

**Speech by Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP**

**Korean Veterans Day Memorial Service**

**Hamilton Hill Memorial**

**Friday, 27 July 2018**

---

Good Morning Veterans, the serving men and women of the Australian Defence Force, ladies and gentlemen.

As we gather here today in the Hamilton Hill Memorial Hall to commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice and to acknowledge those who returned we are reminded that this continues to be a war that has never ended despite July 1953 being announced as the end of the war.

“If the best minds in the world had set out to find us the worst possible location in the world to fight this damnable war,” U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson once said, “the unanimous choice would have been Korea.”

The peninsula had landed in America’s lap almost by accident. Since the beginning of the 20th century, Korea had been a part of the Japanese empire, and after World War II it fell to the Americans and the Soviets to decide what should be done with their enemy’s imperial possessions.

In August 1945, two young aides at the State Department divided the Korean peninsula in half along the 38th parallel.

The Russians occupied the area north of the line and the United States occupied the area to its south.

Nothing has changed since that time apart from the escalation and de-escalation of military activities and posturing; and; in more recent times the rhetoric that has filled the media and brought the world to the doorstep of a second nuclear war.

Is it any wonder that nations are spending billions of dollars on the purchase of arms to protect their sovereign borders, and in some cases, the borders of other nations?

To the Korean veterans here today and their families, to those who have passed on since the Korean War, and to those whose names are indelibly etched in the memorials around the world, we owe each and every one of them our heartfelt respect and gratitude.

Wherever the Australian flag flies around the world we can all stand tall as individuals, as a community, and as a nation in the full knowledge that we have and continue to seek out the ultimate goal of world peace.

The fight for freedom continues in many nations across the world - for good or bad - for mothers who wait in quietness with the home fires burning - the love of a nation surrounding them - their sons, and increasingly their daughters, bring great honour and respect to our nation and those that we stand shoulder to shoulder with in war and during peace keeping efforts.

The re-unification of Korea may be a possibility in the future as President Trump of the United States and President Kim Jong-un of North Korea enter the battlefield of hope.

- Will a nuclear war be averted;
- will the people of North and South Korea be able to re-unite their families;
- will the need for thousands of people dying as a result of poverty be addressed;
- will the Korean Peninsula be united as one;
- will there be everlasting peace in our lifetime; and
- will those who made the ultimate sacrifice from 1950 to 1953 be in vain?

Questions, oh so many questions in our hearts and minds.

Will those mothers waiting in the quietness of their homes; keeping the home fires burning be free from the anguish and hurt of war and the impact on families, friends and the community?

Questions, oh so many questions in our hearts and minds.

Lest We Forget.