

CHAPTER 5

AUSTRALIA IN KOREA 1950–1957

The War and Post-Armistice Service

5.1 This Chapter relies to a large extent on official records and reports from the period. While it also refers to submissions and evidence from veterans, the Working Party is aware that recollections of veterans may be influenced by the passage of time, so reference to contemporary records is important to achieve a balanced historical assessment.

5.2 Chapter 7, Case for Medal and Badge Recognition, draws on the material in this Chapter. This information contributes to an historical appreciation of the contemporary situation for the period after the Armistice. This included an ongoing strategic need to present an appearance of force levels to deter aggression and maintain the Armistice. This was influenced by the need (within the UN Command) to respond to demands for military forces elsewhere in the world Cold War confrontation. At a time when standard operating procedures were in place to avoid combat contact, the higher command needed to condition forces to maintain a high level of readiness. These factors contributed to an environment of tension and perceived threat, aggravated by the harsh conditions and the immediate past history of the combat in the Korean War.

5.3 Unless otherwise stated, the source of the information in this Chapter is the relevant unit war diary or similar record.

5.1 Structure of the Chapter

5.4 This Chapter has been organised to illustrate the conditions experienced and major changes in the operating environment of the Australian forces committed to Korea, with particular attention given to the period under review (28 July 1953 to 26 August 1957). Australia was one of the few countries with all three Services (navy, army and air force) committed to the Korean theatre.

5.5 The material presented in the Chapter begins with a summary of the combat period of the Korean War (25 June 1950 to 27 July 1953). This is important in setting the scene for a discussion of the post-Armistice period, because it highlights the differences in the conditions experienced before and after the Armistice.

5.6 This is followed by a strategic overview introducing the political context of the post-Armistice period from a number of national perspectives. The graph at Annex 5A at the end of this Chapter shows the actual and relative estimated strengths of the opposing forces from the date of the Armistice until 1955.

5.7 The remaining matter in the Chapter is organised in separate periods with distinct operational features, within the overall period of Australian involvement from July 1950.

Period	Nature
July 1953 to November 1954	Forces pulled back and remained in place at high force levels. Significant Australian force reductions occurred with the reduction of the destroyer/frigate commitment from two to one and in November 1954, with the departure of the second Infantry Battalion (3 RAR) and the only RAAF combat unit (77 Squadron)
December 1954 to April 1956	Forces had been drawn down but Australian ground forces were still in place on the Kansas Line defensive positions in a diminished Commonwealth Division at Brigade strength. At the end of this period, the last remaining Australian combat forces were withdrawn.
May 1956 to August 1957	The period of the Commonwealth Contingent Korea (CCK) which had a non-operational role, with an Australian signals element (based at Inchon).

5.8 Within these periods, the source material is organised chronologically in the following four sections:

- Strategic background
- Navy
- Army
- Air Force
- Conditions experienced.

5.9 At the end of the Chapter, there is an assessment of the overall conclusions emerging from the whole post-Armistice period, and their implications for recognition of service during the period.

Maps

5.10 The Chapter should be read in conjunction with the maps shown in Annex 5B at the end of this Chapter. These maps are as follows:

Map No.	Showing	
1	Korean area	
2	Disposition of ground forces at the time of the Armistice	
3	Commonwealth Division area, including Camp Casey, Headquarters and Tokchong facilities	
4	Commonwealth Division sector with two overlays showing:	
	A	Disposition of Australian units and their superior headquarters during 1953–54
	B	Disposition of Australian units and their superior headquarters during 1954–55

Photographs

5.11 In Annex 5C at the end of this Chapter are included several photographs showing the conditions under which Australians operated in Korea after the Armistice. All but one of these photographs are previously unpublished. As a result of the Working Party's research, they are now available on the AWM website.

Chronology

5.12 Appendix 8 sets out a chronology of key events in Korea and the rest of the world during the post-Armistice period, in order to create a strategic framework for the military developments in and around Korea.

5.2 Summary of the combat period, 25 June 1950 – 27 July 1953

5.13 The combat period is very well documented by official and other historians. A summary of the main events is as follows.

Mobile Phase

5.14 Communist forces invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950, rapidly advancing and trapping US and Korean forces in the south-east in an area around the port city of Pusan. War was not formally declared.

5.15 In the absence of the Soviet delegate, the UN Security Council took action to authorise a unified military response "to repel the armed attacks [on South Korea] and to restore international peace and security in the area".

5.16 On 29 June 1950 the Australian Government placed HMA Ships *Bataan* and *Shoalhaven* at the disposal of the Security Council in support of the Republic of Korea, and *Shoalhaven* was tasked for convoy escort duties commencing on 1 July.

5.17 77 Squadron RAAF flew its first combat mission on 2 July 1950. The Australian ground forces (3 RAR) arrived in South Korea on 28 September 1950,

shortly after General MacArthur launched a major counter-offensive at Inchon on 15 September 1950.

5.18 On 1 October 1950, the 3rd ROK Division crossed the 38th Parallel. The UNC advanced towards the Yalu River, marking the boundary between North Korea and Manchuria (China). Pyongyang fell on 19 October 1950.

5.19 In October–November, Chinese forces intervened in the conflict in large numbers, crossing the Yalu River, inflicting heavy losses on UN forces and forcing their rapid withdrawal. By December 1950, UN forces were driven back south of Seoul.

5.20 In January 1951, General Ridgway (Commander 8th Army) launched Operation THUNDERBOLT to drive the Communists north; Seoul was retaken on 14–15 March 1951. Following a dispute with President Truman over matters including the misjudgement of Chinese intentions and his plans to widen the War, MacArthur was dismissed on 11 April 1951; the UNC retook Seoul and advanced back to the general line of the 38th parallel.

5.21 A fresh Chinese offensive was aimed at Seoul and involved the Australians at Kapyong in 23–24 April 1951. This offensive was finally halted by 20 May 1951 and UNC forces resumed their advance.

5.22 UNC forces had advanced to the Jamestown Line north of the Imjin River by October 1951; the opposing forces remained locked in combat on this line as a stalemate developed. Between 3 and 9 October 1951, 3 RAR's part in OPERATION COMMANDO to straighten the line and drive the Chinese from a line of high hills was the assault on Maryang San. On 12 November 1951, General Ridgway ordered the 8th Army to cease offensive operations and begin 'active defence', thus ushering in the static phase of the War.

Static phase

5.23 The stalemate which developed in the region of the 38th parallel (near the current DMZ) was characterised by trench warfare, artillery and mortar duels, active night-time patrolling, small unit actions, periodic adjustments of the line, and limited Communist offensives—all happening at the same time as faltering peace talks which were occurring from mid-1951.

5.24 In the days immediately before the Armistice was signed, the Communist forces mounted intense human-wave assaults on UNC positions in order to achieve the most advantageous ground and make a show of strength. In the British Commonwealth sector, the fighting in front of the 2 and 3 RAR positions at the Hook (see Map Overlay 4A) was particularly fierce, with heavy casualties on both sides.

5.25 In the words of the Commander 28th Commonwealth Brigade, Brigadier J Wilton:

“The floor of the valley between the Hook and the Chinese position was almost covered with dead Chinese who had been caught by our deadly defensive-fire artillery concentrations. On the immediate approaches to 2 RAR the bodies literally carpeted the ground sometimes two

deep... I am an experienced artillery man... but it doesn't mean that I like it. I just know how to do it... They lay there in their hundreds covering the field like a carpet."ⁱ

5.26 A total of about 1.5 million Communist combatants became casualties of the conflict, along with about 400,000 UNC combatants (including 339 Australians who died during the combat period). In addition, an estimated one million Korean civilians died.

5.27 Professor Robert O'Neill has commented on the overall implications of the Korean War:

"The main consequence of the war for Australia was the signing of the ANZUS Treaty in September 1951 and the successful negotiation of a \$250 million loan under unusually favourable conditions. The war made little direct impact in Australia itself, although the North Korean attack and the prolonged fighting contributed to the heightened Cold War atmosphere which came to characterise domestic politics in the first half of the 1950s."ⁱⁱ

5.28 As an example of the diplomatic and strategic considerations underpinning Australia's military commitment in Korea:

"... the government ... received a further request from President Truman for more troops for Korea. The Defence Committee advised that there was no military necessity, while the provision of an extra battalion would severely disrupt the Army's long-term development plan. In Cabinet on 25 September [1951], however, Casey defeated McBride and the government decided to send a second infantry battalion to Korea. During that month the ANZUS Treaty was finally signed in Washington."ⁱⁱⁱ

5.3 Strategic overview of the post-Armistice period

Politico-strategic (global)

5.29 Korea was seen as the first of the Cold War hot conflicts. While the result was a stand-off, it played some part in halting communist expansion temporarily. After Korea, east-west confrontation moved on to other sites of Communist activity: principally Indo-China and Malaya, and to a lesser extent Thailand and Japan. These conflicts were seen as a struggle between Communism and the Free World, with little attention paid to national aspirations in these countries.

5.30 The UNC's efforts in post-Armistice Korea, in addition to avoiding hostilities with China and North Korea, were concerned with maintaining control over a bellicose South Korea as it built its economy as an example of democracy in action. It was also concerned with maintaining a united front by the 16 contributing nations in preventing further northern aggression.

5.31 A long-term peace settlement for the Korean Peninsula remained elusive. Professor O'Neill records that the Geneva Conference was intended initially to progress to a peace settlement for Korea but the agenda was extended to include Indo-China.^{iv} In the final outcome Indo-China discussions achieved some results but no further progress was made towards a settlement in Korea.

