

# 1953 - 2023

## 70 jaar Armistice in Korea



# VOX - V.O.K.S.

Association magazine of the  
Korean War Veterans Association  
of The Netherlands

This VOX -V.O.K.S. is  
a special edition of the

**KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION  
OF THE NETHERLANDS**

To mark 70 years of Armistice between

North- and South-Korea  
July 27, 1953 - July 27, 2023

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## FOREWORD PRESIDENT VOKS



With this edition you have a special issue of our association magazine VOX-V.O.K.S. on the occasion of the armistice between North and South Korea on July 27, 1953. Despite the fact that it is now 73 years since the Korean War began, the memory of it remains. Both among current Korean War veterans, soldiers of the Van Heutsz Regiment and descendants of Korean War veterans.

During this war, 125 Dutch soldiers were killed or were missing. In addition, 20 South Korean servicemen, who were attached to the Dutch Detachment United Nations, also died.

July 27, 2023 marks the 70th anniversary of the signing of the armistice between North and South Korea. Although there have been several incidents since then in which North Korea was the culprit, things have calmed down over the years. And even though the people of South Korea live in peace, the country is now well prepared for a possible recurrence. After all, it remains uncertain what the leader of North Korea has in mind, given the pinpricks he dispenses by occasionally launching a missile as a demonstration of his imagined position of power.

We too lived in peace for years in Europe and thought that after the Second World War it would remain so. However, the war in Ukraine, started by yet another dictator with megalomania, shows that peace is sometimes a fragile concept.

This issue includes an overview of the deployment of the Dutch United Nations Detachment during the Korean War, written by Second Lieutenant Koen Monnickendam, working at the Ministry of Defense's Defensity College. He discusses the origins of this war and then particularly describes the role of the Dutch military over the period 1950 -1954, both from the Army and Navy. Also included are several quotes from Korean War veterans and texts from a book, written by Pastor Koppert, spiritual director during the Korean War.

In addition, attention is paid to the participation of three Dutch Navy pilots who were deployed during this war. And also a list of Korean War monuments in the Netherlands is published.

Furthermore, you can read an article about the symbolic monument of "Freedom is not Free, Statue of Two Brothers" placed in Seoul.

Not only will this war and the efforts of the Dutch servicemen of the Dutch Detachment United Nations and the Navy in it exist as a lasting memory, but we, together with the Regiment Van Heutsz, will continue to ensure that the efforts of our servicemen during the Korean War will never be forgotten.

I hereby express my thanks to the commander and men of the Regiment Van Heutsz for the years of support for our Korean War veterans and our association.

My thankyou also goes to Koen Monnickendam for his contribution to this publication.

*Paul Gommers*  
*President VOKS*

## AMBASSADOR HYOUNG-CHAN CHOE



I hereby congratulate the Korean War Veterans Association of The Netherlands (VOKS) on this special edition of the booklet VOX-V.O.K.S. commemorating the 70 years of Armistice after the Korean War.

The Korean War, erupted in the early hours of June 25, 1950 by the invasion of North Korea, was a tragic chapter on the Korean Peninsula. Thanks to the tenacious struggle of the Army of the Republic of Korea and the noble sacrifices of 22 participating UN forces, including the brave soldiers of the Van Heutsz Regiment from the Netherlands, the Communist aggression was repelled and finally led to the signing of the Armistice Agreement on July 27, 1953.

The dedication and sacrifices of these Dutch soldiers played a crucial role in ensuring freedom and peace in the Republic of Korea and paved the way for the political democracy and economic prosperity we enjoy today. The courage and dedication of these heroes will never be forgotten in the memory of the Korean people. We are committed to preserving their legacy by sharing their stories and ensuring that their noble spirit and dedication are never forgotten.

The ravages of war left the Republic of Korea among the most underdeveloped countries in the world. However, the aid and support of the international community laid a strong foundation for the resurrection of the Republic of Korea and provided the people with hope and an impetus to rebuild our nation from the ashes of war.

Today, the Republic of Korea is one of the world's leading economic powers, due in large part to this foreign aid. Now, as two of the world's most active economies and leaders in international trade, the Republic of Korea and the Kingdom of the Netherlands continue to expand their cooperation in various fields. Our partnership extends to high-tech industries such as semiconductors and hydrogen, as well as defense, agriculture, and nuclear energy. Moreover, our two countries are committed to the universal values of freedom, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and the rules-based international order.

In addition to these strong political, diplomatic and economic ties, Korea and the Netherlands elevated their bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership in November 2022. This move will further strengthen our ties in the coming years in areas of mutual interest.

While the Embassy of the Republic of Korea will continue to promote the relationship between our two countries, we will never forget the noble sacrifices made by Dutch soldiers that form the basis of our bilateral relationship. The Embassy has maintained strong ties with V.O.K.S and the Van Heutsz Regiment and is committed to continuing to express gratitude and respect to our veterans and their families.

Once again, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to VOKS on the publication of this booklet. It is worth reading to gain a deeper understanding of the Korean War and the brave Dutch military who helped liberate the Republic of Korea from Communist occupation.

*Hyoung-chan CHOE - Ambassador of the Republic of Korea*

## LIEUTENANT COLONEL T.R. DE BOER



It is my pleasure to introduce myself to you. I am Commander Tabe de Boer, the battalion commander and regimental commander of the 12th Infantry Battalion Regiment Van Heutsz.

This issue of the well-known association magazine VOX-V.O.K.S. of the Korean War Veterans Association of The Netherlands (VOKS) is entirely devoted to the Armistice between North and South Korea, which began 70 years ago.

This armistice ended the bloody war that was the Korean War. And which to this day is called "The Forgotten War".

With this VOX-V.O.K.S. we commemorate and honor the efforts of the Dutch Detachment United Nations and Royal Navy ships in Korea.

While our country was still recovering from the horrors of World War II, which had severely tested us in the East Indies and on Dutch soil, as well as from the Indonesian struggle for freedom that followed, the international community asked our country to contribute to the United Nations force in



Korea. That country, far from us, threatened to be overrun by a totalitarian regime with massive Chinese support. The freedom of a people seemed to be threatened again. This was not to happen again!

The Netherlands supplied a battalion (the Dutch United Nations Detachment) to the international force that was to prevent the North Koreans and Chinese from conquering the entire Korean peninsula. Men volunteered from all corners of our country and later from overseas to bring peace.

Under-equipped, they arrived in South Korea. Despite hardships of cold, hunger, disease, and fear, they bit through, stood their ground and did, what they had come for: bring peace.

That did not happen by itself. There had to be a fight! And hard too. The Dutch Detachment more than lived up to the 2nd US Infantry Division's motto: '2nd to none' (never a second). Time after time they managed to stand up to enemy superiority, which often amounted to ten times or more.



