive Committee. All were duly elected, and are listed on the back page of this newsletter.

At the Reception following the AGM we were joined by the recently appointed ROK Ambassador, HE Choo Kyu-ho, who is joint President of the Society. Director Won Yonggi of the KCC was also present along with a number of Korean Embassy staff. Ambassador Choo was kept extremely busy meeting enthusiastic AKS members who were all delighted to welcome him to his new position.

The remainder of the evening passed convivially as we all enjoyed the excellent Korean buffet with wine.



Ambassador Choo (centre) with AKS committee members, Peter Poole and Dr Woo Seung Shin

Tour of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office - Thursday 22 April 2010

About 20 AKS members had the privilege of a personalised tour of this magnificent Victorian building, which was restored to its original glory between 1984 and 1997. The informative tour, led by the curator Mr Grant, culminated in tea being served in one of the reception rooms.

Our thanks to AKS member Colin Crooks and the staff of East Asia Division for arranging this event.

Following the tour, the cellar bar of the Red Lion, just across Whitehall from the FCO building, proved a convenient venue for a drink and something to eat. There we were joined by our Chairman, Sir Stephen Brown, who enjoyed a chance to meet with members and their guests.



AKS members outside the FCO building

PAST EVENTS

East Asian Friendship Event

An East Asian Friendship Event, involving colourful cultural performances from China, Korea and Japan, took place at the Islington Chinese Association on 13 April. The first of its kind, it was held in association with a number of related organisations including the AKS and the British Korean Law Association. Several AKS and BKLA members attended and enjoyed a lively evening of talented dance, song and music, preceded by a delicious Chinese dinner.

Korea's input involved a beautiful classical dance and music performance from Sunnee Park, Jeunghyun Choi and Dong Yong Hwang, introduced by Sylvia Park, and some sparkling jazz from the increasingly popular Younee, a rare classically-trained singer, composer and pianist, who was touring the UK. All the performers kindly gave of their time free, with profit from the event going to Pitch Perfect, one of the present Lord Mayor of London's chosen charities bringing together music and cricket in children's educational programmes in London's most challenging boroughs. Lady Katy Tse Blair presided, and the artistic producer was Malcolm Ironton of Crocodile Music. Some 250 people attended, including volunteer helpers, Field Marshall and Lady Chapple, the Dowager Viscountess Rothermere, senior representatives from the embassies of the Republic of Korea, Japan and the People's Republic of China, and Cherie Blair QC. All present joined at the end in the singing, in four languages, of Auld Lang Syne! Plans are already being discussed for a repeat event in 2011.

AKS Diners



The Chairman tries his hand at serving.

These popular gatherings have been held this year at the beginning of February, April and June, all at Woo Jung Korean Restaurant, off Tottenham Court Road. Numbers vary from around 15 to 20; at the last dinner we had an influx of committee members, conveniently on the spot and ready for a beer having held a meeting in the restaurant beforehand.

Any AKS members are welcome to attend and may bring guests who are interested in Korean food and culture.

The next Diners will be on Wednesday 1 September, again following a committee meeting, so join us and take the opportunity to meet some of the committee and share your views on the Society.

FUTURE EVENTS

Korea Update - 8 July 2010, House of Commons

Following last year's popular event we will again be updated on current issues within the Korean Peninsula by Martin Uden, British Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, and Peter Hughes, British Ambassador to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Our special guest speaker will be Choo Kyu Ho, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea.

The event will be hosted by Simon Hughes MP.

Chuseok Celebration - 22 September 2010, Korean Cultural Centre

Join us for a celebration of the traditional Korean Harvest Moon Festival, with entertainment and a Korean Buffet.

Annual Dinner - 2 December 2010, House of Lords

This year our annual dinner will be held in the prestigious Peers Dining Room in the House of Lords - a first time at this venue for the AKS. Our host will be Baroness Perry. The dinner will be preceded by a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament.

For more information on any of the above events please contact our Social Events Secretary, Sylvia Park. Tel: 07802 858 771 Email: sylviaparkairtravel@hotmail.co.uk

60th ANNIVERSARY

The Korean War (1950-53) - A Veteran's View

After the end of the Second World War Korea was divided as a temporary expedient along the line of the 38th Parallel. Communist forces occupied the North and the United States the South. Elections supervised by the United Nations led to the establishment of an independent Republic in the South in 1948. The United Nations electoral commission was refused entry to the North.

