

# **Korea**

# **Canada's Forgotten War**

**Produced by:**  
**H. Clifford Chadderton**

**For:**  
**The War Amps of Canada**

**Duration: 27 minutes, 30 seconds**

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Voice of Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent:

*“Fellow Canadians, the Government has authorized the recruitment of an additional army brigade which is beginning on Wednesday. This brigade will be known as the Canadian Army Special Force. This brigade will be available for service in Korea as part of the United Nations forces. The United Nations action in Korea is not war. It is police action intended to prevent war.”*

Voice of Korea Veterans Association veteran Ed Mastronardi:

*“Some people don’t even call it a war. But by gosh, you had nearly two million soldiers on both sides. Roughly a million on each side facing each other. That’s not action. That’s a war!”*

**H.C. Chadderton:** I’m Cliff Chadderton of The War Amps, and with me is Matthew Iserhoff, who is a member of our CHAMP Program. This is another in The War Amps *NEVER AGAIN!* series. This time it's about Korea, and we call the film “The Forgotten War.”

Matthew and I have been going through the War Museum. We had a pretty good look at the World War I exhibit. We also had a pretty good look at the World War II exhibit.

Let’s see what you remember now. The Battle of Vimy Ridge; what war was that?

**Matthew Iserhoff:** World War I.

**H.C. Chadderton:** What about Passchendaele? What war was that?

**Matthew Iserhoff:** World War I.

**H.C. Chadderton:** Twenty years later, the Canadians were fighting again in Europe. This was called World War II. Do you remember the fighting in Sicily and Italy? What war was that?

**Matthew Iserhoff:** World War II.

**H.C. Chadderton:** Right. There was the landing in Normandy on D-Day. What war was that?

**Matthew Iserhoff:** World War II.

**H.C. Chadderton:** Now I want to tell you something. It’s very interesting for me, having been a combat soldier in World War II, to realize that when that was over in 1945, none of us ever thought, in our lifetime, that Canada would be at war again. And yet, five years later, there was another

war and Canadians were there. Now that war was in a place called Korea. Do you know where that is?

**Matthew Iserhoff:** No.

**H.C. Chadderton:** You don't know where Korea is?

**Matthew Iserhoff:** No.

**H.C. Chadderton:** Well, Korea is near Japan. It's in the Far East, a long way from here. What were the Canadians doing there? They were there as part of the United Nations forces and we'll be telling you a little bit more about that later.

**H.C. Chadderton:** But I think it must bother all of us that Canadians know about the famous names like Vimy Ridge. They know about Passchendaele. They know about the Battle of Ortona. They know about Dieppe. But when you come to place names like Kapyong, they have no idea.

That's why we call this film "The Forgotten War." And if you want to learn something about the Korean War, there are probably two ways to do it. One of them is to read books and come to exhibits like this where we're standing, and second is to hear stories from the soldiers who actually fought in that war. And that also will be part of our Korean War film. All ready to go? All right, let's watch some film footage.

A contingent of Canada's Korean War veterans return to Korea every year to pay tribute to the soldiers who died in this far away land. Yet the sacrifices these men and their fallen comrades made four decades ago have gone largely unrecognized in their own country.

Canada, in 1950, for most Canadians, war was the furthest thing from their minds. The big dream was to have a family, maybe a Chevy, and a new home in the suburbs.

The first radio reports about the invasion of South Korea reached Canadians on a hot summer's day in June. A war had broken out in a country they knew very little about. Odd-sounding names like Kapyong, Chai-li and Hill 227 would soon enough become familiar.

Korea is a mountainous peninsula about twice the size of Newfoundland. It joins the Asian mainland, immediately south of China, and the Soviet Union. Across the Korea Strait is Japan.

At the end of the Second World War, Korea, once occupied by Japan, was divided in half at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. South of that line the Republic of Korea was created, backed by the Americans. To the north, the

Communist People's Republic of Korea was established under the supervision of the Soviet Union.

The 38<sup>th</sup> parallel hardened into a permanent boundary. But trouble was brewing. Each side claimed the right to rule all of Korea.

It is 4:00 a.m., June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1950. Artillery shattered the silence of what was known ironically as "the land of the morning calm." An estimated 90,000 North Koreans charged across the parallel, supported by Soviet T-34 tanks, aircraft and big guns.