In addition to one and a half million enemy casualties, 400,000 South Koreans died for the freedom of their people, including 20 KATUSA's assigned to the Dutch detachment.

Of the 3,400 volunteer from the Van Heutszers who went to war between 1950 and 1954, 122 died, and three of them were never found. Incredible numbers, and not fitting the current image we have of UN operations.

On July 16, I visited the International Cemetery in Busan with men from the Regiment and walked past the 127 graves related to deceased Dutch servicemen. Buried in this cemetery are 117 Dutchmen killed during the Korean War and five Korean War veterans interred there as from 2016. It is also impressive that although five graves have headstones, they are still empty until the five Dutch soldiers who went missing during this war

are found and can finally be interred there as well. On behalf of the Regiment Van Heutsz we laid a wreath, followed by the 'Last Post' and a minute of silence. All very impressive!



In 1954, the Van Heutsz Regiment was given the honorable task of taking over the traditions of the Netherlands United Nations Detachment, carrying them forward and securing them for the future. We do so with pride and determination. It is a tradition that unites us as a regiment.

The commitment of the men of the Dutch Detachment United Nations, the story of their sacrifice and struggle must not be forgotten. A battle in Korea about courage, comradeship, and sacrifice, but also about hardship, pain and loss.

Together we remember and honor the fallen, the missing, all who contributed to the freedom of South Korea. We will never forget.

*LKOL Tabe de Boer*

## STATUE OF BROTHERS

Now, 70 years after the Armistice, the Statue of Brothers reminds everyone of the Korean War. The statue of the two brothers is a symbolic monument in the South Korean city of Seoul, recreating the dramatic moment when they faced each other in this war.



During the fighting, North Korean KPA soldiers fled north. Soldier IL was the older brother in the South Korean army who warned a KPA soldier, who was lying on his face, that his life would be spared if he did not try to flee.

The KPA soldier who raised his head to that voice was the younger brother. The man wearing a helmet with a rifle on his shoulder is the older brother, Second Lieutenant Park Gyucheol, of the ROK 16th Regiment, 8th Division.

The embraced KPA soldier is the younger brother, Private 1st Class Park Yongcheol, of the KPA 83rd Regiment, 8th Division.

Amid heavy barrage, the two brothers embraced each other and burst into tears. Since then, the two brothers demonstrated model brotherhood during the Korean War. The scene in which they met as enemies during the war represents reconciliation, love and forgiveness, and the National War Museum of Korea erected the brothers' statue to permanently remind people of the scars and pain of this war and the inestimable value of peace.

## KOREAN WAR MONUMENTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Numerous monuments have been erected in the Netherlands to remember and commemorate the soldiers of the NDVN who died during or because of the Korean War.

The National Korean War Monument at the Oranje Barracks in Schaarsbergen also includes a mention of the 20 South Korean soldiers who perished and were attached to the NVDN (KATUSA's).

On the occasion of 70 years of armistice, the VOKS inventoried a number of these monuments. The list indicates to which soldiers these monuments refer.

CITY	MENTIONS
Alphen aan den Rijn	E. van der Horst
Apeldoorn	Ds. H. Timens
Gemert	Jan van Extel
Genemuiden	Jan Evert Schaapman
Hoorn	With the names of all Dutch soldiers killed during various missions, including the Korean War
Lutten	Jan Kerssies
Maastricht	E.M. Lamberti - J. Lenaerts - C. Bastiaans
Oirschot <i>(Genm de Ruyter van Steveninckkazerne)</i>	J.H. Sour -J. Voogt - W.F.M. van der Sman - S.A. Breeman - P. van Rossum - A.J. Twisterling - J.H.L. van Kollenburg - B.J.T. Kamevaar - E.M. Lamberti
Poortugal	J.Verheij
Roermond	With the names of all Dutch soldiers killed during various missions, including the Korean War
Roosendaal <i>(Engelbrecht van Nassaukazerne)</i>	All military personnel of the NDVN who belonged to or were trained in the Command Corps, perished in or because of the Korean War

Rotterdam	T.L. Boukema - T.J. de Haan - H. Pakker - A.A. Schilders - A.G. Timmermans - H. Cleffken - R. Samuels - J.J. Timmermans
Schaarsbergen, (Oranjekazerne)	All Dutch servicemen and KATUSAs killed in or as a result of the Korean War
Schiedam	All Dutch servicemen, killed in the Dutch East Indies and during or as a result of the Korean War
Smilde	J.Daling
't Harde (Legerplaats LbO), artilleriemuseum)	All Dutch servicemen, killed in the Dutch East Indies and during or as a result of the Korean War
Utrecht	L.M.J.M. Grasso - D.A.C. Jansen - F.W. Fama - J.W. Verbon - J. van Steenis
Waalre	All Dutch military personnel from the Province of Brabant killed in or as a result of the Korean War, among whom were LKOL Den Ouden
Wolphaartsdijk	D. de Blaeij



*Oirschot, Gem de Ruyter van Steveninckkazerne*

# 70 years of armistice in Korea



Korean War Veterans Association of The Netherlands  
(VOKS)



*“Because of the calmness of the night, I could not suspect that a tragedy had occurred in the forecourt. At six o'clock I am brought out of my bed by S.M. Gielkens of the M.G.D.. A platoon of C Company has hit the Chinese, who were in ambush; there are dead and wounded. Only one man got out in one piece. By eight o'clock all were transported here. We count five dead and six wounded. Two more are missing. The platoon commander, 2nd Lt. Douna, is among the fallen. Among them are two boys from my group (General Muir). Needless to say, there is great dejection. We all stand facing the flags as the trumpet signal sounds, and see how, after first being hoisted to the top, they are lowered to half-staff. Such is the beginning of a Sunday in Korea.”*

This is an excerpt from the diary of pastor and army preacher Jan Cornelis Koppert that he recorded in Korea exactly 70 years ago. It is about “The Last Patrol”, in which five Dutch military servicemen were killed one day before the armistice.

In the 70 years since the end of the war, only a limited number of publications have appeared on the Dutch deployment in Korea.

The Korean War is known as ‘The Forgotten War’ because of the limited interest from the Dutch population and politicians in the armed conflict. The final phase of the Korean War has remained underexposed to this day. In the few weeks just before the armistice on July 27, 1953, the Chinese tried to gain as much ground as possible through so-called “truce line offensives” before a cease-fire was declared.

This issue of the VOX-V.O.K.S. focuses on that final phase of that war in the context of 70 years of armistice between North and South Korea. This is done through Pastor Koppert's diary, archival material, as well as through personal experiences of Korean War veterans.

Before zooming in on these, several pages are devoted to the context of the Korean War and prelude to this final phase of the conflict.