Politico-strategic (Australian domestic)

5.32 Australia was under a number of internal and external pressures in the mid to late 1950s. While juggling post-Second World War reconstruction priorities, it was under pressure to meet increasing commitments to Malaya, while suffering poor Service recruiting and retention in a climate of full employment. There was also the pressure of costs (both in finance and other resources) of maintaining Korean and other emerging British Far East commitments.

5.33 Internationally, Australia was juggling important US and British Commonwealth relationships. Culturally, we were still 'British to the Bootstraps' but increasingly determined to exercise some independence. Australia's relationship with the USA was quite different from that of its other British Commonwealth allies (the UK, Canada and New Zealand) with the USA. The signing of the ANZUS Treaty during the combat period (on 1 September 1951) created an entirely new dynamic.

5.34 As a result of these pressures on Australia, the Korean deployment after the Armistice was not central to Australia's strategic security concerns.

Operational

5.35 Operationally, the antagonists were represented by the Communist Chinese forces and the Korean People's Army on the one hand, and the UNC forces on the other. Along the DMZ, this involved the US 8th Army.

5.36 Both sides were clearly maintaining a defensive posture and displaying a clear lack of interest in resuming the conflict. Despite the accusations and denials in the MAC, there was an increasingly optimistic assessment that the Armistice was holding—even though neither side trusted the other.

5.37 The UNC clearly identified the post-Armistice threat as:

- agents/provocateurs/saboteurs from the north;
- unauthorised civilians in military-controlled areas (refugees, thieves, organised crime syndicates, agents); and
- armed ROK soldiers (both controlled and uncontrolled).

5.38 In the months following the Armistice there were periodic escalations of tension and alert states associated with the possibility of a Communist attack following the release of non-repatriated Prisoners of War. In addition, a key feature of the political instability which the UNC had to respond to by deploying forces were the riots and demonstrations conducted over the role of the Communist members of the NNSC.

5.39 The UNC was also fully occupied in training and preparing the ROK forces to assume responsibility for their own security, without providing them with the capability to conduct offensive operations in their own right. It was simultaneously drawing down forces for commitments elsewhere, while keeping deployed forces occupied through reconstruction assistance, exercises and alerts.

Tactical

5.40 In its sector of the Kansas Line, 1 British Commonwealth Division was facing CCF forces, which were keen to avoid hostilities. They were not facing the KPA.

5.41 Generally, the same activities were being conducted on both sides, chronologically:

- building up fixed defensive positions;
- actively policing and maintaining the DMZ;
- commencing training for resumption of hostilities;
- maintaining a show of force;
- keeping troops fit, proficient and occupied; and
- drawing down forces as early as possible.

5.42 Australian forces were maintaining an aggressive posture at unit level, although this varied between units. In varying degrees, commanding officers and NCOs imposed high states of readiness.

5.4 July 1953 – November 1954

Strategic background

5.43 Contemporary sources make it clear that they regarded the Korean War as ending with the commencement of the Armistice on 27 July 1953. For example, the official Royal Navy staff history of British naval operations in Korea (published for internal Ministry of Defence use in September 1967) ends with the Armistice in July 1953.

5.44 The official South Korean history states:

“... After the Korean War, which ended in an Armistice signed in July 1953... The Republic of Korea has been trying to ease tensions... even in the face of ever-present North Korean Communist provocations”.^v

5.45 Only one Volume (by Walter G Hermes) of the US official history deals with the post-Armistice period. It makes it very clear that the Korean War ended at the Armistice but there was some tension and difficulty after that time.

5.46 Another American author (William H Vatcher Jr) declared:

“As the battle for the Armistice has ended, now the battle for the peace starts.”^{vi}

5.47 The British official history by General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley states that hostilities finished on 27 July 1953. It makes no mention of post-Armistice service.

5.48 The following advice was provided to the Working Party by Dr William M Donnelly, US Army Center of Military History, in August–September 2005:

“Although the declassified records in the National Archives do not provide a thorough coverage of I Corps between August 1953 and 1957, enough material is available to make some conclusions concerning conditions in the corps’ sector during this period. Key documents are the August 1953 and September 1953 I Corps command reports, the I Corps quarterly historical reports for 1954, the I Corps periodic operations reports for December 1955 to December 1956, and the I Corps G-2 journal for 1955.

“These documents show a corps, after the DMZ salvage mission is concluded and the new Main Battle Positions are established in 1953, which is focused on training, updating war plans, routine military housekeeping, robust observation of enemy activity, and preventing UN forces from violating the armistice agreement. The forces opposing I Corps during this period only occasionally violated the terms of the armistice agreement, and when they did so, the violations did not lead to combat.

“All the primary sources I have reviewed, and all secondary sources known to me, portray an I Corps in the years after the armistice focused on training, building fortifications, and avoiding incidents in the DMZ while keeping communist activities under close observation. I Corps did regularly update its contingency plans, and its units did regularly practice moving into Main Battle Positions, as well as other aspects of the plans such as retrograde and counter-attack operations. These exercises, however, were no different from what V and VII Corps were conducting in Germany during this period.

“To avoid incidents in the DMZ, the only troops used to patrol inside the zone were provisional DMZ Police companies formed shortly after the armistice. These companies were all-volunteer units, with the men carefully screened and trained for this mission. The DMZ Police Company in the Panmunjom area in its 1959 history noted that it “has never seen combat” (Information Section, 1st Cavalry Division. 1st Cavalry Division, *The First Team*, Korea, 1959. Tokyo, 1959). [Note: The Australian Battalions provided these policing patrols in rotation with other British Commonwealth Division units – see the photographs at the end of this Chapter. Several witnesses at public hearings referred to the conduct of these patrols.]

“American DMZ Police Companies were provisional units within divisions assigned to a sector of the DMZ. Since they were provisional, the divisions could not request personnel for them and thus had to man and equip them “out of hide.” Because of the sensitive nature of their work, divisions wanted a unit that was something of an elite, and thus restricted its members to volunteers from among soldiers assigned to the division. This system meant that any soldier within the division, not just MPs, could serve in the company if they were accepted. (I have no information on the selection criteria used to screen volunteers.) Given the nature of their work, I suspect (but have no evidence at this time) that most of the men in these companies came from infantry and reconnaissance units of the division. I have no information on the ROK Army DMZ Police Companies.

“... I recall that these [possible enemy] courses of action ranged from a major offensive across the DMZ through ambushes and other harassing operations to continuing their current course of action (that is, observing the terms of the armistice). In each case, the most likely course of action for the enemy to take was listed as continuing to observe the terms of the armistice.

“Attached below is an extract on the post-Korean War drawdown of the US Army, including the reduction of forces in Korea, from pages 250-251 of John B. Wilson, *Maneuver and firepower: the evolution of divisions and separate brigades* (available at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/books/Lineage/M-F/chapter9.htm#b4>). The two divisions remaining in Korea after 1954 were assigned to I Corps (Group); most non-divisional units in Korea were withdrawn from the country in the same time frame as the divisions.

“The units that remained in Korea after the drawdown were also thinned out. In order to stay within its authorized active-duty strength and meet its other commitments, the US Army never

sent the units remaining in Korea sufficient American soldiers to man them at full strength. The resulting shortfall was partially covered by retaining the wartime KATUSA (Korean Augmentation to the US Army) program; while this measure did take care of the junior enlisted ranks, Eighth Army would be short of qualified technical specialists, senior NCOs, and experienced captains and majors for years after the end of the war.

“Readjustment of Divisional Forces

“Hostilities ended in Korea on 23 July 1953 when the United Nations and North Korea signed an armistice, but demobilization, like mobilization, did not follow a preplanned course. A threat still hung over Korea, and the defense of Western Europe remained of paramount concern. The size of the Army depended on the new President, Dwight D. Eisenhower, inaugurated in January 1953, who was committed to reducing military expenditures. Between 1 July 1953 and 1 July 1956, the Congress, at the President's request, cut the active Army from 1.5 to 1 million men, a reduction that required major adjustments in divisional forces.”

5.49 American historian Clay Blair writes of the political instability and alliance difficulties that characterised the strategic situation within Korea:

“Except for one large, nagging detail, peace seemed to be at hand. The final obstacle was posed not by the enemy but by an ally: Syngman Rhee. He had never relented in his efforts to sabotage the armistice. Throughout the talks he had demanded that no concessions whatsoever be granted the Communists, that the CCF be expelled from North Korea, that the NKPA be disarmed, and that all Korea be united under the ROK government. Now that the armistice appeared to be impervious to sabotage, Rhee declared that South Korea would not honor its terms and that he might detach the ROK Army from the UN command and continue the war alone.

“These were not idle threats. Beginning in mid-June, Rhee launched final, desperate efforts to sabotage the talks. First, on June 18 he directed ROK guards at the NKPA compounds to turn loose those men who did not wish to be repatriated. That night about 25,000 of 33,600 NKPA POWs in that category shed uniforms, fled through open gates, and melted into the South Korean population. Secondly, he imposed what amounted to martial law in South Korea and forbade all ROK Army personnel and civilians to continue working for the UN command. Thirdly, he alerted the senior ROK Army commanders to prepare to fight on, armistice or no armistice.”

