Activity Book
For all age groups
The Korean War

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM
TE MATA TOA
The Korean War began on 25 June 1950 when troops from The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) invaded their southern neighbours The Republic of Korea.

There were two distinct phases to the war. The first lasted from June to September 1950 with RoK supported by the US and some Commonwealth countries. The second phase until July 1953 was a contest between the USA and 15 other countries and China supporting the two Korean States. After WWII Russia and the US divided Korea along the 38th Parallel, however the Koreans never became reconciled with this and border tensions were common as they tried to reunify the peninsula.

The June invasion took the RoK by surprise and the DPRK made rapid progress, in fact taking the capital Seoul within three days. When North Korea ignored the United Nations call to withdrawal the UN called on its members to assist South Korea.

New Zealand was one of the first to respond sending two frigates to escort convoys from Japan to Korea. The Korean Peoples Army resistance quickly disintegrated either being captured or retreating to the hills of North Korea. The UN purpose was thus fulfilled. The US was tempted to keep pushing forward and their decision to cross the 38th Parallel precipitated the response from China to help its ally.

Initially ill equipped, although in large numbers the Chinese army drove the UN back past the 38th Parallel, Seoul was again captured and the new front line became south of Seoul.

New Zealand by this time had formed KAYFORCE, a 1000 man ground force, mainly 16th Field Regiment artillery and some ancillary services. There was no shortage of volunteers as over 5000 applied.

They left New Zealand in December arriving on New Years Eve. They were first in action on 24 January 1951 after joining the 27th Commonwealth Brigade helping to recapture Seoul and again forcing the Chinese back to the 38th Parallel. The artillery played a vital role in supporting the UN forces.
In July 1951 after a disastrous offensive the Chinese realised an outright victory was beyond their capacity and armistice talks were initiated. These proved very slow, in fact the armistice wasn’t signed until 27 July 1953 and even then no peace settlement was ever signed, the armistice arrangement continued for over 40 years.

In all 4700 men served with Kayforce plus a further 1300 RNZN served in the frigates. Forty five men lost their lives plus one was taken POW for 18 months. The war achieved a side benefit for New Zealand. New Zealand showing it was able to demonstrate support to the US led to the signing of the ANZUS treaty on 1st September 1951.

Gunner G Garland – was the only New Zealander taken Prisoner of War during the Korean War.

Gnr Garland was a radio operator relaying fire orders back to the Divisional Artillery. While his officer Captain Mclean crawled back through the trench system to gain assistance Gnr Garland stayed forward. During the night the position was overrun and Gnr Garland was taken prisoner.

When Captain Mclean and the others returned they found they were in Chinese occupied territory, they too were taken prisoner, but when they were marched down the hill to Chinese positions they were left momentarily unattended and were able to make their way back to friendly lines.

Gnr Garland was held in a camp in Northern Korea until liberated some 18 months later, after the armistice. He conceded later that the conditions were “not bad” even if harsh by Western standards. As with other POW’s he had to endure attempts by his captors to indoctrinate him with communist ideology.
“You are going to a country where the fighting will be severe. Time may be short and you should make sure you are absolutely fit. The reputation of New Zealand is in your hands. I wish you God speed and a safe and quick return”
Governor General Sir Bernard Freyberg 1950

“The war has been described as the forgotten war. It was not the largest or the longest war that New Zealand has fought but it was amongst the hardest … We must remember the Korean War”
Laurie Stack President New Zealand Korea Veterans Association

“It was very easy to start a war in Korea. It was not so easy to stop it”
Soviet Leader N.S.Krushchev
The diorama commemorating the Korean War at the National Army Museum shows members of 16th Field Regiment Royal New Zealand Artillery loading a 25 pounder gun in preparation for firing. The soldiers are dressed in the winter uniform necessary for fighting in the extreme cold of Korea.
4th November 1951 16th Field Regiment fired 10,000 artillery shells – its highest daily total. In all over 1,000,000 shells were fired during the war by New Zealand Artillery.

An expansion draft of 500 men left Wellington on 2 August 1951 but their troopship Wahine was shipwrecked north of Darwin. The men were eventually flown to Japan to join Kayforce there.

New Zealand troops continue as observers on United Nations missions in Korea.
1. **M*A*S*H** the long running television series was based on the Korean War – what is a MASH?

2. **What is the 38th Parallel?**

3. **Why is a 25 pounder gun as used by the New Zealand Artillery in Korea called a 25 pounder?**

4. **How many New Zealanders were killed in the Korean War?**

5. **Why was the name Kayforce used to describe New Zealanders in Korea?**
Open daily 9.00am to 4.30pm
(Closed Christmas Day)

State Highway One, Waiouru

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