*Second lieutenant drs. Koen Monnickendam*



## The Netherlands gets involved in the Korean War

**Six months after the conflict in the Dutch East Indies ended, the Netherlands again became involved in a war in East Asia. On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces of Kim IL-sung, supported by the Soviet Union, invaded the South and rapidly conquered territory. The Americans managed to label the North Koreans as aggressors in the United Nations (UN) Security Council the same day due to the absence of the Soviet representative.**

This was the prelude to an international coalition of 16 countries that, under the UN flag but led by the United States (US), went to assist South Korea militarily in this first 'peace enforcing' UN mission. The US quickly took the lead to intervene, but felt it was important to add more countries to the coalition to fight against North Korea's communist advance. The Netherlands also became part of this coalition.

The Netherlands was not waiting for a new battleground in Asia, and many Dutch were war-weary after five years of occupation and the subsequent decolonization struggle in the Dutch East Indies. The country had to be rebuilt and Korea was for many Dutch people "too far away from my bed-show".

Besides, building up the military had priority and the money could be better spent on that. Nevertheless, under heavy American pressure, the Dutch government decided to contribute to the first UN mission in Korea. There were mainly practical considerations for the Dutch government to join in, such as preserving Marshall Aid, safeguarding allied solidarity in NATO, and protecting Dutch interests in Asia (especially American support for the preservation of Dutch New Guinea). Whereas at first the Netherlands thought it could get away with sending an ambulance or a destroyer, the American lobby made it clear that 'boots on the ground' were needed. A 'symbolic' contribution from the Netherlands was therefore much appreciated.

It was finally decided to participate in this first UN deployment by sending (in total) successively six naval ships, three Navy airmen, and a battalion of volunteers to Korea.

And so, on Sept. 25, 1950, the Netherlands Detachment United Nations (NDVN) was formed and attached to the Van Heutsz Regiment.



More than 1,600 men enlisted, but after selection, it became clear that the strength of the detachment was not sufficient for an infantry battalion.

The undermanned battalion was still augmented with Marines and defense personnel from Dutch New Guinea to 636 men but could only fill two instead of the three needed tirailleur companies.



*Prime Minister Drees inspects the NDVN at the Binnenhof in The Hague before departure for Korea, Oct. 24, 1950*

On October 24, 1950, the NDVN stood with the Dutch flag and UN flag at the Binnenhof in The Hague, and Prime Minister Willem Drees gave the following speech:

*“The action on Korea is a new fact in history. Thou go not because we desire strife or war, thou go to secure world peace all the better. You are also going to help restore justice instead of violence. I hope that you will leave knowing that you have a fine task to perform and that you will contribute to reviving the prosperity of Korea.”*

It is questionable whether this was Prime Minister Drees' main consideration for sending the volunteers east, but two days later, on October 26, 636 heavily packed soldiers embarked on the troop ship SS Zuiderkruis.

The battle seemed over by then, as the UN troops that were already there had pushed the North Koreans far back. So far that they were almost at the Chinese border. Mao Zedong's Communist China saw this as a threat and decided to send hundreds of thousands of Chinese “volunteers” to assist North Korea. This in turn pushed UN troops back to near the 38th parallel, which was the original dividing line between North and South Korea after the end of World War II.

The Van Heutsz Regiment entered this new phase of the Korean War and was incorporated into the 38th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division, called “Indianhead”.

The NDVN was under American command and was organized in the American way with the corresponding armament. This was a changeover, as the Dutch Army had been built after World War II according to the British model, with British weapons and equipment.

Several dozen Marines offered relief on the way to Korea. They had volunteered to go to Korea and had experience with American weapons. The Dutch battalion consisted of a motley crew of volunteers. Some servicemen went to Korea for ideological reasons, others for adventure or to escape their home situation, but many boys left for practical reasons to the East to be able to build a future with their earned salaries or the possibility of becoming professional soldiers upon their return.

The Dutch volunteers had mostly served in the Dutch East Indies and were often experienced veterans. Military experience of at least 12 months was an important requirement to be part of the first detachment. Still, fighting Indonesian guerrillas was somewhat different from the more conventional, traditional combat that raged in Korea. Thus, the Dutch faced frontal attacks and incoming artillery and mortar fire, which claimed many casualties.

This situation improved only slightly with the introduction of armor reserves in late 1952. The number of injuries due to shrapnel fell by about 75 percent after this. Climatic conditions were also of great influence. Korea was a “tjotten” country (hilly) and in winter the mercury easily dropped to minus thirty degrees Celsius.

This was particularly intense in the winter of 1950/1951 when the Dutch soldiers had not been provided with proper winter clothing. They received their baptism of fire in Korea shortly after arriving in winter conditions, and the second phase of the war was ushered in when the Chinese launched their spring offensive. The polygon newsreel reported this in January 1951 as follows:

*“A huge Chinese army force entered North Korea and the offensive of the allied armies not only stalled, but turned into a hasty retreat. The sudden Chinese intervention, which virtually changed the aspect with the battle with one blow, caused great turmoil in the capitals of the Western world.”*



*Dutch military faced heavy opposition from Chinese at Hoengsong and Wonju, February 1951*

The first months of 1951 were therefore characterized by chaos and a front that shifted frequently, causing many casualties. The NDVN suffered a major blow when Chinese troops managed to approach the command post at Hoengseong on the night of Feb. 12-13 and launched an attack. Seventeen Dutch were eventually killed in this attack, including battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Den Ouden and Reverend Timens. The battle continued, however, and in the following days the NDVN was ordered to capture Hill 325 (the number indicates the height) near Wonju. This height was essential for the defense of the city, and the Dutch managed to capture the hill after three attempts and heavy losses. In the last attack, even cooks and writers from the support company were used to take the hill. For these actions, therefore, the U.S. president awarded the Dutch battalion the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC).

Nearly 200 of the 636 soldiers were not deployable after this, and the NDVN was augmented in the following months by Dutch and South Korean soldiers. The latter group were called KATUSA's (Korean Augmentation To the United States Army Republic of Korean Soldiers), who would be an important part of the NDVN until the end of the war. The augmentation detachments consisted not only of Dutch volunteers, but also soldiers who had come from Suriname and Dutch New Guinea.

The Dutch cabinet decided as early as July 3, 1950, that the destroyer Hr.Ms. Evertsen should go to Korea to participate in the battle. It began shelling North Korean coastal artillery in late July 1950.

Beginning in 1951, the ship patrolled both the west and east coasts, where it provided artillery support to ground units. On April 18, 1951, the Evertsen was relieved by the Hr.Ms. Van Galen. From then on, the latter was tasked with conducting patrols on the west side of the Korean peninsula, near Incheon. The Van Galen sailed to the east coast in July, supporting the conduct of bombing raids on the industrial city of Wonsan. The NDVN was given a six-week rest after the intense initial period but fought a tough battle near the town of Inje from late May to early June 1951. The Dutch covered the retreat of UN troops after an attack but became separated from their vehicles and the rest of the regiment, followed by a two-day "hunger march" to get back to their own lines because not enough food was available.