“These actions precipitated a crisis, but did not lead to the intended breakdown in the talks. Mark Clark and the chief UN negotiator, William Harrison, delivered to the Communists a written apology, which specifically blamed Rhee for the “escape” of the 25,000 NKPA. Meeting with Harrison on June 20, the Communists grudgingly accepted the apology. They suggested that Clark track down the “escapees” and reimprison them for a proper exchange, but knowing full well that this task would be impossible, they did not press the issue. Instead, they rightly posed the larger questions: ‘What was to be done about Syngman Rhee? Could the UN command bring him under control? Would an armistice include the ROK government? If not, would the ROK government abide by its terms, or would it continue the war alone?’”

“President Eisenhower sent a task force to Korea to bring Rhee into line. Its members conceived a three-step strategy. In return for Rhee's cooperation on the armistice, they would first attempt to reason with Rhee by promising a long-term mutual defense treaty, full support for a twenty-division ROK Army, and untold billions in military and economic aid. If that failed, they would try a gigantic bluff. They would rescind those offers and threaten to withdraw all American forces from the peninsula, leaving South Korea to its fate. If the bluff also failed, they were prepared to stage a coup d'etat (Operation Everready), replacing Rhee with a more amenable South Korean leader.”^{vii}

5.50 The official history of the Royal Canadian Navy in Korea records the uncertainty which pervaded the immediate aftermath of the Armistice:

"The end of open hostilities in Korea on 27 July, 1953, did not mean that the United Nations forces could now be disbanded; after all, no peace treaty had been signed, only an armistice—and a very unusual armistice at that, for neither side had been defeated in the field. Indeed it was quite possible that the fighting might break out again at any time should the always unpredictable Communists decide that such a course would be to their advantage. Furthermore there was always the danger that Syngman Rhee [the ROK President] might suddenly brush aside the restraining hand of his allies and carry out his earlier threats to "go it alone." Such action would undoubtedly have precipitated full-scale war, for Rhee's forces would almost certainly have been badly beaten and the Allies would have been forced willynilly to come to their aid or stand back and see South Korea overrun again. There was yet another way in which hostilities might be renewed; if the political conference which was to be called to settle the problems left unsolved by the armistice should fail to reach agreement, the Communists might conceivably attempt to break the resulting stalemate by force of arms..."^{viii}

5.51 Professor Jeffrey Grey writes of the immediate post-Armistice period:

"The peace-talks at Panmunjom finally led to a cease-fire, although not to a peace treaty, on 27 July 1953. From an operational point of view there were three immediate tasks to be performed. These were the withdrawal of forces from both sides of the newly declared demilitarised zone within 72 hours of the cease-fire, the construction and occupation of new post-armistice positions to the south of the Jamestown line, and supervision of the exchange of prisoners of war including the potential difficulties implicit in the decision not to repatriate forcibly POWs who did not wish to return to their own side.

"The immediate withdrawal southwards was hectic but uneventful. The defensive positions, erected with such skill over the almost two-year period that the Commonwealth Division had held its section of the UN line, were demolished, while stores and equipment were removed in order to leave nothing of potential value to an enemy by no means trusted to keep the cease-fire agreement which he had just signed. Uncertainty concerning the Communist intentions led the Americans to insist that all governments with forces in the UNC should maintain those forces until it was clear that the terms negotiated at Panmunjom would be adhered to. The South Africans withdrew their fighter squadron during October 1953, but the other Commonwealth governments maintained their forces in Korea although all had reasons for wishing to terminate the involvement as quickly as possible. The governments concerned also agreed to maintain the Commonwealth nature of the forces in Korea, thus precluding any other unilateral withdrawals."^{ix}

5.52 In Australia, there were already wider concerns at the highest level about the strategic outlook following the Armistice:

"Menzies drew attention to the danger period that would arise in the Far East following a likely armistice in Korea, and in late June the British Defence Minister, Lord Alexander, advised him that Britain proposed forming a Far East Strategic Reserve, to be located in Malaya. If Australia joined with Britain and New Zealand they could 'make an arrangement which would effectively safeguard our Commonwealth interests in the cold war'."^x

5.53 On 26 July 1953, Prime Minister Menzies said: "It is inescapable that United Nations forces will have to remain in the region for some time... An Armistice means the cessation of hostilities but this is only the first step towards a peace settlement." The Commander-in-Chief, UNC (General Mark Clark) said "nothing should detract from the maintenance of combat readiness."^{xi}

5.54 The UK First Sea Lord [Chief of Navy] wrote to Commander-in-Chief Far East Station on 31 July 1953, with regard to the Armistice:

“There are a number of possibilities—

- (a) a happy solution, with peace and withdrawal of forces in the course of the next 90 days. This seems too good to be true.
- (b) a breakdown or breach of Armistice. This would result not only in the resumption of fighting, but possibly in war in the Far East on a much larger scale and outside the artificial boundaries which were kept before the Armistice.
- (c) a breach of Armistice by the South Korean forces...

“There are also other possibilities, but it is clear that we must count on a possible resumption of hostilities, which might even be on a larger scale than before...

“I hope the Australians will take a realistic view of the Armistice. The Canadians have already complicated matters by withdrawing the squadrons they were going to embark in [HMS] WARRIOR next year for her term in Korea.”^{xii}

5.55 Reflecting the mood of uncertainty, the Department of External Affairs wrote to the Australian High Commissioner in London on 7 September 1953 about the terminal date for medals and awards: “... The CINC BCFK has advised that War Office state terminal date for Korean General Service Medal [sic] and Gratuity will be decided when it has been ascertained that hostilities have really ceased...”^{xiii}

5.56 The Prime Minister said in a Statement on 14 September 1953:

“Signature of the truce in Korea now makes such an extension of hostilities [beyond Korea] far less likely, at any rate an extension following upon hostilities as distinct from possible further Communist Chinese action in other parts of South East Asia. The truce in Korea has therefore not only given us a breathing space in which to try to solve the political problems of Korea; it has also considerably improved the changes of the world avoiding in the foreseeable future a major extension of hostilities which could well lead to atomic war.”^{xiv}

5.57 The Canadian Government had already begun to consider the scope for force reductions, but realised that significant forces would have to remain for the time being:

“Before the armistice was signed it had been agreed that there would be no immediate, mass withdrawals of the UN forces in the Korean theatre, and it was understood that when the risk of renewal of hostilities had declined sufficiently to permit reduction of forces this would only be done after consultation with all the powers involved. The Canadian Government considered the question of the eventual reduction of Canada's Korean force at a Cabinet meeting on 24 September, 1953, and decided that, when the time came to cut down, Canada would be prepared to maintain one infantry battalion and one destroyer or frigate in the UN Security Force which, it was believed, would have to be retained in the Far East for some time to come. The unsettled conditions that followed the armistice and the long and bitter dispute over the prisoners of war who did not wish to be repatriated resulted in the postponement of any reduction of forces for some months...”^{xv}

5.58 On 29 September 1953, a British report on facilities required post-Armistice stated:

“Choice of Japan and Korea as a base area

“4. The choice of location for the base is confined to Japan or Korea.... Should the war in Korea break out once again we may have to return to Japan

“Choice of a base area in Korea

“13. Incheon-Seoul area... is close to the front and, if war starts again, there is a considerable security risk in having our base located here.”^{xvi}

5.59 The security of Malaya had already assumed a higher priority in Australian strategic thinking:

“Shedden [Secretary of Defence] chaired [Australia/UK/NZ] meetings in Melbourne between 19 and 21 October [1953] ... The conference concentrated on the threat in Southeast Asia, noting that the situation in Indo-China was 'extremely brittle'. It was vitally important to maintain a presence in Malaya and to block any advance into that country. Australia's primary objective in global war would therefore be the security of Malaya, and priority in planning would be given to the deployment of Australian land and air forces to the Malayan area... By the end of 1953, however, the focus was moving towards Southeast Asia, rather than global war, and the defence program was slowing down.”^{xvii}

5.60 These Hansard extracts are relevant. On 10 November 1953, Mr Galvin, the Member for Kingston, said:

“Mention is made in the Governor-General's speech of the conclusion of an Armistice in Korea after a struggle which lasted more than three years. Members of the Labor Party are gratified that, at long last, an Armistice has been signed. We are pledged to support the United Nations in its efforts to achieve and maintain world peace. It is unfortunate that the threat of war is still present, but I feel that the danger of a conflict is receding and that there is a real hope for peace in the future.”

5.61 On 12 November 1953, the Minister for the Army said in response to a question on the provisions of the Repatriation Act:

“A soldier is entitled to repatriation benefits if he has been on active service. Members of the forces who are serving in Korea are entitled to the advantages and benefits of the Repatriation Act.”

5.62 On 12 November 1953, Mr Opperman, the Member for Corio, said:

“... We are all very interested in the cessation of hostilities in Korea ... Although we have no great confidence in the peaceful intentions of the Communists in Korea, we must nevertheless be grateful because hostilities in that country have now ceased.”

5.63 By the end of the year, the resource cost of Korean post-Armistice service was becoming of concern, as this Department of Defence paper indicates:

“Expenditure related to the maintenance of our forces in Japan and Korea is not controllable... The Minister has expressed his concern at the amount required in 1952–53...”^{xviii}

5.64 The USA had also begun to turn its attention to force reductions, as indicated in this advice from Dr William M Donnelly, US Army Center of Military History, to the Working Party in August–September 2005:

“In December 1953 [President] Eisenhower, who had hesitated to reduce forces in Korea because of the precarious armistice, announced that two of the seven US Army divisions there were to return home, a step permitted by improved capabilities of the South Korean Army. United States Army Forces, Far East, selected the 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions for return to the United States, and they departed Korea in the spring of 1954 with only a token personnel complement. Shortly thereafter the divisions were released from active federal

service and reverted to state control. Concerned about the effects of demobilization because of events in Southeast Asia (the French were on the verge of withdrawing from that area), Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson suspended further reductions in the Far East Command on 7 April 1954.”