South Korea could offer no resistance. Although the population of the agricultural south was twice as large, its army was small and poorly equipped. Four days later, the North Koreans captured the south capital city of Seoul.

The invasion marked the first open act of aggression since the United Nations was established in 1946. The U.N. Security Council called upon member nations to, and I'm quoting, "furnish such assistance to the Republic Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security." End of quote. This was literally a declaration of war on North Korea.

A United Nations Command was established under U.S. General Douglas MacArthur. A collective force of 16 nations would eventually come to the defence of South Korea, including Canada.

U.S. President Harry Truman was the first to send support, in the form of air and naval units. When the North Korean advance showed no sign of slowing down, American ground troops were dispatched from occupation duties in Japan. One million U.S. troops would follow.

Here in Canada, the debate as to what exactly Canada's contribution in Korea might be had been boiling over following the United Nations' declaration. For Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent and his Liberal Government, the decision did not come easily.

Firstly, the Canadian Armed Forces had been reduced to peacetime strength after World War II. Any dispatch of troops would seriously weaken our home defence. Secondly, the Far East was not an area of special interest to Canadians.

In July, a month after the Communist invasion, the Royal Canadian Navy sent three destroyers to Korean waters. The Royal Canadian Air Force assigned a squadron for transport duties.

As the situation in Korea grew worse, the media across Canada urged the Government to do more. On August 7<sup>th</sup>, Prime Minister St.

Laurent went on the national CBC radio network and announced the creation of the Canadian Army Special Force.

**Voice of Louis St. Laurent:**

*“This brigade will be known as the Canadian Army Special Force and it will be specially trained and equipped to be available for use in carrying out Canada's obligations under the United Nations charter. The infantry units will be organized as second battalions of the Royal Canadian Regiment, the Princess Patricia's and the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment. The association of the new brigade with these historic regiments will have numerous advantages.*

*The army wants young men, physically fit, mentally alert, single or married, and particularly just as many veterans of the Second World War as possible.”*

**H.C. Chadderton:**

Line ups quickly formed outside depots from St. John to Victoria.

Brigadier John Rockingham left his civilian executive job to command the Special Force. He was chosen for his outstanding record as a Brigade Commander in North-West Europe in World War II.

The Canadians arrived in Fort Lewis, Washington, in November of 1950, for training. The Special Force then became known as the 25<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade.

Meanwhile, the military situation in Korea changed dramatically. The U.N. forces, trapped in the south eastern Pusan Perimeter, were being pushed back to the sea.

To relieve this desperate situation, General MacArthur led a daring amphibious assault at Inchon on September 15<sup>th</sup>. The U.S. 10<sup>th</sup> Corps invaded the sea port area, overcame enemy resistance and went on to re-take the capital city of Seoul. By October, the U.N. forces were driving the shattered enemy back across the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

For a time, it seemed as though the Canadians would not even get to Korea before the war ended.

The Government decided to dispatch one battalion immediately as a “token force” probably to ensure that, if peace was declared, Canada's flag would wave alongside those of the other U.N. troops.

November 25<sup>th</sup>, 1950, only four days after they arrived in Fort Lewis, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry sailed for Korea. Their commander was Colonel Jim Stone.

The Patricia's were not ready for action. There had been no time for advanced training. The plan was to complete it in Korea. Little did the Pats know that the war would take a turn for the worse by the time they arrived.

Ray Lapointe was with the Advance Party that landed in Pusan to unload supplies and prepare for the battalion's arrival. Lapointe remembers a Pusan very different from what it is today.

**Ray Lapointe:**

My first impressions were the rocks jutting out of the sea, the smell that made us decide maybe not to have breakfast that morning. And the closer in we came the stronger the smell. It came from the rice paddies and the night soil. It was used as fertilizer.

The city you see here today, was not in existence at that time. The city was flooded with refugees who were coming in on a continual basis from the north by every means available. They were begging for food, money, anything at all. It was a dog eat dog existence.

**H.C. Chadderton:**

The Patricia's docked at Pusan's Pier Two on December 18, 1950. They were greeted by an American band that played the same tune over and over, every time a troop ship arrived. In this absurd atmosphere, the Canadians learned what they were really up against in this war.

