

We Turn Toward Busan on Veterans Day

A message from Park Sung Choon, Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, The Republic of Korea

NOTE: This message was delivered before Veterans Day 2014. We present it to give members an idea of how they can prepare for the Turn Toward Busan ninth annual program in 2015.



Jim Whitmore (R), carrying U.S. flag, Larry Kinard (C) and Leo Ruffing of KWVA at Turn to Busan ceremony in Washington D.C. General Kyoung Soo Shin, Defense Attaché with the Republic of Korea Embassy, is directly to President Kinard's left.

Preface:

This statement by Minister Park Sung Choon of the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs of the Republic of Korea is presented to the brave Korean War veterans of the United States of America, and to their families and descendants, on the Eighth Annual Turn Toward Busan International Service of Honor and Tribute to the Korean War Fallen.

The core global service [was] conducted by Minister Park Sung Choon in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery in Busan at 11

a.m. on Tuesday, November 11, 2014. All veterans and others [were] invited to join in this service throughout America by turning toward Busan at local times that are synchronized with the 11 a.m. service in Korea.

Veterans and all others also [were] invited to Turn Toward Busan in accord with their own timings on November 11.

Veterans in the United States should know that this invitation [was] extended to their comrades in all 21 nations that sent armed forces and medical humanitarian aid

units to Korea, and to all veterans of the Republic of Korea's armed forces.

Statement by Minister Park Sung Choon:

We turn toward Busan on Veterans Day, where a new American monument now stands in the United Nations Memorial Cemetery. During the Korean War, when it was known as the U.S. Military Cemetery at Tangak, 10,000 American soldiers were buried here, before being repatriated to their United States of America.

That new monument was dedicated in 2003 by the American Battlefield Monuments Commission. In a speech, the Commissioner remarked that "Honor, Freedom and Peace, the principles which the United States fought to preserve during the Korean War, are the only words engraved upon the memorial. Nothing else needs to be said."

Yet, there is another monument in that far off cemetery. It is called the United Nations Wall of Remembrance. This vast memorial was dedicated and consecrated in 1996. It is a remembrance to all who fell, a gift to posterity from the Korean people. This monument is inscribed with not three words, but tens of thousands of words. Deeply engraved in the granite panels, they softly speak the names of 40,896 soldiers who fell in the Korean War.

Of those names, 36,492—90 percent of all of those who lost their lives serving in United Nations Forces—are American. They are listed there by the states that were their homes. That great Wall of Remembrance tells a story that needs to be heard! It needs to be cried out to all states and counties in America; to all lands and all corners of our world.

The world needs to know that from the great and peace loving United States, nearly two million Americans left their warm homes to defend freedom in the fledgling Republic of Korea. If the Americans had not come to save our people, our nation would have been conquered and subjugated by an invader's cruel regime.

The brave Americans came. Probably the poorest among them was rich by the standards of East Asia. Their lives were of luxury, compared to that sad standard in



President Larry Kinard addresses crowd at Washington D.C. event. General Shin stands to his right. Leo Ruffing (back to camera) holds the flag. Terry Whitmore (R) holds U.S. flag, and Don Loudner, wearing the baseball cap, National Commander of the National American Indian Veterans organization, is far right.

our impoverished land. They were the freest, most independent people in the world. Yet they came, those magnificent Americans. They came to one of the poorest of nations, where oxen still ploughed the soil, and the rice was planted stalk by stalk by farmers who waded in the vast paddy fields.

They came to where there was sickness and horrid extremes of weather; to a harsh land of mountains that taxed their very souls. They came to face the horrible fire of the enemy, to the crucible of the tyrants. They faced nights and days of agonizing danger, of unending fear.

Yet they rose above that fear. They fought with the greatest valor one can ever imagine. Since the end of that terrible war, over and over again have come accounts from enemy records of how they were in awe of the high caliber of the American soldiers.

The Americans would fight when others would give it up, the reports of the old

enemy say. They would resist and fight back tenaciously, when everything in the enemy's plan of assault and maneuver said they should give way.

Such tribute, in reports the enemy made to their own people, within their own annals.

Even early in the war, when outnumbered, and facing superior heavy weapons, with no protection against the enemy's armor, the Americans thwarted the cruel onslaught. They thwarted it with their outright courage and their blood. They totally upset the plans of the tyrant and its allies for a quick, ferocious victory against freedom.

The Americans soon came in greater numbers and with the best battle equipment in the world, and they repelled the cruel enemies. Once on the offensive, the American forces and the units from 21 nations that came under their command, stayed in the ascendancy.

The Americans came. They were magnificent, these champions of the vulnerable! They saved our nation! They also saved the stature of the United Nations, for this was the first test under fire and world scrutiny of its principles and the policy of collective security.

These are reasons why, on this Veterans Day in 2014, it is right to Turn Toward Busan, where the new American Monument, and the Wall of Remembrance are located. We turn to honor those who fell in that war of so long ago. We do so in silence for the moment, in respect of them. But we and the world should never be silent about the deeds of those more than 36,000 Americans who died in the Korean War. The world must know about them.