On the 25th June 1950, the North Koreans invaded the South and a war that was to last for more than three years commenced. The year 2010 is the 60th Anniversary of the outbreak of war. The Security Council authorised and requested armed assistance for South Korea from member countries. This being the first and only United Nations War in which twenty-two states promised contingents, it was a unique military operation by the United Nations which has never been repeated. The American General, Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the wartime occupation force in Japan, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the naval, land and air contributions placed at his disposal.

Some 100,000 British troops served in Korea, many of them National Servicemen, together with Commonwealth forces from Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa. Overall, the United Nations forces suffered 142,000 casualties. The United States losses alone over the three years of combat were close to those they sustained during the whole of ten years of the Vietnam conflict. Losses by the South Koreans were even more severe and exceeded 1 million people, military and civilians.

An armistice was finally signed on 27th July 1953 ordering a cease-fire along the battle lines. Due to the fact that all negotiations for a formal peace treaty between the two nations have failed, the peninsula remains divided roughly along the 38th parallel. The authority for this separation depends solely upon the armistice terms agreed between the respective commanders-in-chief.

To this day there are many thousands of Korean War Veterans in the UK, mostly in their late seventies or early eighties, who have vivid recollections of the war; the inadequate clothing to combat the cold weather, and the extreme heat of a Korean summer, to say nothing of the monsoons that saturated the body and made life sometimes unbearable. Nevertheless, the comradeship, the unselfish will to protect and support each other was something to be admired and will never be forgotten by all who served in this conflict.



Korean War Veterans on a return visit to Korea

Could we have imagined, cold and shivering in a trench or sweating and being stung by mosquitoes on a hot dangerous night, that Korean technology would one day place the spires on the tallest buildings in the world, and 70% of Korean children would go to a university? Compared to any other nation in the world Korea is at the forefront in all technologies, science, medicine, culture and the arts. Yet without those who served, helping to make and keep South Korea free, none of these amazing achievements would have been possible.

Every year the Korean Government and Korean people welcome veterans from the nations who supported their impoverished and nearly crushed country during the war. Their treatment and respect for the veterans is without equal, no other nation does as much to pay homage to those who fought to bring them freedom.

This year at least 2,400 veterans will be making a nostalgic return to the land that took over their lives so long ago, to participate in ceremonies and commemorative events. The Ministry of Patriots and Veteran Affairs and the 60th Anniversary of the Korean War Committee, headed by Prime Minister Chung Un-chan and former Prime Minister Lee Hong-gu, are working hard to **make 2010 especially memorable for the world's veterans who fought in Korea, six decades ago.**

*Peter Poole, AKS Membership Secretary
Served in Korea 1951/1952*

60th ANNIVERSARY

USAF pilot's lonely last resting place in North Korea

By Michael Rank

There can be no lonelier grave, anywhere on earth.

In the midst of fields close to the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, lie the remains of Flight Lieutenant Desmond Hinton, a British fighter pilot flying for the United States Air Force who is the only member of United Nations forces in the Korean War known to be buried in North Korea. Hinton is officially listed as missing in action, but his brother David, himself a retired bomber pilot, dug up records of how and where Desmond died and managed to visit his grave in highly secretive North Korea.

David discovered in RAF archives a graphic report of how his brother died on January 2, 1952.

"F/Lt DFW Hinton had been ordered to undertake an interdiction and reconnaissance mission in the area of Sunan-Pyongyang with three other aircraft from his unit... After making a bomb run on railroad tracks just north of Sunan, he called the other members of his flight saying he was hit and on fire. The aircraft was then seen to crash into the ground and explode on impact. The remaining three aircraft flew over the wreckage of F/Lt Hinton's aircraft for 15 minutes, but returned to their home base after seeing no evidence that F/Lt Hinton was alive. Sadly, F/Lt Hinton is still reported as missing."

From this account David had a good idea of where his brother had gone down in his F84e Thunderjet - over the Sunan area of Pyongyang which is now the location of the city's airport. It turned out that despite the North Korean government's deep-seated xenophobia, the remains of Desmond Hinton, who was fighting for the hated "Yankee imperialists," had been given a decent burial close to where his body fell to earth. David was therefore determined to pay his respects to his brother at his grave and in 2004 embarked on a remarkable journey to North Korea, taking the train from Beijing to Pyongyang. Despite the bitterness of the Korean War, he was treated as an honoured guest and enjoyed the rare distinction of being accompanied during his visit by a senior Korean People's Army officer, Colonel Kwak Chol-hui, who is appropriately enough Director of Negotiations for Remains at the armistice site at Panmunjom.