During the previous two months, hundreds of thousands of Chinese Communist forces had entered the fight and crossed the Yalu River, into North Korea, under cover of darkness. The U.N. Command was taken completely by surprise. It had failed to take seriously repeated warnings from the Chinese that they would intervene if the U.N. forces got too close to their border.

The Chinese and North Koreans pushed the U.N. troops back to positions along the Imjin, north of Seoul.

Suddenly, the urgent matter became how fast the Canadians could be thrown into action. The Americans wanted the Patricia's to take three days to unpack and then move to the front.

Colonel Stone, however, was determined not to send his troops into battle until they were ready and he had written support from the Canadian Government to back him up. No one wanted a repeat of the horrors faced by the Canadians in Hong Kong in 1941.

The Korean terrain was different from anything Canadians had fought on in previous wars. The landscape consisted of one mountain range after another, separated by deep valleys and rice paddies.

The Patricia's began an intensive period of training at Miryang, near Taegu, as grim news continued to arrive from the front.

Two months later, the Patricia's set out through guerrilla infested valleys and treacherous mountain passes on their way north-east. They were to meet up with the 27<sup>th</sup> British Commonwealth Infantry Brigade. From this point they would commence their advance towards the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

The weather was bitterly cold. Dead civilians lay among the ruins of bombed out villages. Those who survived, sick and without shelter, watched the Canadians as they passed.

The monotony of the hills, that is what veterans remember most about Korea. It was difficult for them to know the exact location of their positions because one hill looked the same as the others. The Canadians simply identified them as Hill 355 or Hill 162, according to their height on the military maps. The strategy was to take the high ground.

**Wayne Mitchell:**

Our fighting, more or less, was done mostly on the mountains. If you have control of the mountains on each side you can pretty well control the valley. And it made it much harder to advance because you're constantly climbing up and down, but I think in the long run it saved us from having many, many more casualties than we did have.

**H.C. Chadderton:**

For the Canadians, the grim hardship of war was evident all too quickly. They lived 24 hours a day, seven days a week in hastily dug trenches on mountains that were hard enough to climb, let alone fight over.

**Wayne Mitchell:**

After a little while, we realized that those people we were fighting were in their country. They knew it, they could live on it and we were strange to it. Yes, we had a few boys from B.C. who had seen the mountains, but we had a tremendous amount of men like myself. We were farm boys off the Prairies and climbing mountains we didn't know anything about.

At the beginning it was very rough and very hard. When you're packing all your gear, you had to carry your rations. You had to carry extra ammunition up there. At one time I was packing with my Bren gun approximately 90 pounds and I only weighed 136.

**H.C. Chadderton:**

The tough part of their job was facing the unknown.

**Wayne Mitchell:**

You had to go up and clear the hill off and it might have been just one or two snipers up in there and sometimes there would be more. But we never knew; it was very hard to tell numbers. And this would go

on and on and on, up one hill and down the next, and up and down, up and down. Very seldom, that I can remember, where we were allowed to pitch camp at night in the valley. It was always up another hill, dig a bit of a hole and stay on the mountain.

**H.C. Chadderton:**

The U.N. advance continued, forcing the Chinese and North Koreans to withdraw. By mid-April, almost the entire U.N. front lay north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Fierce fighting on Hills 444 and 532 had cost the Patricia's 10 killed and 29 wounded. The exhausted battalion went into reserve north of the village of Kapyong. An amazing turn of events would follow in the next few days that would cut their rest period short.

Meanwhile, controversy brewed in the U.N. Command. General MacArthur pressed for an all-out effort to achieve victory, at the risk of open war with Communist China. President Truman disagreed. He favoured military stabilization with the hope that U.N. negotiations would end the conflict. MacArthur was relieved of his command and replaced by American General Matthew Ridgeway.

The Canadian monument at Kapyong, and a memorial to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry; it was just north of here, in April 1951, that the Patricia's engaged in one of the most important Canadian battles in the Korean War.

Every April, Canadian veterans are joined by their Commonwealth comrades to pay tribute to the Patricia's, whose brave stand at Kapyong earned the battalion the U.S. Presidential Citation.

Kapyong is a quiet farming village in central Korea, now a two-hour drive north-east from Seoul. It looks much the same as it did then; the nearby winding Kapyong River, the rice paddies, the dirt roads. Many of the same farmers still live there.

