

TOESPRAAK MINISTER HYEJEONG AHN NAMENS DE REPUBLIC KOREA

Dear President Mr. Gommers of the VOKS, Commander De Boer of the Regiment Van Heutsz, board members of the VOKS, representatives of the Regiment Van Heutsz, and last but not least, the distinguished Korean War veterans,

Good morning.

Today, I am very much honored to pay tribute here this year. Please understand that the ambassador was unable to attend this event due to his busy schedule and that he sincerely regrets this situation.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude, as the Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, to all those who have contributed to the freedom and democracy of the Republic of Korea.

As we are well aware, the Netherlands was one of the first countries under the UN flag that came to the aid of Korea. When the Korean War broke out in 1950, thousands of young Dutch soldiers came to South Korea under the flag of the United Nations to defend peace and democracy against the invasion by North Korea.

For Korea, one honorary figure of the Regiment Van Heutsz is Colonel Marinus den Ouden.

He is a Korean War Hero who died in the Battle of Hoengseong during the War.

Not only his, but also many Dutch soldiers' sacrifices with other UN forces laid a solid foundation for the freedom, democracy, and prosperity of the Republic of Korea. Our people remember the noble sacrifice and dedication of Dutch veterans.

Thanks to them, the Republic of Korea has been able to achieve the prosperity enjoyed today.

In 1950, Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world. However, today, Korea has finally become one of the largest economic countries of all. Moreover, the long-standing relationship between our two countries is more vital than ever in various fields such as renewable energy, solar and wind energy, hydrogen economy, smart agriculture, semiconductors, and digital economy.

I hope we will continue to work together to shape an open and inclusive international order with our mutual interests as a firm basis. Once again, we thank you sincerely from our hearts for your sacrifices and commitment.

We will remember you forever. Thank you.