5.65 On 4 January 1954, the British High Commissioner in Canberra wrote to the Secretary of the Prime Minister’s Department in terms which still reflected uncertainty about the future of Korea:

“The United Kingdom proposals [on the location of base facilities] are, of course, concerned with hypothetical circumstances in which it may have been possible to reduce Commonwealth land forces in Korea from a Division to an Infantry Brigade Group. Such a situation is, of course, only one of several which might come about. If, for example, there were a complete settlement in Korea, there would be no requirement for a Commonwealth base, whilst, if hostilities were renewed and Commonwealth forces were involved, the existing base facilities in Japan would presumably be used.”^{xix}

5.66 This memorandum of 6 January 1954 from Minister for Defence to Minister for Army reflects the three concerns of maintaining combat readiness in Korea, keeping the troops appropriately engaged, and eventual force reductions:

“General Clark [CINC UNC] has issued instructions that the United States military personnel, should be made available for rehabilitation work in Korea to the maximum feasible extent provided:

- (i) troops are not required to work as common labourers and
- (ii) nothing should detract from the maintenance of combat readiness...

“The Prime Minister has now approved the following policy:

- (a) Australian troops may be used to assist in the provision of technical assistance in civilian reconstruction in South Korea, providing that such activities:
 - (i) do not adversely affect the ability of Australian troops to carry out their operational tasks;
 - (ii) do not interfere with the ultimate aim of reducing and eventually withdrawing them from Korea; and
 - (iii) do not require troops to work as common labourers; ...”^{xx}

5.67 On 26 January 1954, the British High Commissioner in Canberra wrote to the Secretary of the Prime Minister’s Department that:

“President Eisenhower’s recent announcement of the decision that US forces in Korea are to be progressively reduced as circumstances warrant, and that, as an initial step, 2 of their 8 Divisions will shortly be withdrawn, has led the UK authorities to consider whether to suggest to other Commonwealth governments that, in the circumstances, a start might be made in reducing the strength of the Commonwealth forces in Korea. The conclusion reached by the UK Government is that at the present time it would not be opportune to approach the US Government with a proposal for reducing the Commonwealth forces.”^{xxi} [Note: this relates to concern that since the US had shouldered much of the burden of providing forces, it would be embarrassing to consider reducing British Commonwealth forces too early.]

5.68 Early in 1954, the British Admiralty identified force reductions of headquarters and support ships on the ground that there was “no operational requirement for them”. At the end of January 1954, the UK Defence Committee asked the British

Chiefs of Staff to approach the US Joint Chiefs of Staff about force reductions in Korea and US intentions. The US responded that “the present American decision is limited to the withdrawal of two Divisions”. The UK Defence Committee expressed the opinion that “In case the Korean War should start again, it seems essential that, at least for the time being, the United Kingdom ships withdrawn should remain on the Far East Station...”^{xxii}

5.69 A MAC report of March 1954 highlighted continuing tensions on the DMZ:

“Violations of the DZ

“In the 106th Meeting of the Secretaries, UNC charged that the Communists had based a large majority of their alleged aircraft violations on erroneous information and suggested that their methods of reporting should be examined with a view to adopting a more reliable system. Their inaccuracy was pointed out by the fact that in the 105th meeting of the Secretaries the Communists again denied the same charge they had previously denied at the 104th meeting of the Secretaries. KPA/CPV stated that their side was strictly abiding by the terms of the Armistice Agreement while the UNC consistently violated the Agreement.

“In recapitulation of violations of the Armistice Agreement from 27 July 1953 through 31 March 1954, the Communists have alleged 18 ground and 223 aircraft violations against the UNC. As of 31 March, the UNC had admitted 10, denied 6, and was investigating 2 ground charges; and has admitted 21, denied 192 and is investigating 10 of the air charges. Additionally, the UNC had admitted 3 ground and 1 aircraft violation before they were charged by the Communists.

“The UNC has accused the Communists of 11 ground and 37 aircraft violations during the same period. The Communists have admitted 2, denied 6, and are investigating 3 of the ground charges. They have admitted none, denied 14, and were investigating 23 of the air charges.”^{xxiii}

5.70 Annex 5D at the end of this Chapter is a transcript of a contemporary document showing the constant accusations and denials which characterised the confrontations about alleged DMZ incidents in the MAC between the Armistice and mid-1955.

5.71 An HQ BCFK report for the period 1 April 1954 to 30 September 1954 states:

“1. The Commonwealth Division The first month of the period under review saw the Commonwealth Division completing its training prior to the Divisional exercise which was held from 26 April to 1 May. Following upon this, work was continued on the completion of the Kansas Line position and the various Divisional sports competitions were begun. Preparations were made for further training at the end of hot weather but it was necessary to cancel most of the exercises on the receipt of orders for the run-down of the Division. Planning was at once begun on the redeployment of the new Commonwealth Division and by 15 November 1954 this formation will have been formed.”^{xxiv}

5.72 The prospect of renewed hostilities in Korea was still seen as a serious threat to world peace. In late April 1954, the British Admiralty expressed continuing concern about “doing everything possible to ensure that the Americans do not precipitate a world war by using weapons of mass destruction against China in the event of a renewal of the Korean War”. In a paper titled ‘Action in the event of a renewed Communist attack in Korea’, the First Lord of the Admiralty [Navy Minister] was advised by the UK Chiefs of Staff through the Defence Committee that they “do not exclude the use of atomic weapons tactically within Korea if necessary to avoid a serious military defeat”.^{xxv}

5.73 By May 1954, Australian Defence policy on Korea was being expressed in these terms:

"In his letter of 21 May 1954, the Minister for Defence made or repeated observations on the Army proposals... summarised...:

- (1) The commitment in Korea must continue until the forces can be released or reduced.
- (2) It is not possible at present to express any view on Strategic Reserve in Malaya which could only be token pending release from Korea."^{xxvi}

5.74 In a statement to Parliament on Defence Policy and the Program, the Minister for Defence said in part:

"Owing to inactive conditions in Korea, the 1953–54 allotment for the Field Force of 5,800 has been reduced to 5,300 and can be further run down to 4,450. This would be achieved by:

- (a) under-establishing units in Korea; ..."^{xxvii}

5.75 South Korean intentions were still a matter of concern. For example, in a Report of Proceedings for 14 July 1954, the Flag Officer Second-in-Command, Far East Station, said:

"I waited on Vice Admiral Sohn at the [ROK] Ministry of Defence. He told me again how Korea had suffered from the War, how terrible it would be to fight again, but if they had to, how important to start it first."^{xxviii}

5.76 Communist strengths were still being actively monitored. An internal Defence minute of 28 July 1954 about CCF strengths stated:

"Despite the known withdrawal of nine armies and two artillery divisions, personnel strengths have not reduced correspondingly. This is due to the upward adjustment of strengths based on better information since the Armistice..."

Armistice CCF 18 Armies & support Total 886,200. Enemy front total of 32 Divisions (25 CCF)

1 July 1954 CCF 11 Armies & support 608,000. Enemy front 23 Divisions (only 12 CCF)."^{xxix}

5.77 This Note for File titled 'Reduction of Commonwealth Forces in Korea' summed up the position on 29 July 1954:

"With regard to the statement of the United States State Department Official reported in Washington cablegram No. 712 of 23rd July [1954] –

'the main thing was to maintain representative character of United Nations Forces, and reductions should not go beyond position where total of non-United States Forces was below one division in strength',

the following is the strength of combat units in Korea as at 5th July, 1954 (Commander-in-Chief's Weekly Review 10th–16th July) –

Eighth US Army and 1st US Marine Division	202,449
Korean Communication Zone	3,335
ROKA personnel attached to US Forces	109,352
ROKA (Tactical Units)	375,146
1st British Commonwealth Division	18,763
1st Turkish Armed Forces Command	5,367

Thailand Infantry Battalion	1,249
2nd Philippine Battalion	872
Ethiopian Infantry Battalion	1,164
Colombian Infantry Battalion	863
Greek Expeditionary Forces	2,238
Netherlands UN Infantry Battalion	704
Belgian Infantry Battalion (incl. Luxemburg Detachment)	738
French Detachment	22
	623,262

"2. There are therefore ample non-United States and Commonwealth infantry forces, but inadequate artillery."^{xxx}

5.78 During this period the prospect of political disturbances in South Korea over the Armistice monitoring process was increasing. A 3 August 1954 cablegram from the Australian Representative to UNCURK to Canberra read in part:

"Following warning by ROK Provo Marshal, Won Yong Duk on 30 July that "action essential to the preservation of national security will be taken if Communist members of NNSC do not withdraw immediately from ROK", on 31 July Korean demonstrators attempted to enter NNSC camp near Inchon, but were prevented by United States guards and shots were fired at NNSC billets in Pusan without injury to the occupants. There are reports of minor incidents in Kunsan."^{xxxi}

5.79 On 9 August 1954, the Australian Embassy Washington sent a cable to Canberra reporting on a meeting at the State Department, at which the 16 nations contributing forces in Korea were asked to pass on to their governments the following information:

"... the United States proposes to have only two US divisions in Korea by the end of 1954... Aim is to 'increase strategic flexibility' of US forces... UN forces in Korea are now relatively stronger vis a vis Communist forces than at signing of Armistice.