The Patricia's were in reserve in the valley of the Kapyong River near its junction with the Pukhan River. To the north, the wide valley narrowed and curved, and was surrounded by hills. From these hills, the exits and entrances to the valley could be controlled. Dominating the whole area was a feature west of the Kapyong River known to Canadians as Hill 677.

Twenty-one year old Private Curt Hayes of Dunbar, Ontario, took advantage of the brief rest period to write a letter to his sister in Ottawa. It was the last letter his family would ever receive from him.

**Voice of Private Curt Hayes:**

*Dear Maddy, received your letter the other day. God was I ever glad to hear from you. You don't know how happy it makes me to know that you still miss me. As for things over here, we are just waiting for word to go over the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, and believe me Maddy, I sure as hell don't want to go over it because, if we do, we'll never get home. It will take years because there are too many of them. Oh, yes, did you get any pictures done of yourself and Ginny Lee? Sure hope so as I like to see how my girl is. You know how much I think of her, don't you? Please write soon. Your loving brother, Curt.*

**H.C. Chadderton:**

Just before midnight, April 22, 1951, less than a week after the Patricia's went into reserve, a renewed and massive Chinese offensive began 20 miles to the north. Defending South Korean troops were forced to flee southwards down the Kapyong Valley.

The following morning, Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Colonel Stone and his battalion were ordered to take up positions on Hill 677. Against the flow of retreating South Korean soldiers, the Canadians moved up.

By night fall, they began digging their trenches. The battalion covered the north face of Hill 677. The Kapyong valley was the direct invasion route to the South Korean capital. The Canadians were to stop the Chinese and hold the withdrawal route open so that the South Korean Division could escape.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Australian Regiment dug in on Hill 504, across the river on the east side. Behind and to the south of the Patricia's was the British 1<sup>st</sup> Middlesex Regiment.

Shortly after 10 p.m., the battle of Kapyong began. The Chinese, who had been right on the heels of the fleeing Koreans, attacked the Australians first. From their higher vantage point across the valley, the Patricia's watched and waited. By next morning, the Australians were forced to withdraw. The Patricia's were alone now, their position exposed to enemy attack.

Wayne Mitchell was a 19-year-old Bren gunner with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry. He remembers how different the hills looked back then, stripped bare of trees, just scrub brush and rock. For him, those two nights on Hill 677 seemed like an eternity.

**Wayne Mitchell:**

As we stand here we're actually looking at the Hill of Kapyong from the view of the enemy. I can remember on the evening on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Company Commander, Major Lilley, had come up to our forward position which was 6 Platoon Baker Company and he says, "We're here on our own now so get over there and dig in deeply, we don't have much time."

- H.C. Chadderton:** Mitchell and the others in “B” Company moved their forward position farther south to a location where they could observe the enemy build up across the valley of the Kapyong, near the village of Naeochon.
- Wayne Mitchell:** You’d seen earlier, you’d seen the enemy moving up from the valley, you’d seen them coming across, thousands of them actually. And then at night a mortar shell comes in, they know where you’re at. It explodes and the bugles start and everybody’s yelling “here they come.” You’re trying to hold off on firing so you can see something which is pretty hard but hopefully you’ll get close enough.
- H.C. Chadderton:** The Chinese moved forward in waves through the darkness. Some would fall, but there were others who came on. One minute the Canadians were firing at shadows in the brush in front. The next moment they were fending off bayonet attacks from the rear. As the Canadians remembered it, the air was filled with machine gun chatter, screams, shouted warnings, and, yes, even prayers.
- Wayne Mitchell:** Then the mortars just keep coming in, the fighting goes on. They get in, they get in very, very close to us and I remember Don Morrow was in the slit trench on my right, he took a piece of mortar through the face.
- I don’t have the memory of fear. I have a memory of being cornered and a feeling that we have to keep going.
- Lieutenant Ross had to call in the section that was holding over to our left of platoon headquarters and two of them came up. They were dragging their Corporal with them. Corporal Evans. He had taken a grenade in the head and was scalp less; the top of his head was off. So we dragged him into the platoon trench and he asked for a cigarette. That was the last thing he asked for.
- It was getting 2 or 3:00 o'clock in the morning. I’m yelling for more mags all the time because the boys that are down in front of me and over on my left and right were calling for cover fire, and you’re trying to do the best you can with that, and it just seemed time, I don’t know, you ask me time, time don’t mean anything.
- H.C. Chadderton:** “B” Company was partially overrun and short of ammunition. The order came to pull back to the main company position where they could re-organize into a counter-attack force. In the following confusion, several Canadians were wounded. One of them was Curt Hayes, the young private from Ontario.
- Wayne Mitchell:** That left me with Hayes. And at that time I was all by myself with Hayes. I got him onto my arm and started backing down. Just at that

time the Chinese came over the crest. I realized that one of the Chinamen had a burp gun, and he was blowing it right at me and he got Hayes through the throat and chest while I had him in my arms.