Several weeks later, new heavy fighting followed around the NDVN positions due to Chinese attacks. During these actions in Inje, a total of 20 Dutch were killed and 36 soldiers were wounded and one soldier was made a prisoner of war.



*Dutch fallen after Inje, June 1951*

Around this time, the destroyer Van Galen patrolled Korean waters and returned to the east coast in October 1951. Here the Van Galen was involved in bombing raids on industrial complexes. The ship was also hit by a typhoon, forcing it to temporarily move to another location for maintenance.

In the summer of 1951, just before the departure of the first battalion, the Dutch were deployed to the *Punchbowl Valley* to launch an attack on Hill 1120.

After heavy resistance and a two-week battle, another 12 NDVN soldiers died. From then on, the front stabilized around the 38th parallel and entered the third phase of the war. The major shifts in the front were over, but the fighting continued unabated.

Intelligence gathering took on a more prominent role in this phase. Whereas initially the NDVN had to move quickly and often ad hoc due to major offensives, from July 1951 the Dutch stayed longer in the same location in positions at the front. The task was to gather intelligence on the enemy and process it into useful data for the regiment and the NDVN. Captured prisoners of war could be a source of intelligence in this regard, as they could pinpoint spots in the terrain that were of interest. One of the most important developments for the battalion was to know if the enemy had been or would be relieved. This often meant new troops with high morale, at full strength and eager to be deployed.

For the Dutch, it was mainly important to know whether the new enemies were Chinese or North Koreans. The latter group was led by Communist Party officials and was often, in the eyes of many Korea fighters, more aggressive and ruthless than the Chinese. There were also rumors that the North Koreans, unlike the Chinese, did not take prisoners.

After a few months behind the front, the Dutch battalion returned to action in October 1951 to capture a mountain range just above the 38th parallel. Because of the fierce resistance, the operation was nicknamed Heartbreak Ridge, and a Chinese counterattack on Oct. 9 and 10 killed 10 Dutchmen and two KATUSA's. In the weeks that followed, the Dutch battalion had to eliminate enemy opposition in this area and conduct nighttime ambush patrols against infiltrators.

The destroyer Hr.Ms. Van Galen patrolled near the so-called "Route Cigarette" in December 1951. There, the ship was in tow to strike enemy targets on islands and the North Korean mainland.

The Hr.Ms. Piet Hein relieved the Van Galen on Feb. 28, 1952, and became part of Task Group 95.1. The Royal Navy ship patrolled Korean waters throughout 1952 and carried out repeated attacks on enemy railroads.

In November 1952, something special happened in Korean waters. For the Piet Hein managed to become part of the Trainbusters club as she managed to destroy a North Korean train on the east coast from the sea.



*Destroyer Hr.Ms. Piet Hein in Korean waters, sometime in 1952*

After a rest period, NDVN was active from late December 1951 in the “Iron Triangle”, where a number of enemy-occupied heights had to be captured to improve their own front positions.

Battalion Commander Christan decided to act as aggressively as possible from then on to deter the enemy. To achieve this, patrols were run almost continuously, mostly with offensive assignments. This was very successful, but the deployment in the Iron Triangle cost eight Dutchmen their lives and 77 men were wounded.

The NDVN then went to guard prisoners of war on Koje-Do Island but returned to the Iron Triangle in August 1952. The time-tested technique of reconnaissance and ambush patrols continued again until late 1952 but cost the lives of 15 NDVN soldiers (including three KATUSA’s).



On Jan. 18, 1953, the Piet Hein was succeeded by the frigate Hr.Ms. Johan Maurits van Nassau. Several months later, this frigate was involved in an unfortunate incident. During an evacuation attempt, telegrapher Cornelis van Vliet was hit by South Korean troops and died on the spot from the effects of this own fire.

In the months that followed, the Johan Maurits van Nassau was given the task of patrolling and was engaged in this task until the armistice. After the armistice, patrols followed by the Navy ships Hr.Ms. Dubois and Hr.Ms. Van Zijll.

### **The Naval Air Service**

Three Navy aviators, Lieutenants Hagdorn, Van Crugten and Mulder, were assigned to 807 Squadron aboard the aircraft carrier HMS 'Ocean' of the British Royal Navy. They departed from Malta in April 1953 and arrived at Sasebo Japan on May 17, 1953. They were deployed with the Hawker Seafury FB 11, a single-seat fighter, for actions during the Korean War from May 17 to Nov. 1, 1953.



*Hawker Seafury FB 11*



## Once again to the frontlines

After a period in Divisional Reserve, the NDVN left for the front again starting Jan. 27, 1953. Things remained quiet until March, but the battalion faced a series of Chinese attacks from March 15 through March 18. The Nudera outpost was attacked up to four times by Chinese troops, but these attempts could be repelled by the Dutch. A total of nine NDVN personnel were killed in these four attacks.

## 'Stinky Hill'

So the NDVN had been fighting fierce battles in Korea for more than 2½ years, during which many Dutch Servicemen had been wounded or killed. On Jan. 8, 1953, Army Pastor Koppert arrived in Korea on the ship USS General C. H. Muir. He had arrived with the 14th Supplemental Detachment (14 AD), including Private First Class and Machine Gunner Arie Treffers, at the disembarkation port of the coastal city of Incheon. After a few weeks in Korea, Koppert left for Tokyo to run the Holland House in Japan for a few months and be there for the servicemen who were granted leave of absence and were allowed to escape the violence of war for a few days.

On May 12, Koppert again set foot on Korean soil to relieve fellow captain-army pastor Willigen van der Veen. From April 8 through July 12, 1953, the NDVN was once again in "rest" behind the front. It took up residence in the Betuwe Camp and stayed from May 3 in the Juliana Camp near the 38th parallel.