"New Zealand made the point that it might be difficult to maintain their forces anywhere near the present level because of recruiting difficulties since end of fighting. ROK remarked that his government would oppose any 'sudden and drastic' decreases."^{xxxii}

5.80 An editorial of 20 August 1954 in the Melbourne *Herald* summed up the prospects for Korea in these terms:

"Back from Korea

"America's decision to withdraw a substantial part of her ground forces from Korea will be followed by a general 'thinning out' of United Nations contingents along the truce line. The Canadians now propose to bring their brigade home. One of Australia's two infantry battalions in Korea will almost certainly be pulled out soon.

"These moves do not mean that the Korean truce is about to broaden into peace. The country is likely to remain divided for a long time, garrisoned and perhaps colonised in the north by Chinese Communists. President Syngman Rhee's desperate call for a liberating crusade has been rejected in Washington.

"His large army can expect the backing of American air power to meet any new threat from the north, but the steady reduction of U.N. ground forces in South Korea warns him that his allies do not intend to be committed to any adventure launched by him.

"In a strategic sense, America's partial disengagement from Korea should have big advantages. It stresses the fact that America has no aggressive aims on the Asian mainland. At the same time, it aids the concentration of forces to meet any Communist threat elsewhere.

"Australia, with defence interests now centred nearer home in South-East Asia, would find it useful to withdraw all her land and air forces from Korea. The experience gained by these contingents would be invaluable in the training of other Army and RAAF units. Without at least one of the two battalions from Korea, Australia could not quickly assemble even a small balanced field force for service abroad.

"The Korea affair is not ended. But its dangers have cooled to 'cold war' temperatures, and it is timely for the free world to re-group its strength."^{xxxiii}

5.81 On 21 August 1954, the Melbourne *Sun* reported:

"Koreans protest

Pusan, Friday, AAP.

Nearly 10,000 demonstrators paraded here today to protest against the US plan to withdraw 4 of its 6 Divisions in Korea".

5.82 Demonstrators demanded at a mass meeting: retention of US troops, increased South Korean forces, and unilateral action to unify Korea.^{xxxiv}

5.83 Advice from Dr William M Donnelly, US Army Center of Military History, to the Working Party in August–September 2005 indicated that:

"By the summer of 1954 the Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of Korea and the expansion of its army to twenty divisions permitted additional American reductions in Korea and allowed the Department of Defense to release all reserve units from active duty. In October the 25th Infantry Division with its personnel and equipment moved from Korea to Hawaii, where it became part of the Pacific area reserve. Shortly thereafter the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Divisions, reduced to near zero strength in Korea, replaced the National Guard 44th and 47th Infantry Divisions at Forts Lewis and Benning...

5.84 In an undated Department of Defence note of late August 1954, specific Australian force reductions were foreshadowed:

"Australian forces to be withdrawn from Korea

Navy

1 destroyer in October 1954.

Army

1 battalion (3 Battalion RAR) to be withdrawn early November.

Air Force

No. 77 Fighter Squadron RAAF to be withdrawn early November.

Portion of No. 36 transport squadron RAAF to be withdrawn January 1955.

"2. There will be consequential reductions in base troops in Japan, but it is not known yet when these will be made."^{xxxv}

5.85 A Department of External Affairs report of 3 September 1954 focussed on the political effect of US force reduction plans:

“There has been a further stream of official and unofficial complaints against the American decision to reduce their forces in Korea from 6 to 2 Divisions and to withdraw a substantial part of the 5th Air Force. The analogy with the previous American withdrawal from Korea, which was followed by the invasion of June 1950, is naturally stressed.”^{xxxvi}

5.86 On 8 September 1954, the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) was established on the signature of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (Manila Pact). The Korean War was a factor in the creation of the alliance, and contributed to Australia’s high profile role in its formation.

5.87 A Defence Committee minute of 9 September 1954 stated:

“The United States Joint Chiefs of Staff have approved the reduction of Commonwealth forces in Korea to one Brigade group by the end of 1954, subject to:

1. the designation of the First British Commonwealth Division being retained even though it is to be reduced to Brigade strength;
2. the First Commonwealth Division continuing to furnish its own logistic support.”^{xxxvii}

5.88 On 10 September 1954, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff stated at a meeting of the Military Board:

“Briefly the situation was that the British Commonwealth Division would be reduced to one Brigade Group by the end of 1954, although the title of British Commonwealth Division would be retained.”^{xxxviii}

5.89 The Minister for Defence said in a statement to Parliament on 14 September 1954:

“The possibility of achieving a reduction in the British Commonwealth Forces serving in Korea as part of the United Nations effort has been under examination since the Armistice agreement in July 1953... A plan for the balanced reduction of the British Commonwealth naval, land and air forces in the Korean theatre prepared by the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand has now been agreed to by the United States Chiefs of Staff”.^{xxxix}

5.90 By 21 September 1954, there were reports of growing disagreements between the ROK and the US concerned with:

- US force withdrawals; [Note: The ROK was bitterly opposed to these withdrawals.]
- military aid;
- economic assistance; and
- building up Japan at the expense of Korea.^{xi}

5.91 On 27 September 1954, an article in the Melbourne *Herald* included a report that:

“Red China has dropped a bombshell among the United Nations by serving notice that she intends to replace the seven Chinese divisions now being withdrawn from North Korea.”^{xii}

5.92 The Minister for Defence said in a further statement to Parliament on 28 September 1954:

“Australia cannot maintain three Permanent Forces and large citizen forces as well. Since the Army is predominantly a citizen force, and its strength is being built up through National service to its mobilisation target of 115,500, the size and cost of the Permanent Army is to be reviewed.

“The achievement of this objective cannot be fully realised while the present commitments exist in Korea.”^{xliii}

5.93 By late 1954, the British Admiralty had identified the need for an early reduction of Royal Navy forces in Korean waters as “most necessary to meet operational needs elsewhere” and because of recruiting implications. They were keen to get the co-operation of Australia, New Zealand and Canada for a joint approach to the USA over major force reductions. This was an argument that was being developed throughout 1954.^{xliiii}

5.94 Professor Robert O’Neill sums up the period from the Armistice to the end of 1954 in these terms:

“Once the armistice had been in force long enough to be shown to be effective, the Australian Government began to take the first steps to withdraw its forces from Korea to enable other commitments to be made to the Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve in Malaya. Proposals for the establishment of this reserve were agreed upon by the Australian, British and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff when they met in Melbourne from 19 to 21 October 1953. The three governments gave approval to these proposals after the negotiations which took place over the following eighteen months. In early 1955 the Australian Government announced that it would definitely commit forces to the Far East Strategic Reserve.

“The withdrawal of Commonwealth forces from Korea had been discussed by the Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand Governments in 1952 and 1953. They agreed that in the first phase of withdrawal the 1st Commonwealth Division should be reduced to a brigade group, the Commonwealth naval commitment should be reduced to four warships, and the air component should be withdrawn, leaving only two transport aircraft. Of these forces, Australia was to provide one battalion, one warship and the two transport aircraft. Thus the second Australian battalion, the second warship, No. 77 Squadron, RAAF, No. 91 Composite Wing, RAAF, and most of No. 36 Transport Squadron, RAAF, would be released and a considerable reduction in supporting personnel in Japan would also be possible.

“The United States Government strongly opposed any reduction in the strength of the forces available to the United Nations Command until August 1954. In early September the United States joint Chiefs of Staff agreed to the implementation of the Commonwealth withdrawal plan, following President Eisenhower’s announcement that the United States Army commitment to Korea would be reduced from six divisions to two by the end of the year. Prime Minister Menzies informed the House of Representatives on 14 September 1954 that one of the two Australian battalions would be withdrawn as soon as possible, followed by further small army detachments later in the year. No. 77 Squadron and No. 36 Squadron, less two of its aircraft, would return to Australia by the end of the year. The RAN would maintain only one destroyer or frigate in Korean waters after 1954 and the staff and functions of the British Commonwealth Base at Kure would be reduced following a review of requirements by Lieutenant General H. Wells, Commander-in-Chief, British Commonwealth Forces, Korea.