**H.C. Chadderton:**

Curt Hayes took his last breath on Hill 677. Mitchell himself was lucky to survive the night. Wounded twice and losing blood, he stayed at his post. Finally, after it was safe to do so, an American helicopter flew him out. Later, Private Wayne Mitchell was awarded the coveted Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Meanwhile, "D" Company, in its exposed position to the north-west, was attacked by the enemy in large numbers from two sides. The company commander called for supporting fire on top of his own position and succeeded in stemming the enemy advance. The attacks that continued through the night were driven off by Canadian artillery fire.

By morning, April 25<sup>th</sup>, the Battle of Kapyong was over. From their lonely stand on Hill 677, the Patricia's had managed to hold their positions and re-open the supply route despite tremendous odds. The Canadian action at Kapyong stopped the Chinese advance in this sector of the front for the rest of the war.

During those two days and nights of bitter fighting, 10 Canadians died. Twenty-three suffered serious injuries.

Allan Hayes made the trip to Korea to visit for the first time the grave of his brother Curt, who died in the arms of Wayne Mitchell at Kapyong. He is buried here at the United Nations Cemetery in Pusan alongside his fellow Canadians and soldiers from the other nations that sacrificed their young men for the freedom of South Korea.

Allan was 15 when he heard the tragic news about his brother.

**Allan Hayes:**

When I came home from school, it was in the afternoon around 4 o'clock. My mother called us in and I was getting ready actually to go out on a paper route, and delivering magazines. And she called us in; my other brother, my other sister, and she said that she received a telegram that our brother Curt was killed over in Korea.

At that time, being very close to my brother like I was, I left the house and got on my bike and I started delivering my magazines. I had to go 10 miles to another town up around Morrisburg. I was very upset when I heard the news. I stayed away most of the day. I didn't come back until late that night. I'm still not over it. Curt and I were very close. Every where he went I went, if it was possible.

- Wayne Mitchell:** Hayes, it's sad. The whole platoon, the whole company felt bad about Hayes. He'd just got a message that the woman he'd been living with prior to coming overseas had given birth to twins. That came in three or four days prior to the battle. We were all kidding and joking about how he was a papa. But that's the way things go. He never got to see them, nor they to see him.
- H.C. Chadderton:** Less than two weeks after the Battle of Kapyong, the remainder of the 25<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Brigade arrived in Korea from Fort Lewis to join the Princess Patricia's in the U.N. forces' third advance to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.
- War was not new to 25 year-old Ed Mastronardi. He was a sniper and Intelligence Officer with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment. He had seen action in the North Atlantic while serving with the Navy in World War Two.
- Ed Mastronardi:** Well, we got rid of our sea legs. And then we did a lot of hill work. We'd go up in the hills that surround Pusan, and they would have company attacks to get the chaps sharpened up, and get their condition back. Then we ordered up.
- H.C. Chadderton:** The 25<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which became part of the newly formed 1<sup>st</sup> Commonwealth Division, moved to an area north-east of Uijongbu. The aim of the United Nations forces was not to go on the offensive but only to force the enemy back behind the mountain barriers along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.
- The Royal Canadian Regiment's first major fight took place near the village of Chai-li. Dominating this whole area was Hill 467. The plan for Lieutenant-Colonel Bob Keane's battalion was for "A" Company to seize the village up north. "B" Company would secure the left flank by occupying Hill 162 to the west. "C" Company would capture Hill 269. "D" Company's mission was the main assault on Hill 467 itself. The operation began early in the morning of May 30 in a driving rainstorm. Ed Mastronardi was with the "D" Company.
- Ed Mastronardi:** It was a real shoot-out. The Chinese decided to defend that in strength. All we saw were Chinese and they were coming up by the hundreds in that hill. By noon it was full engagement. We knew we were in a war.
- H.C. Chadderton:** "A", "B," and "C" Companies managed to reach their objectives, but "D" Company met strong resistance on Hill 467. The men scrambled their way up the slippery incline. They moved in crouched positions, slid on their bellies, or darted from one overhang to the next.