There was hardly any real "rest", however. The battalion was busy with training almost the entire period and had to participate in some heavy exercises of the Americans. Whereas during the Korean winters the mercury could drop to 35 degrees Celsius below zero, in the summers it could get scorching hot with temperatures easily 35 degrees above zero. Koppert wrote the following about this in his diary:

*"The B and C companies are in the field. When I stop by the doctors later in the afternoon to talk about a boy, one after another is brought in in a cat swoon. The heat has become unbearable, especially when you have to carry the heavy pimple up the tjotten. There are a lot of dropouts."*

These exercises were so violent that one soldier was killed and 11 wounded. Similarly, according to Koppert, things went wrong on Saturday, May 16, 1953:

*“During dinner I am called away to the M.G.D. Quickly there. There was an accident during the exercise of C Company, which cost one of the boys his life. He has just been brought in. We bring a last greeting to Jan van Steenis, aged 24, from Utrecht, Tulpstraat 19, married and father of two children, belonging to the Reformed Church. He had just been here two weeks. The flags go at half-mast and the first preparations for the message home are made.”*

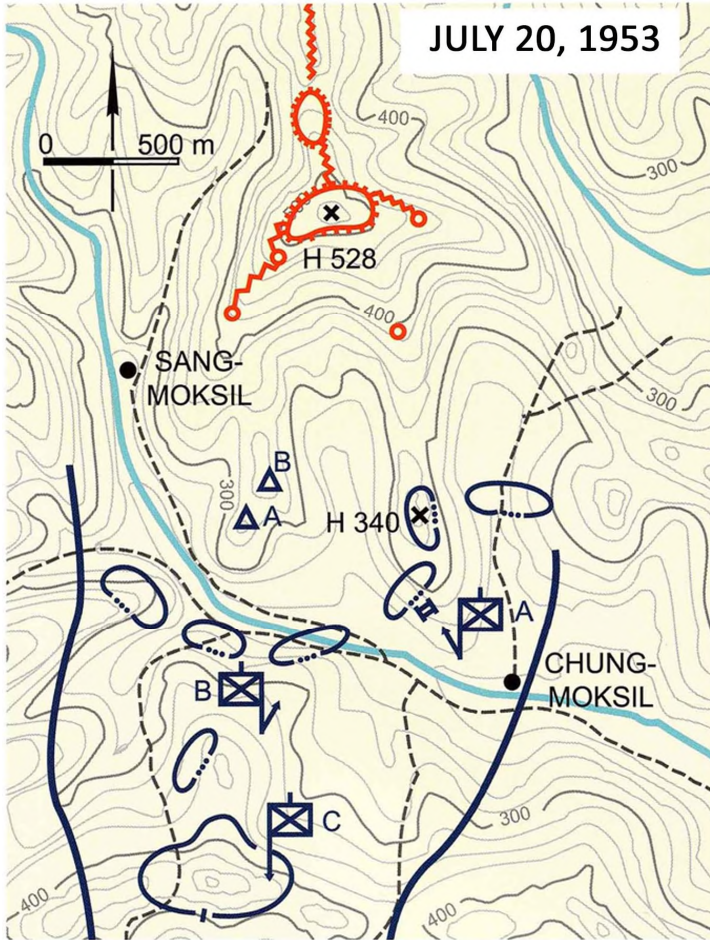
On July 13, 1953, the NDVN went back in line and faced the last major Chinese attacks of the Korean War. Through these so-called “truce line offensives”, the Chinese tried to gain as much ground as possible before a cease-fire was declared.



*Dutch positions at the 38th parallel, sometime in 1953*

The NDVN was sent to the valley of Chungmok-sil, where it was placed between two other American companies. The B Company was the only one in position on Hill 340, as the A and C Companies served as reserves.

Less than a kilometer away were the Chinese positions. On the night of July 17-18, the American company was attacked by a Chinese unit and suffered heavy losses. A Company was assigned to relieve the Americans and take position on the hill.



*Heuvel 340, July 1953*

By now temperatures had risen considerably and enemy artillery fire did not cease. On the night of July 19-20, the Chinese attacked the Dutch positions and A Company had to hold the line with three platoons. Koppert wrote the following about this in his diary:

*“The eve is quiet. later the puffing starts again. Something is going on on the line again. We notice it by the supporting fire, which the artillery provides. Later we hear that the A Company is facing a considerable attack. Ammunition is being brought in feverishly. The Superior passes under the fire to take command himself.*

*At one point the hill is completely surrounded by Chinese, but by dawn the us have regained complete control of the situation. Our losses are fortunately not too bad: three dead, including two ROK soldiers. The attack, which the Americans had to endure the day before yesterday at the same point, produced more losses, so much so that the company had to be replaced by our A Company.”*

Some of the following paragraphs meticulously describe the battle based on the battle reports detailed by Lieutenant Colonel Schaafsma in his book “THE DUTCH DETACHMENT UNITED NATIONS IN KOREA 1950 – 1954”. Francoise Appels, daughter of Korea veteran Appels, then chronicled them in her NDVN commemorative book.

Schaafsma wrote about the combat operations that the enemy artillery fire began around 10:20 p.m. on July 19. The 2nd Platoon of A Company was keeping watch at that time and two soldiers from a listening post reported to the command post (CP) of the 2nd Platoon.

The seriously wounded Private Hendrik Roetert had remained in the destroyed post because his buddies could not get him out. Help unfortunately came too late for Roetert and he died on the spot from his wounds.

The deputy PC, Sergeant First Class Klems, went through the trenches to inform the men of the situation. He ordered everyone to remain in high alert.

About 10 minutes later, Sergeant Klems asked for a second time light grenades and the PC moved to the north side of the position to be on lookout. A few minutes later the light grenades were fired and the front area was illuminated, making it easy to see the Chinese attackers. At that moment, the Chinese artillery shifted its fire to the positions of the A Company's CP and the other two platoons (1st and 3rd).

Around 10:43 p.m., the battalion commander, Superior Schilperoord, had a platoon of C Company ready to deploy. On Hill 340, the men of the 2nd platoon fought stubbornly to hold the line. The CC tried to help from the CP but could not properly approach the platoon due to a well-placed Chinese machine gun. Van Ardenne concluded that the 2nd platoon of A Company was surrounded by the Chinese and requested reinforcement and continuation of its own artillery fire.

At 11:35 p.m., the telephone and radio link from the A Company CP to the battalion CP (BCP) failed. The called-up platoon of C Company therefore had to advance to reinforce A Company.

By now it had become July 20, and around 00:23 a.m. Hill 340 appeared to be full of Chinese troops and A Company was surrounded by the enemy. At 00.46 the Company's own artillery came into action and strafed the positions around A Company. Sergeant Klems had requested this earlier, but his request, according to Klems, was not honored and he was ordered to withdraw. To this he responded as follows:

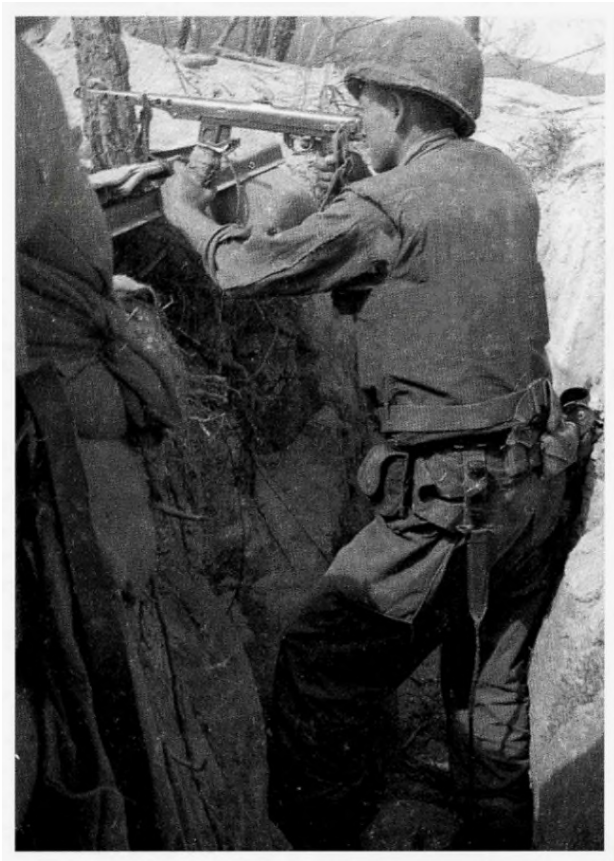
*“When we requested that fire, then they said; we had to come back...and I didn't want that...I'm not a military man for that, because then I have to leave all those fallen that were there, I have to leave them...no that never, because we got there together and we're going back together.”*

Its own fire finally came. It was perfectly aimed and continued intermittently for hours to repel the Chinese attackers. The Chinese units suffered heavy losses but managed to take cover in part in the abandoned Dutch bunkers. Thus, Sergeant Klems was prevented from joining his platoon from the CP. From the BCP, Superior Schilperoord no longer had a good view of the situation and decided to travel by jeep with some volunteers to the A Company CP. Schilperoord's jeep was shelled by mortar fire close to their objective and ended up in a ditch, so the journey had to be continued on foot.

At 02:45 CC van Ardenne reported that reinforcements from C Company had not yet arrived. Over an hour later, Sergeant Klems and a soldier with BC Schilperoord arrived at the A Company CP.

It then became clear that the 1st and 3rd platoons managed to hold their positions, but the 2nd platoon was struggling and still waiting for reinforcements

At 05:17 BC Schilperoord decided to form a platoon to launch a counterattack. He ordered close fire support from his own artillery to halt the action. The Chinese were overwhelmed and decided to retreat. In doing so, they left 19 dead and their wounded CC on Hill 340. So, there was heavy fighting on the night of July 19-20, but the hill remained in Allied hands. In the battle, in addition to Private Roetert, 25-year-old Private Cornelis Jongenelen was killed. In addition, six NDVN personnel were wounded and five soldiers suffered battle exhaustion due to the heavy fighting. Private Ferry Titalepta joined the NDVN as a rifle gunner in April 1953 and was also on Hill 340:



*Private Ferry Titalepta with a captured  
PPS-43 on Hill 340, July 1953*

Titalepta told the following : *“We were with killed and wounded servicemen in a command bunker and were attacked by a large group of Chinese, who had surrounded us. Sergeant Klems then requested artillery fire on our own positions after which the Chinese withdrew. After that we passed daily, it was quiet by now, a small river in which we also washed. At one point there was a woozy smell, which got worse and worse. Then we found a dead Chinese or Korean lying there with one hand in the water. In one of his pockets, we found a photo showing him with his parents.”*

Army preacher Koppert wrote on the day after the Chinese attack that the Dutch had taken a lot of booty and it was scorching hot:

*“In the afternoon, we drive to C Company. The heat is atrocious. A couple of C-Cie platoons are temporarily assigned to A-Cie. From the positions out I get a great view of the battlefield of the past night. Through the viewer I can get everything very close to me. The boys show me what they captured: a Chinese Bren gun and the rest of a soldier's equipment. All much more primitive than ours, but perhaps a little more effective. One carries a lot with him!*

*I meet boys who have not slept in four nights and must go on patrol again tonight. They almost fall over. My canteen with lemon brush is very quickly swallowed by their thirsty mouths. I have Willem drive up and down by jeep a few times to the collection point, down in the valley. At least then they won't have to walk.”*

Ferry Titalepta and Arie Treffers, like many other Korea-goers, did not have fond memories of the battle on Hill 340 and the days that followed. In fact, it took three days before the bodies on the hill could be cleared. This scorching heat quickly corroded the bodies of the American dead. Hill 340 was therefore soon renamed “Stinky Hill”.

Machine gunner Treffers said the following about this during an interview with the Dutch veterans magazine Checkpoint in 2013:

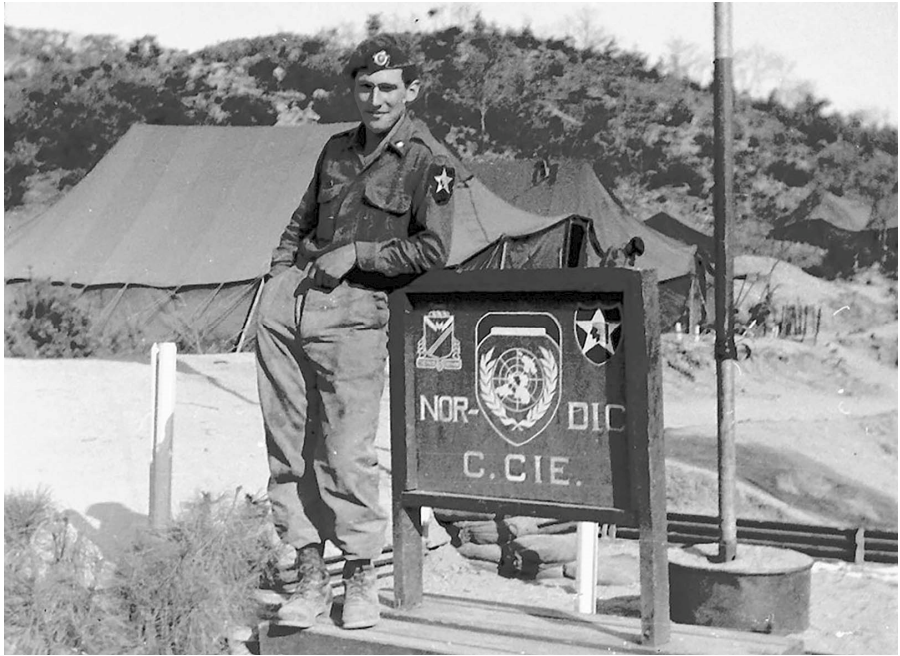
*“I was the first, with battalion commander Schilperoord, to arrive at the top. What we found there was terrible. All the fallen had been left lying; we found one more wounded Chinese. Somehow, I could withstand it. Maybe because I had seen some of it during World War II.*

*That Chinaman was attacked by an American lieutenant in front of my eyes. Because almost their entire platoon had been killed; they wanted revenge.”*



Private Treffers said he was ordered to recover the bodies, pack them up and carry them down. The American dead could then also be recovered:

*“It was horrible, all those killed. Somehow, I was able to resist, but there were colleagues who had a very hard time with it. We also had nothing those days on the hill, no food, no drink. That could not be delivered. After three days we were able to get food, which was a relief.”*