“During the first eight months of 1954 some informal withdrawals had taken place by the indirect method of not fully replacing personnel who returned to Australia following the expiry of their assigned tour of duty in Korea. The Australian Army was in great difficulties maintaining its force in Korea at the full strength of 3970 men, because recruiting rates in Australia had declined after the armistice. By mid-1954 the Australian Army contingent in Korea was 114 men below strength and numbers fell more rapidly thereafter. The Defence Committee warned the Government that by late 1954 it would be acutely difficult to maintain two battalions in Korea. Thus Menzies’s announcement that the commitment would soon be

reduced to one battalion was greeted with relief by the Military Board, which was then able to give top priority to the raising of a full battalion for service in Malaya. In the two months following Menzies's announcement on 14 September, one ship of the RAN was withdrawn without replacement and both 3 RAR and No. 77 Squadron, RAAF, left the theatre of operations.”^{xliv}

Navy – conditions experienced

5.95 The following ships were allotted to the Royal Australian Navy Component BCFK during the periods shown below.

Ship	Commencement	Conclusion
HMAS <i>Culgoa</i>	14.3.53	8.11.53
HMAS <i>Tobruk</i>	3.6.53	21.1.54
HMAS <i>Arunta</i>	21.1.54	22.9.54
HMAS <i>Sydney</i>	27.10.53	2.6.54
HMAS <i>Murchison</i>	8.11.53	25.6.54
HMAS <i>Shoalhaven</i>	25.6.54	28.2.55
HMAS <i>Condamine</i>	28.2.55	2.10.55

5.96 Professor Robert O’Neill sums up naval activity during this period as follows:

“The [Australian] destroyers and frigates [after the Armistice] were occupied principally in patrolling the west coast near the Armistice line, both to protect the islands controlled by the Republic of Korea and to prevent infiltration by Communist forces... There were occasional alerts when North Korean military aircraft came near, or when North Korean infiltrators in small boats were detected, but generally the coastal patrols were uneventful.”^{xlv}

5.97 The terms of the Armistice required implementation at sea as on land:

“Then, the ten days allowed by the armistice for the evacuation of the UN-held islands having elapsed, the [HMCS *Iroquois*], along with the rest of the UN naval forces, withdrew south of the parallel...”^{xlvi}

5.98 In a ‘secret and personal’ report of 4 August 1953, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station, provided to the UK First Sea Lord [Chief of Navy] a list of ships “completely ready to resume hostilities at about five days’ notice...” and stated, “Full readiness for war must be maintained. If shooting restarts it may well be on a wider scale than before. For this reason, war complements cannot be reduced...” In his reply of 18 August 1953, the First Sea Lord adopted a calmer view: “I fully appreciate the feeling that there must be in the Far East that the Korean War might well start again and that it might be on a bigger scale for our ships and aircraft. Nevertheless, I am quite sure we must take this opportunity of letting ships relax...”^{xlvii}

5.99 HMAS *Culgoa*’s August 1953 Report of Proceedings stated in part:

“2. From the 1st to the 13th the ship was in the Worthington area, and I held the position of CTU 95.1.5. It was a period of little activity, as the Korean Ceasefire had become effective, and the consequent concentration of forces on Paengnyong Do, Sochong Do and Taechong Do had been speedily effected without our being required to assist.

“3. Patrols of the Worthington area were carried out from the 2nd to the 6th by ships of Task Unit 6.1, which was placed under my command for that period. From the 7th to the 13th with the exception of the 9th when weather conditions were poor, we carried out daylight patrols in either the Chodo area or Worthington area. All patrols were carried out with a supporting ship, to lessen the chances of false claims of violation of North Korean territorial waters being made. Little surface traffic was seen in enemy waters, and no evidence of activity on Chodo or Sokto was found.

“4. The ship was dressed with masthead flags on the 4th and 5th, the occasions being the birthdays of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and Her Royal Highness Princess Irene of the Netherlands.”^{xlviii}

5.100 In his Report of Proceedings for August 1953, the Second-in-Command, Far East Station, wrote:

“I was directed to carry out frequent surface and air patrols of the North Korean coast outside the three-mile limit... , apparently with the aim of letting the Communists see that we were still present and alert, as well as to observe anything of interest going on. No enemy activity was observed on these patrols and on 25th August I was instructed to discontinue them... A somewhat unsatisfactory position exists as a result of continuing activity by numerous small, unrelated intelligence agencies which operate from our islands [off the west coast of Korea]. I have been instructed that ‘no cognisance whatsoever’ is to be taken of these activities. Consequently the Task Unit Commanders have orders on the one hand to prevent possible infringements of the Armistice terms, and on the other to take no notice of what is the most obvious—indeed, at present, the only—potential infringement that they encounter”.^{xlix}

5.101 HMAS *Culgoa*'s September 1953 Report of Proceedings included the following:

“3. After taking over I anchored to the East of Paengnyong Do, in a position giving radar coverage of the Northern and Eastern approaches to that island. This was done to detect any clandestine junk movement, as an infiltration of agents into Paengnyong-Do had recently been attempted. The ships of the unit anchored in company with us by day, and each night were sent to night stations...

...

“6. At 0928/4th we proceeded to an anchorage off Taechong Do. Here I lunched on board H.M.S. *Crane*... Entered the anchorage at 1640 with mail... We sailed at 1731 and returned to our anchorage off Paengnyong Do.

...

“9. At 0717/9th we weighed and steamed to rendezvous with H.M.A.S. *Tobruk* at Taechong Do... At 1000 we sailed for Sasebo...”ⁱ

5.102 In a report from Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station, to the British Admiralty of 12 October 1953, regarding reduction of ships' complements to interim peace standard, he informs them:

“Whilst I am most anxious to reduce the complements of all ships to interim peace standard to improve habitability and to provide much-needed ratings for manning the Fleet elsewhere, to do so too soon would only result in a chaotic situation, were hostilities to break out again.”ⁱⁱ

5.103 The Flag Officer Second-in-Command, Far East Station, states in a Report of Proceedings for 11 November 1953:

“There have been a few instances of unidentified aircraft approaching the islands at night. Red warnings have been issued by the TADC on Paengyong-Do but no incident developed until 11 November when, at 2010i two slow low-flying aircraft were sighted over Paengyong-Do. Guns on the island opened fire and claimed hits: there is some evidence that one aircraft may have crashed later. Ships were not involved.”ⁱⁱⁱ

5.104 The Commander-in-Chief, Far East Station wrote to the UK First Sea Lord [Chief of Navy] on 30 November 1953 about the political and military outlook:

“Assuming that the present uneasy truce conditions persist (and I see no real hope of a political settlement), I shall want soon to get free to move the majority of my ships around the Station as I think fit, leaving only a small standing ‘ration’ in Japan”.

5.105 He goes to express concern that with the current rate of reductions, the Commonwealth Dominions will provide all of the destroyers and frigates in the forward area, indicating that the Royal Navy was “leaving the baby with the other Commonwealth navies”.ⁱⁱⁱ

5.106 The Royal Canadian Navy official history sums up the naval force structure at the end of 1953 as follows:

“In December of 1953 the Royal Navy completed what was in effect a minor reduction of its Korean force by returning the command of Task Group 95.1 to the U.S.N. and withdrawing the Flag Officer Second-in-Command Far East Station to Hong Kong. Henceforth seven RN or Commonwealth destroyers and frigates were maintained in the immediate war area on a rotational basis, with the remainder ordinarily at Hong Kong on seven days' notice; of the seven ships in the operational area, two were usually Canadian destroyers. A suggestion by CANCOMDESFE that the RCN ships be withdrawn to Esquimalt with the understanding that they would return to Korea on three weeks' notice should hostilities begin again was rejected by Canadian Naval Headquarters. The ships were, however, ordered to reduce from war complement to operational complement by 1 March, 1954...”^{iv}

5.107 HMAS *Arunta*'s June 1954 Report of Proceedings reads in part:

“1–5 June lay at anchor in vicinity of Paengyong-do. This period completed an uneventful 16-day patrol in which there were no incidents of an operational nature. Relieved on 5 June, proceeded to Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, completed 1 day full-calibre firing. Further 8 days, shopping and bus trips arranged, but Dockyard swimming pool proved main attraction. Also effected shipboard repairs. Sailed for Kure 18 June. Anti-aircraft firings cancelled due to weather. Competed in USS *Mount McKinley* track and field meeting 22 June. Cricket, running, tug of war, heaving line throw and veterans race. Splendid lunch. 26 June, returned to Korean west coast operational zone. Lay off Paengyong-do for remainder of month, no incidents, no armistice violations.”^{iv}

5.108 And for July 1954:

“2. From the beginning of the month until... 6 July 1954, H.M.A.S. *Arunta* remained in the vicinity of Paengyong Do carrying out the duties of CTU 95.1.2 and CTU 95.1.5. During this latter period of a 16-day patrol there were no incidents of an operational nature and no violations of the Armistice Agreement were observed...

...

“7. ... H.M.A.S. *Arunta* returned to Yongpyong Do...

“8. There were no incidents of an operational nature and no violations of the Armistice Agreement during the period H.M.A.S. *Arunta* was acting as CTU 95.1.2 and CTU 95.1.6.

Ships were disposed at night stations each night and the minesweepers carried out a planned minesweeping program to check-sweep the searched channels.”^{lvi}

5.109 In his Report of Proceedings for 10 August 1954, the Flag Officer Second-in-Command, Far East Station, regretfully advised that RFA *Gold Ranger* had departed Korean waters, leaving the Royal Navy dependent on other sources for fresh water and furnace fuel oil, and limiting the employment of Commonwealth ships.^{lvi}

5.110 RAN veterans provided the following comments in submissions to the Working Party about the period from the Armistice to November 1954:

(Sailor, HMAS *Arunta*): “We served in Korea for most of 1954. It was only a few months after the Armistice when we arrived there, and it was still well and truly like a war zone. We would often sail at night in complete darkness, even without the navigation lights on. ... We had a number of air-raids during the months of April, May and June. Not only were we patrolling certain areas, but we also did some minesweeping.”

(Sailor, HMAS *Sydney*): “I compare the entries in my diary for the HMAS *Warramunga* [July–August 1953] and find that most of the *Sydney* trip was devoted to being on edge, cold and even bored witless whilst on watch. This is not a good combination.”

(Sailor, RAN): “As a Korea veteran (1951 and 1952) I personally have no axe to grind with the recognition of post-Armistice Korean veterans ... In fact I had another tour of duty in 1954 and found the same anxiety state still present whenever we were in Korean waters.”