The Canadians never reached the top. Out of camouflaged bunkers and slit trenches that criss-crossed the top of the hill, a barrage of enemy machine gun and mortar fire poured down on them.

**Ed Mastronardi:** A lot of our men were veterans. They were young veterans, but like myself, they were veterans of the Second War. So they didn't panic and they gave the controlling influence on the younger fellows, 18, 19, and 20 year Olds, who hadn't had Second World War experience.

**H.C. Chadderton:** Later in the day, the Chinese completely surrounded Company "A" in Chai-li. Meanwhile "C" Company, located on Hill 269 between the two points, was forced to watch the debacle, unable to help. Poor visibility made it difficult to identify troops in the valley and Hill 467 was too far for their gun-fire to reach the enemy.

**Ed Mastronardi:** The maps we were using were outdated Japanese maps. The scale was much different than their maps – much different than the map we were accustomed to dealing with. We found the distances were much greater than we anticipated and that was very difficult when you're fighting in the hills and you get too far from your other troops, you don't get very good support. We had a lot to learn and we learned it all the hard way, but we learned it.

**H.C. Chadderton:** Hill 467 was vital to the Chinese supply lines and their communications system across the Chorwon Plain. The Chinese put up such stiff resistance, that Brigadier Rockingham ordered the Canadians to withdraw to their start position. The battle ended in a stalemate, at a cost to the RCRs of six men killed, 25 wounded.

**Ed Mastronardi:** A number of the people killed and wounded, not only there but later, they were killed and wounded trying to help other people. Sacrificing themselves to quite a degree. There was a lot of that buddy system, worrying about the other guy.

**H.C. Chadderton:** While the infantry divisions fought in the hills, the Royal Canadian Engineers kept the men and equipment moving through the mountainous, and often muddy, terrain.

**Azade Robichaud:** With the engineers, the time I went out there, I worked lots on the roads, maintaining the main supply route, rebuilding roads and built some new roads and made sure they were in good shape at all times. We built a lot of trenches on the front line too.

**Jean-Paul St-Aubin:** The Pioneers, we were like engineers but within the battalion, if ever there was a culvert to be built or a road to be fixed, lay mines, clear off mine fields, booby traps. That was the job for the Pioneers.

- H.C. Chadderton:** During the summer of 1951, the Canadians were assigned the dangerous task of patrolling no-man's land. This was an area north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel along the Imjin River and the Chorwon Plain. The troops were in a vulnerable position because the galleys and valleys provided easy access for enemy infiltration. The Canadians had to be constantly on the alert.
- Ed Mastronardi:** When we were stationed at a place called Chorion, and we were doing a lot of advanced contact and that's what patrolling is about, you want to find out the disposition of the enemy, what their strength is and, if possible, get a prisoner to find out just what unit it is. It was really to keep them off balance to show them we could dominate no-man's land.
- In preparation, we'd remove anything that could identify us in case we got hit or picked up. We camouflaged ourselves. Usually in the winter time we wore whites, otherwise it was balaclavas and darkened faces. We tried to keep our weapons as quiet as possible and made sure no one had any stomach troubles. There's nothing more identifiable than human noises.
- You always went out one route and came back another, in single file. You had a getaway man in case things really went wrong and he stayed further behind for two reasons, to make sure you weren't being trailed and, secondly, if you really got hit, he was to go back and inform what happened, where you were.
- H.C. Chadderton:** A patrol would move silently down into a valley under cover of darkness and follow along the dykes between rice paddies. Other times, a patrol would climb 450 metres up hill. The soldiers moved slowly, checking for mines and booby traps along the way, praying they would return safely at the end of the night.
- Ed Mastronardi:** At first, everything looks like an enemy. I've had new chaps coming up thinking that turkeys gobbling were Chinese signalling to one another, and getting everything all up in the air. You soon get over those things.
- The problem is getting casualties back. That is the thing you fear the most because you don't have many men. It takes four men to bring one man out. Unless you carry him on your back and that is hard.
- H.C. Chadderton:** In the fall of 1951, the war had been going on for some 16 months. The Chinese again took the offensive. It was during one of these that Mastronardi was awarded the Military Cross.
- He was manning an outpost with his platoon on a ridge 600 yards from the main line of resistance and 800 yards from the enemy. By

evening, his 28 men were under siege by 600 Chinese soldiers. The Canadians were completely surrounded.