*Arie Treffers in Korea (Treffers family private collection)*

Still, Private Ferry Titalepta commented on the battle at Stinky Hill:

*“The stories are only about Stinky Hill (...) while there are so many other hills where fierce fighting took place. But you never hear about those. Those people are all dead.”*



## The Last Patrol

After the intense days at the front, peace seemed to return slightly. The Dutch used the time to fortify their bunkers and positions, but also to resume the daily routine. Thus, several patrols were again run, with a nice result being achieved on July 23:

*“There was a big ‘catch’ yesterday, with which we and the S2, the intelligence officer, are very happy. During the night patrols, the boys had already heard the cry for help from a Chinese once. They had not responded to it, suspecting an ambush. Yesterday, however, they went in and captured an officer who was wounded on one of his legs. At first, he mistook himself for a sergeant, but from his long boots - by which one recognizes Chinese officers - one could tell that he was fooling around. One has not yet found out, what his rank is, but one thinks of a captain. In any case, this gentleman has told many valuable information about his troops and what the plans are. We also know now that the Chinese have indeed carved out great bunkers in the mountains, in which they sit quietly all day and-with five of them as in a hotel room. Only in the evening do they come out. So, the daytime artillery fire does not bother them at all.”*

The NDVN men thus gained valuable information about their opponent in the rugged terrain at Hill 340. Still, the end of the armed struggle seemed to be in sight. Army preacher Koppert wrote in his diary that hopeful reports were coming from Panmunjon about a possible truce:

*“Reports from Panmunjon are again more hopeful. One now expects the signing of the ‘Cease fire’ within a few days General Clark spoke of “an early signing of the armistice.” The Communists seem to have resumed building up the tent where this ‘spectacle’ will take place. When Singman Rhee released the POWs, they had stopped doing so. In any case: we are curious.”*

A few days later, on July 24, it even seemed that the BC should travel to Panmunjon to be present at the signing of a truce agreement:

*“The commander will be invited any day now to come to Panmunjon to co-sign the armistice terms, The honor-guard, which includes two Dutchmen is already there. So you would say, it will now go ahead. But there's also a Syngman-Rhee! Who knows, what he still does.”*

But two days before the armistice, On the night of July 25-26, disaster struck for the NDVN. A platoon of C Company walked into a Chinese ambush during a patrol. In this latest NDVN action, five Dutchmen were killed and several seriously wounded. Two other NDVN personnel also went missing.

We now zoom in further on this latest patrol that began as a routine job, but ultimately ended fatally.

In the documentary “The Last Patrol” (released by Pia-Media, The Netherlands), several Korean War veterans recount their experiences during this event.

Private Treffers was ordered by Second Lieutenant Hendrik Douna to assemble a patrol on the afternoon of Saturday, July 25, 1953. He said:

*“Then I had to get some people together on behalf of the commander, because they were assigned to run the patrol. But while waking up my friends, who had also been in rope last night, I noticed a little bit of resistance, so my friend spoke some harsh words to me and I said, ‘yes, nothing can be done about it, so you have to show up at the commander’s office now, because it’s necessary.’”*

On Saturday evening around 10:00 p.m., a fourteen-man patrol, led by Lieutenant Douna, left for the forward area. As usual, the patrol walked a pre-arranged route and had to report at various points. Private de Buijzer was part of the patrol in question:

*“Walking a patrol that’s observing, of course, but the tension remains. The tension remains, because you never know what you’re going to encounter...you never know what you’re going to encounter...”*

2½ Hours later, another patrol from A Company encountered five Chinese in the forecourt. This was 100 meters from “Checkpoint 3” and this patrol fired on the Chinese who then fled northward.

Lieutenant Douna's patrol arrived at reporting point 3 at 01:13 and reported to the B Company CP. The latter gave the order to go into ambush, because the patrol of A Company had not yet returned to the positions and was still somewhere in the forecourt. The scout of the battalion patrol walked ahead in this pitch-dark and rainy night and gave the signal safe.

Lieutenant Douna's patrol then went into ambush for 15 minutes and was then ordered by the S3 to continue the route and go to reporting point 4. Less than a minute later, the CC, Captain Bert Schüssler, heard shots in the forecourt from the B Company CP. They were the rattling burpguns (PPS-43 machine guns) of the Chinese.

Over the radio, the CC heard Lieutenant Douna calling for light and fire. Captain Schüssler tried to contact the radio man, but he heard only a cry for help. After that, the line remained silent.

Private de Buijzer told the following about it:

*"I had a soldier with me, [...] Hampel from The Hague, he was lying next to me and we lay down for 10 minutes and I say to him; Hampel, do you hear that too? I say, that sounds like locking rifles...you know what I do Hampel, I go to the lieutenant Douna and I say what I heard, so I said to lieutenant Douna, I hear something there and it's not right.*

He said: *just go back again and pay close attention and if there is anything then attack immediately".*

Private Arie Treffers lay with his .30 machine gun at a point between the field fortifications and the patrol:

*"And then in the middle of the night about 1:30, that's when it happened. And suddenly there is a violent rattling and banging, the explosion of hand grenades and a single gunshot,"* said Corporal First Class C.W.

Trommelen, who was further up in a listening post. Private de Buijzer continued:

*"And now it starts...all hand grenades and shooting, because I don't know how many men they were, but there were more of them than we had [...] Private Hampel next to me, he got shot, I think in his forehead...he was dead, everyone panicked [...] Lieutenant Douna screaming; the phone, the phone!...that fight lasted maybe five minutes; I was badly wounded and covered in hand grenade shrapnel."*

The S3 immediately sent out a support patrol, but upon arrival their help was already too late. Due to enemy fire salvos, Lieutenant Hendrik Douna and his deputy Sergeant Jacobus Vreeswijk were killed directly in the battle. Private Martinus Beyerink, and soldiers first class Marius Hampel and Robert Samuels, also did not survive the Chinese attack.