The world must know about the bravery and the utter nobility of nearly two million

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A group of 26 students from South Korea at the Washington D.C. Turn to Busan ceremony. They were with Hannah Kim, who was helping them tour the area while they were in the U.S. LTC Hong, Assistant Defense Attaché, is the Korean officer in the left of the picture. General Shin, Tim Whitmore, and Leo Ruffing stand in the back next to President Kinard.



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of their American comrades who fought for world freedom in that far off small nation most of the world had never heard of before.

There has been far too much silence masking the service of these great men and women who defended world freedom and saved the fledgling Republic of Korea. It began even while the war was raging, while tens of thousands of Americans were fighting so bravely and fiercely, and while thousands of them were dying.

Although three million soldiers were at war, counting our allies and the aggressors, silence was the rule. Pretense that it was not a major war was the rule. Many euphemisms were coined to cover the reality of that cruel and deadly war, calling it a police action, a conflict. Word of the great battles, the terrible losses – and the many, many victories – often were censored.

What was horrible and threatening the peace and safety of the entire world was kept obscure by policy on the belief that facts might propagate a third world war. So the war was muffled and masked, by downplaying what those great, brave soldiers were doing, and how they were suffering so badly.

Those who served in Korea remember, mostly with agony, the terrors of the front lines, the iciness of the seas, the heart pounding flights. There was courage, great courage! It was abundant always; flowing in blood, flowing in sweat, flowing in strength... but not written in words of praise and those great, magnificent deeds therefore have escaped the annals of our world's history.

The Medal of Honor was awarded to 136 Americans in that three-year war; one in every 170,000 who served. Of those brave souls, only 38 were alive to receive it. The rest of those recipients, 98 great heroes from America, perished in their brave acts, and the medal was awarded posthumously in their names.

Those heroes who still live will say with a humility that comes natural for most Americans, that every soldier in that war was no less brave, that all of them at one time or other, committed great acts of bravery, unrecorded more than not.

Well over 100,000 Americans were awarded the Purple Heart, in recognition of

the wounds that they suffered.

Many who served in Korea must now wonder how they managed to carry on. The land, though beautiful in peacetime, was savage to them with its great granite mountains, the horrible winters, and the rains and searing heat of the summers.

Yet soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen from the United States came, from the opening days of the Korean War, throughout every long, tortured day that followed, until victory was achieved.

They are the most compassionate, most generous people in the world. They open their hearts and their treasures to the oppressed. They will take the shirts from their backs to save the shivering beggar, while others might shun him.

These remarkable, friendly people were born to liberty, or knew it as newcomers to their land. Yet they were most fierce when fighting for the freedom of a small country from which their nation attained no commerce or benefit.

Who cannot say that America is the greatest nation in all of the world, and that the American people by their courage and their sense of right have made it so? Nobody can say otherwise, who knows the story of the Korean War!

The victory they attained, ratified by an armistice agreement, has been enforced for more than 60 years by the vigilant American presence in Korea and its region. It has been maintained by more than five million Americans, who have served in the theatre since the guns went silent.

They have taken the torch of their fathers and grandfathers to keep the Republic of Korea free, and to maintain the United Nations' principle of collective defence that will keep all nations free.

They still stand on guard in Korea and at bases near Korea, and their officers still serve in the Unified Command of the Republic of Korea and the United States. The alliance forged in war still stands with greatest strength.

Such a commitment! Can history possibly exclude this from its greatest stories?

Millions of American citizens, for more than 60 years, serving in a nation thousands of miles from their homes, to preserve it, and to preserve the basis of the United

Nations, that aggression will not be tolerated and will always be answered?

Shame on any nation, on any historian, who should overlook this! The Korean War and these great heroes, the great nation of the United States and its nobility and generosity to the unfortunate, have been overlooked for far too long.

So these are some of the reasons that we Turn Toward Busan, and we remember all who served, and all who fell.

We in Korea are in awe of them. We weep for every one of them, for every brave man and woman who served in our country. We weep with greatest sorrow for all of those who fell, and for those who went home with wounds of body and of mind.

As we turn toward Busan on this day, veterans from all 21 nations that served with the United Nations Command turn with us, to salute and hold a minute of silence for those who fell. In Korea, our veterans also turn to face the United Nations Memorial Cemetery and the new American Memorial, and the venerable Wall of Remembrance, and in their hearts, in all of our hearts, we thank every American!

From the bottom of my own heart, for everything that Korea is this day, for the great freedom that we enjoy, I salute and I thank and I extol every American who answered the call of the United Nations!

By their noble service, they saved a new nation, provided the freedom needed for it to enter and excel in the modern age, and by denying the conquest of tyrants who envisioned that all nations might come under their harsh domination, they changed the future of the world!

Park Sung Choon

Minister Patriots and Veterans Affairs

The Republic of Korea

Turn To Busan Ceremony In Washington D.C.

There was also a Turn To Busan ceremony held in Washington D.C. as part of a world-wide effort on behalf of all the UN countries that participated in the Korean War. The ceremony was held to remember the sacrifices of those killed and wounded during the war.

It was a very successful day.