**Ed Mastronardi:**

There was fantastic heroism in some of my men. A man, a reinforcement, I barely knew his name. Bren guns were jamming, they were getting so hot and he was going through the fire, picking up jammed Bren guns, bringing them back to my position, stripping them, cleaning them with gasoline, reassembling them, lubricating them and running them back to the various positions.

One of my men jumped on the back of one of the Chinese and drove him to the ground and killed him that way.

**H.C. Chadderton:**

Three o'clock the next morning. The RCRs had fought off three major assaults. They were out of grenades and short of ammunition. Half of Mastronardi's platoon was down in casualties.

**Ed Mastronardi:**

We got the wounded in a group as we were getting ourselves to the blown wire, a Chinese set up a machine gun. They were going to shoot, they weren't going to shoot at us, they were going to shoot at the wounded, so the two chaps and I took a charge at them and got rid of the machine gun and then we kept firing, move back, fire, move back, fire, keeping them at bay until we got back to the position. We brought out everybody except one dead man.

**H.C. Chadderton:**

By November 22, 1951, the three Canadian infantry battalions had moved forward to a front of seven kilometres extending north-east from the Samichon River.

That afternoon, the Chinese began an intensive bombardment of Hill 355 which was being held by the Americans. The attack spread to "D" Company of Quebec's Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, the famous Vandoos. They were dug in between Hill 355 and Hill 227 to the east.

Lieutenant-Colonel Jacques Dextraze and his men fought back in freezing cold temperatures and heavy snow. The following morning, the snow melted. The area became a muddy morass, making it difficult for the engineers to keep the roads open for the troops.

The Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> held its ground but the U.S. positions on Hills 355 and 227 fell to enemy hands. The Canadians were now exposed on both flanks. The fighting continued through the next day as Hill 355 changed hands back and forth between the Americans and the Chinese.

As the Chinese soldiers streamed down Hill 227 towards them, the Vandoos called for heavy artillery fire. When this was not enough to stop the enemy, the Vandoos engaged in hand to hand combat. They

also directed fire on Chinese troops who were attacking the Americans on Hill 355.

At the end of four days, the Chinese retreated and Hills 227 and 355 were back in U.N. hands. After 96 hours of bitter temperatures, lack of sleep and heavy shelling, the Vandoos were near exhaustion. The battle of Hill 227 was undoubtedly the bloodiest battle fought by the Royal 22<sup>nd</sup> Regiment in the whole war. The Vandoos suffered 54 casualties, of these, 16 were killed and two were taken prisoner.

Ernie Mullin was an ambulance driver with the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps. His job was to go into the hills and bring back the casualties.

**Ernie Mullin:**

The background here is very close to being what, as I remember, we could see from our base at that time. When we would get a call from one of the companies, whether it was the RCR, Vandoos or PPCLI, we'd get a call that they were under attack or they had wounded coming in. I had a medic travel with me and we'd take the jeep ambulance and go to the designated spot and bring the wounded back down to be evacuated by either a larger ambulance or helicopter. They were in very bad shape. The medics usually carried morphine to give them a shot for pain.

The helicopter would come in and we'd strap the wounded to the side. Put the cover on the capsule and away they'd take them back to a more advanced hospital to be treated. I feel that the helicopter saved an awful lot of lives. It shortened the time getting them to hospitals where they could be treated a lot better than the facilities we had in the field.

**H.C. Chadderton:**

The Korean War was a war of firsts, the first time the U.N. was involved in a conflict, the first time helicopters were used to evacuate the wounded. It was also the first time napalm was used (a chemical that would become synonymous with Vietnam a decade later). Napalm is a gasoline that is chemically thickened so it spreads over the ground while burning.