The grave consists simply of a mound of earth surrounded by a white picket fence, without any inscription. He was introduced at the grave to two witnesses to Desmond's crash, a Mr Ri and a Mr Han, local villagers who were only 13 years old at the time but appeared to have perfect recollections of the event. "They told how the aircraft passed directly over their houses at very low level and they were at the crashed aircraft within minutes," David said.

He asked if he could possibly have some sort of souvenir of his visit, and to his astonishment he was presented with a piece of Desmond's flying suit which Colonel Kwak ordered to be dug up from the grave. David gave a short speech at the grave, thanking Colonel Kwak and the ambassador for making his visit possible, while the head of the village promised to tend the grave and paint the fence.

David Hinton is content for his brother's remains to stay in North Korea, and he now hopes to place a plaque on the grave in memory of his brother. David wishes the plaque to be inscribed in English and Korean, and he hopes to return to North Korea to place the memorial on Desmond's grave in order to ensure that his brother's name lives on in the land where he sacrificed his life.



*David Hinton at Desmond's grave,
June 28th 2004*

For more on this story and other photos, visit Michael's blog at: <http://tinyurl.com/35w5ppp>

A FINAL WORD



©British Embassy, Seoul

British graves at the UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan. Over 1000 British troops, under UN command, died during the Korean War.

Absent Veterans

Would that you could wander still
Through grassy fields, by wooded hill
When morning bird-song fills the air
And yet another spring is here.

If only you could still feel the sun
Upon your face when winter's done,
And smell sweet scented flowers fair
When yet another summer's here.

But Fate decided otherwise
And you, beneath Korean skies,
A gallant band of comrades lie,
Your duty done, your merit high.

No changing seasons can erase
That once familiar name, that face
Which comes and lingers in each thought
Of those with whom we lived and fought.

*D.U.R. Lidstone (1920 - 2004)
Private, the Gloucestershire Regiment
Korea 1950/51*

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To the Last Round

The Epic British Stand on the Imjin River, Korea, 1951

By Andrew Salmon



It was in Korea in April 1951 that a legend was forged, when a British brigade, deployed along the Imjin River, faced an entire **Chinese army. 29th Brigade's three-day stand remains – nearly six decades later – the bloodiest battle fought by British soldiers since World War II.**

Andrew Salmon, 42, is a freelance reporter covering the Koreas for a number of organisations including CNN and The Times.

In an illustrated lecture, Andrew will discuss the early days of the Korean War, 29th Infantry Brigade, the tactics of both sides, and the Imjin terrain. A short reading from the book will be followed by an audio-visual presentation on the battle itself.

Date & Venue:

Thursday, 15th July
6.30pm

Korean Cultural Centre
Grand Buildings
1-3 Strand
London WC2N 5BW

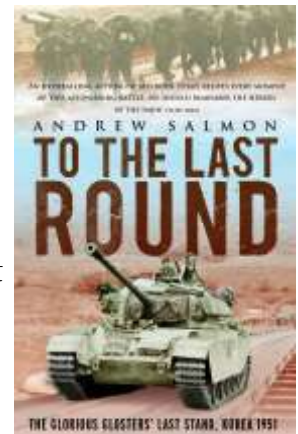
This talk is a joint event between the KCC and the AKS - all AKS members are welcome to attend free of charge.

Email

info@kccuk.org.uk

or call 020 7004 2600 to reserve your place.

Refreshments will be served and signed copies of *To the Last Round* will be available to purchase.



AKS Executive Committee

Chairman: Sir Stephen Brown

Treasurer: George Harvey

Secretary: Cathy Kim

Committee: Miriam Chung, Peter Corbishley, Hyun-key Kim Hogarth, Derek Marsh, Hugh Merrill, Warwick Morris, Woo Seung Shin, Jim Thomson

On sabbatical: Grace Koh

Embassy Representative: Byung-kyoo Ha

Email the committee: info@anglokoreansociety.org.uk

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Social Events Secretary: Sylvia Park

Membership Secretary: Peter Poole