5.111 RAN veterans provided the following comments about the period in evidence to the Working Party at public hearings:

(Sailor, HMAS *Sydney*): “I was never fearful, but I felt apprehensive. I was careful, I was cautious, concerned. If you can forgive a poetic statement, it was almost like the Sword of Damocles. There was something about to happen. It didn’t happen, fortunately, but that was the general feeling, and as time went on, that feeling started to grow. And I can understand now how some people going through stressful situations end up with what I think is called post-traumatic stress disorder. I would never admit to having that, but in retrospect, that was the feeling that I was starting to generate.”

(Sailor, HMAS *Sydney*): “You see, we are the forgotten people of the Korean War. You know, I had to go to a psychiatrist and he couldn’t believe that we didn’t have counselling in our day, you see. And I said, ‘They didn’t even know what it was’. You know, when something happened, an accident—I was on the chocks when the bloke walked into the propeller and had his head just about lopped off. And I mean, they marched me down to the sick bay with him and then it was, ‘Go back to work’, you know, as if nothing had happened. That poor gentleman died some hours later, but that lives with me for the rest of my life. And of course today, if they get shot at, they have counsellors and what have you there, and they get their just deserts. They have people here to welcome them home. You know, who welcomed us home? Our families, nobody else. There was no Prime Minister there to kiss *our* backsides. So you know, I think that they deserve these awards.”

(Sailor, HMAS *Warramunga* 1950–51, HMAS *Sydney* 1953):

“Gordon Jones:

Can I just pursue this bit about what your expectations were a bit further. When you were operating in *Warramunga*, what was your understanding of the threat that the North Koreans and the Chinese presented to you?

“Witness:

Well, you just couldn’t trust them. You didn’t know whether they would go on with all their

skirmishes after they even signed the treaty. Oh, we wasn't there then, but I was and the ship was. But you just had to be on your toes all the time.

"Gordon Jones:

And what about on the *Sydney*. What was your understanding then?

Witness:

Well, we just treated it as a cruise up there, like a Far East Asia cruise."

(Sailor, HMAS *Tobruk*):

"Ian Crawford:

Did you engage any junks or apprehend any junks after the Armistice, who were involved in minelaying?

"Witness:

There were many [that] came under surveillance. They were being watched night and day when you were on those patrols. And the submarines... There were submarines in the area, and we kept track of some of those for quite some time. They were there. And especially where the carriers were. We're not sure who they were, but I know in the early stages we dropped a few charges over and got an oil slick out, but we never got anything out other than the oil slick, so whether that was deliberate or what, I don't know..."

(Sailor, HMAS *Tobruk*): "... when we came back and we got married, our wives became our psychologists. And our kids had to learn to live with us. We got no help out of it."

(Sailor, HMAS *Sydney*): "And being an aircraft carrier, I was attached to Squadrons. We worked in liaison with them and also with the ground forces ashore in Korea. Whether it might have been the RAAF or the Royal Air Force or the Yanks or whichever, we worked in cohesion with them as far as patrols and whatever the land forces whatever they worked. We worked in full concert with them. And our aircraft in the operational area were always fully-armed: that was with 20 mm Hispanos on them and the guns and also when they had rockets. Not so much on the bombing, but—well, we did bomb, but I'd say that's probably an exercise, but they were always armed fully on take off. And we were always—in the operational area, we always remained at action stations. We always made it operational and ready for attack position at all times."

Army – conditions experienced

5.112 The Working Party has gained the following information about conditions experienced by the Army in the period from the Armistice to November 1954. Unless otherwise stated, the information is from unit war diaries. It is presented in chronological order.

5.113 26 July 1953: On the day prior to the Armistice, 2 and 3 RAR occupied the left of the 28 British Commonwealth Division defensive position on the Hook. At that stage the total enemy strength in Korea was assessed at 1,175,165.^{lviii}

5.114 27 July 1953, 2 RAR instruction on truce actions: "On move back from the Hook, no ammunition will be expended without the permission of CO 2 RAR."

5.115 27 July 1953, 2 RAR Operation Instruction: Action on ceasefire: "All ranks will continue to carry personal weapons and ammunition but no weapons will be loaded or fired except in the extreme case of an enemy attack, when the company commander on the spot will give the order."

5.116 Lieutenant General Sir Henry Wells, Commander-in-Chief BCFK, said in a Special Order of the Day on 28 July 1953:

“In the less dangerous but not less difficult days of the Armistice... Many of our comrades have made the supreme sacrifice in this United Nations cause. We who serve on, have an obligation to them to continue our task until it is certain that the purpose for which they fought has been accomplished.”

5.117 Major General West, GOC 1 British Commonwealth Division, said on 28 July 1953:

“After the ceasefire, there will be no firing in forward areas except by the order of the local commander to repel an attack. After we have withdrawn from our forward positions, no-one must move forward of the no-pass line unless authorised by the Armistice Commission. There must be no relaxation in our readiness for battle.”

5.118 2 RAR, 27–28 July 1953: “Emphasis has been laid on the fact the Armistice does NOT represent the end of the Korean conflict and that it is merely a tentative cessation of hostilities”. Hostile action in 2 RAR completely ceased at 10.00 pm on 27 July 1953.

5.119 A message of 29 July 1953 from Brigadier Wilton, Commander 28 Commonwealth Brigade, read in part:

“You will be asked to work hard for the next few days, but at least you will have the respite from danger and discomfort you richly deserve.”

5.120 There were no recorded incidents after the Armistice in the 28 Brigade War Diary. Brigadier Wilton attended the signing of the Armistice at Panmunjom as Australian representative.

5.121 On 28 July 1953, Brigadier Wilton wrote:

“Now that the tension is off we all feel deflated. Right up to the ceasefire morale was high and all the troops cheerful. From now on it is going to be hard to stop them getting up to mischief. I shall have to keep them fully occupied with the proper proportions of work, training and recreation.”^{lix}

5.122 The 1 [British] Royal Tank Regiment Report for July 1953 included the following:

“This will probably be the last Korean report in its present form written by this Regiment since, after 3 years, during which time the Regiment has been in action 5 months, a truce has been signed in Korea.”^{lx}

5.123 The BCFK Weekly Review of 2 August 1953 recorded that:

“... the UN had no objection to the Communists’ proposal to employ 1,000 civil police in the DMZ, provided they wore distinctive markings. UN intends to employ 650. Agree that civil police be armed with rifles or pistols only.”^{lxi}

5.124 For 22 August 1953, it recorded that over the previous week there had been 31 incidents involving enemy bandits in South Korea, involving some 549 bandits. ROK civil police claimed to have killed 10 and captured 3.^{lxii}

5.125 As one historian put it:

“An uneasy peace now settled over Korea... There was a truce; not a complete and satisfactory peace... The Royal Fusiliers, whose time in Korea was almost ended, breathed a great sigh of relief, but the other Battalions were still wary.”^{lxviii}

5.126 Immediately after the Armistice the Division Column [transport of personnel and supplies] was involved in reducing forward ammunition stockpiles and the movement of stores and troops back to the new defensive positions (the Kansas Line). It was then involved in SCRAM exercises and other preparations for the resumption of hostilities, but by April 1954 it was involved in very routine administration. [SCRAM exercises were designed to practise the rapid occupation of defensive positions on the Kansas Line.] Professor David Horner describes the SCRAM exercises in these terms:

“Once a month the division had a trial occupation of the Kansas Line, and not even the divisional commander knew the date or the time of an exercise until he received H Hour from the corps commander.”^{lxiv}

5.127 The 1 British Commonwealth Division operational/intelligence weekly summaries at the start of the period are comprehensive and lengthy, with many reports of possible violations, enemy strengths and identifications. As time progresses, particularly from later in 1954, the summaries (including the excerpts from the 8th Army and I Corps summaries) are briefer, reporting fewer incidents and mainly concerned with identifying CCF formations withdrawing from the Korean theatre.

5.128 At a Military Board meeting of 31 July 1953:

“The CGS said that with the Korean Armistice the weekly briefings of the Board by officers of the Directorate of Military Intelligence would cease. However, he had arranged for a final briefing at next week’s meeting, covering particularly the conditions of the truce in Korea.”^{lxv}

5.129 The NZ official history describes the immediate post-Armistice and the progressive easing of military tension:

“Although the fighting had ceased, there was no certainty in August 1953 that it would not resume, and among the early post-armistice tasks of the Commonwealth forces on land was that of preparing new defensive positions capable of withstanding an enemy offensive. Thus the gunners, once they had cleared their old position, began building new gun positions in Line Kansas. This was 'virgin country'. Land had to be cleared and levelled, drains put in, roads constructed and cables laid. While these were sensible precautions, the men became increasingly confident that there would not be renewed fighting. This impression was reinforced when the guns officially came out of action and were lined up wheel to wheel in the gun park. 'This is the first time since I've been here that the guns haven't had ammunition handy and been ready to fire, night and day, at a moment's notice,' Wilfred Poulton noted. 'It would probably take an hour now for us to get our guns set up and parallel, and get the first round away, if we had to do so.’”^{lxvi}

5.130 On 1 August 1953, the MAC “agreed that there would be no restrictions to the number of troops employed in clearing the DMZ, provided that all troops were unarmed. It was also agreed that all types of equipment may be used and that explosives may be employed for the destruction of field defences.”^{lxvii}

5.131 In the 1 British Commonwealth Division Periodic Report No. 6 of 1 April 1953 to 1 August 1953, the GOC (General West) said:

“Morale remains very high but the inevitable reaction after the Armistice has resulted in a slackening of discipline. This is going to be a considerable problem because there is not much to do in Korea except fight... It is hoped that this will be the last war-time periodic report from Korea.”^{lxviii}

5.132 1 August 1953, 2 RAR: “All ammunition was withdrawn from all personnel this week.”