**CBC Reporter:**

*Now the second aircraft is coming in. I think its going to release napalm also. There it goes. You can see the black bombs falling. Hits on the far side of the ridge and covers an area of some 200 yards.*

*A beautiful big flash which lit up the whole top, lighted up the whole top of that ridge. There's a great cloud of black smoke now boiling and churning up above the ridge where the napalm has struck the enemy forces dug in on the far side of that hill. There's a village there and, as usual, the Chinese Communist forces take advantage of any*

*shelter they can find. And it is sometimes necessary to get down and give these villages a good strafing run.*

*In North Korea, of course, as far north as we are now, it becomes very difficult to warn civilians and of course they're on the wrong side of the fence in an air strike like this.*

**Ed Mastronardi:** I don't like to use this sort of example but it's just like seeing people barbecued, it is frightening. It's just hell to see people that way.

**H.C. Chadderton:** Amidst the bombing and the shelling, the Korean people suffered terribly.

**Wayne Mitchell:** They didn't have anything. To see them coming down the road with all their belongings, their whole life packed onto what we called an A-frame, or in a cart, pushing it with the children. They didn't have any chance.

You'd run into them in the little villages in the mountains and you tried to give the children cans of your food. We'd all chip in and try and leave something there.

**H.C. Chadderton:** From December, 1952, until the end of the war, a period of static warfare set in while negotiations continued. The Canadians spent the rest of their time in this area between the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel to the south and Chorion to the north. It became a war of raids and counter-raids, booby traps and mines, casualties and endless patrolling.

In the Demilitarized Zone that divides North and South Korea is a place called Panmunjom. It was here, that negotiations from both sides met to discuss ways to make peace. On July 27, 1953, three years after the war started, an Armistice agreement was signed. It was the first time in history that an international organization, like the U.N., had intervened with a multinational force to stop a war.

This cement line is a visual reminder that the country remains divided to this day. On one side is Communist North Korea and on the other South Korea. They are neither at war nor at peace. It is the longest truce in military history.

The Canadians returned home amid little fanfare. There were no bands playing, no parades. In fact, the Korean War had very little impact on Canadians, except, of course, for those who fought in it or those who had lost loved ones. Yet, it is an important part of our history. Canada made a larger contribution to the Korean War, in proportion to her population, than most of the nations in the international force.

Once a year, on June 25<sup>th</sup>, the Korean veterans gather at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, to lay wreaths in memory of the 516 Canadians killed in the Korean War. Except for a few curious tourists, the ceremony goes largely unnoticed. A far cry from the annual November 11<sup>th</sup> ceremonies which commemorate World War I and World War II.

Veterans visiting South Korea today find very little trace of the war. It is now an industrial nation of 48 million people. Sprawling cities of skyscrapers and highways cover what used to be battlefields and refugee camps.

For Koreans, though, the sacrifices of the U.N. forces are not forgotten. And neither is war forgotten. The fact that soldiers still face each other across the line that divides their country, reminds the Koreans of the possibility of another war which may not be far away.

The Canadian veterans are respected for what they did here. Chi Kap Chong, Chairman of the United Nations Korean War Allies Association.

**Chi Kap Chong:** That's why we selected the Canadian monument to Kapyong. So citizens of Korea, especially the young generations, will know how Canadian soldiers so bravely helped Korea in our fight for freedom. We shall not forget.

**H.C. Chadderton:** And the Canadian veterans have not forgotten the Korean people. There is a bond between them that grew out of their mutual suffering during the war years. As a kind of living memorial, the Canadian veterans give bursaries to Kapyong school children.

**Jean-Paul St-Aubin:** The war we see on T.V. is not war. You know Rambo, he does not exist, and Chuck Norris is the same. But for young people, war - I just hope they never have to go. I just hope there will never be another war.

**Ed Mastronardi:** Don't forget your history because the reason why we can do the things we can today is because, over a series of wars including Korea, a number of Canadians were willing to make a sacrifice.

**H.C. Chadderton:** The misery experienced by the Korean people, and the soldiers who fought in this land, is very much a part of The War Amps *NEVER AGAIN!* message. In a war, people from all sides suffer; innocent children, mothers, fathers, and soldiers of every uniform.

In Korea, the U.N. forces lost 450,000 dead and half a million wounded. It is estimated that 1.5 million Chinese and North Korean soldiers were killed and many more were wounded. No one knows

how many civilians died. We must put a stop to this slaughter.  
*NEVER AGAIN!* is a universal message and it is a legacy to The War Amps and other veterans who saw what war at close quarters can leave for future generations.