*BAR gunner Marius Hampel ran more than 80 patrols, Korea 1953*

Some of the soldiers were still able to fire back, and a machine gun kept up the fight for another four minutes. Corporal Trommelen recounted:

*“And then it got quiet, then the people who were touched, who were still alive; they cried out for help...for blood and come and get us, but you can't do that when it's dark.”*

After contact, the Chinese unit ran through the shot-down Dutch patrol and took two prisoners of war. Three soldiers could be taken by the support patrol, but the five killed and four wounded soldiers remained all night before being picked up in the morning. Ferry Titalepta was part of the support patrol and has bad memories of the day:

*“And we, from the 3rd Platoon of A Company, were sent out for a support patrol. But by then everything had happened and it was too late. What we found was terrible. Five Dutchmen had been killed and there were severely wounded”.*

Private de Buijzer was one of those severely wounded and lay with his fallen comrades in the forecourt:

*"I fell unconscious, I kept recovering after half an hour and then I passed out again and again and again and again I recovered...and yet I still had with me of...I move, see if my legs were still on them, so I immediately moved in my shoes and I felt that there was movement in them so I think; luckily I still have those."*

A rescue attempt was made during the night to retrieve the wounded, but it was aborted after it became too dangerous. Three soldiers did not take notice, as they heard their wounded colleagues calling for help. Private Peter van Haalem was told:

*"[...] if you go to have a look I'll rip the stripes off your uniform. But I said, but I am going to look, because I clearly heard 'help' shouting so there are colleagues of mine in the forecourt".*

Sergeant Klems, Corporal Trommelen and Private Van Haalem decided at the crack of dawn to take the wounded out of the forecourt with another colleague. Corporal Trommelen:

*"There were four of us and we walked with our weapon in front of us...toward the enemy, toward the Chinese...the first one I found that was Sergeant Pluimen. He was terribly badly wounded and was crying softly. Well, I put my hand on his shoulder and he shook all over...I tried to reassure him of; "we are coming to get you".*

Sergeant Pluimen was the first to be removed from the forecourt. The recovery continued and another badly wounded soldier was found. That was Private de Buizer who was taken away by Van Haalem:

*"So I picked him up and then I'm walking with him, his legs were hanging from sinews, shaking around and I turn around and look right into a Chinese machine gun...the Chinese didn't fire a shot."*

De Buijzer was carted off, operated on twice in a field hospital and then carted off to Tokyo to undergo several more operations.

This episode left a deep impression on the Dutch soldiers of the NDVN. Army pastor Koppert wrote that the mood was “*very depressed*” by all that had taken place on the night of July 25-26:

*“Good friends have been snatched away.”*

A sentiment shared by many NDVNers to this day.

## **Armistice**

On the same day of the last patrol, Commander Schilperoord had to leave for Seoul and then travel to Panmunjon. The signing was an arduous process that had taken a total of two years. After General Eisenhower's inauguration as U.S. president in early 1953 and Stalin's death in March 1953, things moved forward. Stalin's successors were willing to negotiate an armistice and Eisenhower wanted to end the Korean War quickly because of the high cost. An agreement was soon reached to exchange prisoners of war and wounded soldiers.

During July 26, it became clear that the armistice would be signed at Panmunjon at 10 a.m. on July 27. Twelve hours later, at 10 p.m. the armistice went into effect. Army Pastor Koppert reported extensively on July 27, 1953, in his diary. Below are his experiences and reflections of the armistice:

*“At eight o'clock we drive off to the rear, after Willem presents himself at roll call. The new group, which has been on the road for weeks from Yokohama to here, arrived just last night. They will no longer see the line nor have patrols to run. For the time being, they will remain in the rear until we have moved into the new positions, which will have to be taken in accordance with the armistice terms. In fact, we must move two Kilometers backwards (as well as the Chinese) within 72 hours of the drawing. I am assigned a new driver, Cor den Hollander, for the time being. He will take me back to the line. The Rowe group is not leaving today, but tomorrow. So we postpone the farewell until tomorrow.*”

*Until 10 a.m. there is 100% alarm. Vigilance must not slacken for a moment. In the early evening we are once again "briefed" by Superior Knulst. At his request, the Father and I will each take charge of a company and await the Cease Fire there. So, I first take the jeep to the outpost, where the third platoon of B Company is located. We must go along a bad road and drive in sight of the enemy. We are the second jeep, which dares to drive down today. It's been all fluff around here today. Lots of fire from "snipers" and entrants. The Lt. Wijers had distressed moments.*

*I can drive back just before dark and do not feel safe again until I am on top of the resistance line near the American tanks. Here I meet Captain Schussler, who takes me to his command post. From there I call the other platoons and have a chat with the commanders.*

*Accompanied by the 1t. Kaja and a soldier, I continue to the second platoon, where I will wait in the command post for the moment of 'cease fire.'*

*While we are on our way, we receive word, that we must maintain the highest vigilance. Chinese have been spotted on the hill. So, the guns are locked and slowly we move forward. However, we see nothing and arrive safely in the C.P. From here I still call the groups, which are in the positions. One of the group commanders is my friend Nakken. He is very quiet.*

*By now it has become very quiet. The artillery, which at the beginning of the evening was still giving away numbers from both sides, is completely silent. Strange sensation to our ears. The boys in the racks loosen up after the excitement and start singing carnival songs through the phone. Gramophone music is transmitted from one of the bunkers. It is a modest demonstration of the joy, which is there. Reports are passed on, that the Troop ship Zuiderkruis is already on its way to pick up our battalion.*

*Then comes the moment, which the world has been hoping for, after several years of difficult negotiations and up and down battles. We get out of the bunker and are impressed by what we see. The full moon has just emerged over the hilltops. Very clearly, we can see the mighty mountain massifs, where the Chinese had settled.*

*It is perfectly quiet.*

*On the day before last night, the patrol of the 1Lt. Douna passed through the valley at this time, young fellows, who also had in their hearts the desire to be allowed to "bale out", to be home soon. In the pitch dark night, they were slaughtered by other young fellows, who did nothing but fulfill their mission, who also longed for peace."*

The armistice signing had lasted less than 10 minutes, but Commander Schilperoord had been told that both sides had to withdraw their troops to two kilometers below the front line within 72 hours to create a four-kilometer demilitarized zone. Despite the armistice, the Korean conflict was not over for the Dutch. The UN troops distrusted the Communists and feared an unexpected attack on their positions. The 2nd Infantry Division communicated the following statement toward their troops:

*"Do not make the mistake of assuming that just because the Communists finally agreed to an armistice, they also agreed to end their aggression against us and our allies."*

NDVN soldiers were expressly ordered not to contact the Chinese. Still, several soldiers have memories of these special days after the armistice. Ferry Titalepta said the following about them:

*"We lit bonfires and the enemy on the hill also lit bonfires. The next day they came down the hill and then we shook hands".*

The NDVN began the job of clearing its positions like the wind and by July 30 had moved into its new positions, which then had to be reinforced. On August 3, Superior Knulst took over command from BC Schilperoord. The two Dutch soldiers missing after the last patrol turned out to be in Chinese prisoner of war. On Aug. 25, Army pastor Koppert was able to retrieve the two from an exchange of prisoners at the border.





*Army Sergeant Koppert (l) with Sergeant Plant (m) and Private Van Leeuwen (r) who were released from Chinese captivity on Aug. 25, 1953*

Over the next few months, opportunities slowly came for rest and recuperation (R&R) in Seoul or the Holland House in Tokyo. There was also time to reflect on the fallen comrades and honor them at commemorations at the Field of Honor in Pusan. Lest we forget!

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