5.133 26 August 1953, 2 RAR at Peace Camp:

“Companies continue to improve existing conditions in company areas and all efforts adding to the beautification of the area. White tape and lime is being used extensively in order to brighten the appearance of things which are normally unattractive.”

5.134 In August 1953, 3 RAR moved to Area 6 well north of the Imjin because of its potential as a good living and training area, not cramped for space and troops were not exposed to the temptations of more southern crowded camp areas. It assisted in providing security over Pintail Bridge each night. Because of 3 RAR’s distance north, it took them 2–2½ hours to report ready on the Kansas Line, although the target was 4 hours.

5.135 On 15 August 1953, 28 Brigade issued an Operations Intelligence Estimate Autumn 1953 based on a I Corps estimate of 15 August 1953. Opposing 1 British Commonwealth Division were elements of 2 CCF Armies (3–4 Divisions, 30–40,000 personnel). A further 33,000 CCF personnel were capable of intervention within 24 hours. It went on:

“There is NO indication of an imminent offensive and for the immediate future the enemy is believed likely to organise, occupy and defend battle positions north of the northern boundary of the DMZ, simultaneously maintaining the ceasefire status but offering covert assistance to subversive elements in South Korea.”

5.136 On 19 August 1953, there was a report of the capture by US Marines of an enemy agent swimming the Imjin River.

5.137 26 August 1953, 28 Brigade Operations Intelligence Summary:

“Briefly, the enemy will probably organise, occupy and defend battle positions in close proximity to the northern boundary of the DMZ, nominally maintaining conditions of the Armistice while assisting subversive elements in South Korea.”

5.138 Routine Orders, 28 August 1953:

“Previous orders have been issued regarding carrying of personal weapon at all times. However, when personnel are proceeding south of the Corps rear boundary [Uijongbu], arms will not be carried except for guards, escorts and military police.”

5.139 Routine Orders 31 August 1953, 2 RAR: “Personal weapons will be carried at all times in the Division area.”

5.140 3 RAR's Kansas Line positions were centred on the Lozenge feature on the southern side of the Imjin River overlooking Pintail Bridge (see maps, Annex 5B).

5.141 The BCFK Weekly Review for 5–11 September 1953 stated that the ROK National Police recorded 49 clashes in the central and southern security command areas, killing 9 of 583 enemy bandits.^{lxix}

5.142 7 September 1953, 2 RAR: 5 Korean Service Corps members walked into a marked minefield; 1 killed, 2 seriously wounded, 2 slightly wounded.

5.143 Major General G E R Bastin, UK and Commonwealth representative on the MAC, informed all officers of 28 Brigade on 10 September 1953: "An armistice is not a peace. It is a military agreement between opposing commanders to cease fire."

5.144 11 September 1953, 2 RAR Routine Orders, Shooting of Game:

"There will be NO shooting of pheasants before 1 October. The mass slaughter of pheasants for unit parties is to be deplored. NO weapons other than shotguns are to be used for shooting game birds."

5.145 The 1 British Commonwealth Division War Diary entry for 17 September 1953 records that the GOC watched an artillery practice firing and then attended a picnic lunch.^{lxx}

5.146 On 18 September 1953, 2 RAR issued orders to the Pintail Bridge guard. Their duties were: protect the bridge against sabotage and damage; prevent unauthorised use of the bridge; prevent infiltration of unauthorised Chinese and Koreans into the area; patrol the banks on either side of the bridge to prevent sabotage; be correctly dressed, smartly turned out, pay correct compliments. There was no mention of orders for opening fire.

5.147 On 20 September 1953, there was a report of Korean Service Corps thefts from officers' lines. A large quantity of personal property was stolen.

5.148 On 20 September 1953, 3 RAR assumed responsibility for night patrolling of the south bank of the Imjin River within their area.

5.149 The 1 British Commonwealth Division Instruction for Exercise SCRAM 1 specified that I US Corps would conduct a practice operation of the Kansas Line [SCRAM 1] on or after 21 September during daylight, to be completed within 4 hours. First line ammunition was to be carried but not distributed below Company level.^{lxxi}

5.150 A September 1953 brief history of Korean War by 28 Brigade ends on 27 July 1953.

5.151 In September 1953, the Division Column was still clearing the Jamestown Line of defensive stores.

5.152 The September 1953 instruction for OPERATION SCRAM 2 stated:

“Weapons: all normal weapons will be carried and deployed. Ammunition: First line ammunition is to be issued to Companies by the RSM, is to be carried in bulk by Companies; boxes will NOT be broken, ammunition will NOT be issued to personnel.”

5.153 The Brigade reported about 10 Korean Service Corps and civilian security violations at checkpoints per week in September 1953.

5.154 The 28 Brigade weekly Operations Intelligence Summary for September 1953 noted: “The enemy in Korea is capable of resuming hostilities at any time.”

5.155 A 3 RAR instruction on security of the Brigade area, September 1953, contained Orders for apprehending unauthorised personnel: If armed, [they were] to be disarmed, arrested and taken to Division PW [Prisoner of War] cage. Without proper documents, [they were] to be handed to the Field Security Detachment.

5.156 On 24 September, I Corps conducted the first EXERCISE SCRAM.

5.157 28 September 1953, 2 RAR orders on personal arms and equipment:

“Personal arms will NOT now be carried except for guards and picquets or when ordered for training or occupation of Kansas positions... Companies will withdraw all personal weapons, which will be tagged and stored in Company Q stores. Bolts etc will be removed from weapons and will be kept in locked security boxes... Weapons will be stored so they are available for immediate issue in case of emergency.”

5.158 A 1 British Commonwealth Division Plan was issued 7 October 1953 for counter-attack on the Kansas Line in the event of Communist infiltration or penetration of defensive locations or the loss of vital ground.^{lxvii}

5.159 From October 1953, members of the Division Column were playing a lot more sport.

5.160 On 13 October 1953, 1 British Commonwealth Division issued Operational Instruction No. 85 to the Commander 25 Canadian Infantry Brigade:

“The aim of this Instruction is to clarify the methods you will employ in delaying the enemy north of River Imjin. ... The object of the covering force is to give time to the rest of the Division to occupy Kansas. The covering force must therefore ensure that the enemy is held north of the Imjin for not less than 4 hrs... Operations north of the Imjin must be so conducted that at no time is there any great danger of a major portion of the covering force being destroyed. It is vital that this force should move intact into its position in the Kansas position, as it constitutes the Division reserve without which the main battle cannot be fought.”^{lxviii}

5.161 3 RAR Routine Orders, 13 October 1953, on the security of personal arms and ammunition:

“Personal arms will not be carried by a member, except DMZ duties, guards, picquets, sentries, training exercises or parages, daily arms inspections. Guards, sentries and picquets to be armed only with rifle and bayonet. Ammunition will not be carried except DMZ duty, guard, sentry, picquet, training exercise involving the use of live ammunition. For guards, sentries, picquets, rifle is to be loaded but no round in breech. Use of weapons: guards, sentries, picquet is to make every effort to arrest intruder without use of his firearm. If arrest is impossible, guard is to shout HALT OR I WILL FIRE and place a round in the breech. If no

effect, repeat. If still no effect and no other way of protecting Government property, the guard should fire WITH INTENT TO WOUND.”

5.162 On 23 October 1953, Military Board heard an address by Major General West, GOC 1 British Commonwealth Division. The minutes record that:

“At the present time in common with all UN troops the Division was engaged in building a new defensive line south of the DMZ ... Morale in the Division was very high and the troops were working hard. Each week consisted of four days work on building the line, 2 days on administration and one rest day... He expected that work on the new line would continue until January/ February 1954 and that up to this time the maintenance of high morale would not be difficult. After the line was completed it would be necessary for the Division to undertake a vigorous training program in order to keep the troops fully occupied.”^{lxiv}

5.163 At the same conference there was an item on ‘Extra messing on Christmas Day’:

“Subject to Treasury approval, the following grant per member would be made:

- a. Troops serving in Korea—an amount of 5s sterling per head...
- b. Troops serving overseas but not engaged in operations—2/6d per member in camp on Christmas Day.”^{lxv}

5.164 On 23 October 1953, 3 RAR issued Standing Orders for members acting as DMZ police:

“Duties

1. Protect members of the MAC joint observer teams and NNSC inspection teams.
2. Enforce law and order within the DMZ and apprehend violators.
3. Apprehend personnel entering the DMZ from north or south without proper credentials.
4. Keep close watch of the DMZ in conjunction with the road blocks and OPs and report all activity.

“Dress and weapons:

3 RAR dress plus American pattern helmet liners painted white, marked DMZP in red, MP armband on upper left arm, and web belt and bayonet. Each policeman will be armed with two weapons : a .38 pistol and a rifle. 20 rounds for the pistol and 20 rounds for the rifle. Magazine charged, rifle unloaded. No rounds carried in the chamber of either weapon.”

5.165 On the same day, Standing Orders were issued for 3 RAR security patrols:

“It is suspected that the Chinese and North Koreans are sending over patrols to lay up and observe our installations on both sides of the River Imjin in violation of the truce. Patrol task is to locate and apprehend any unauthorised personnel within the Company area of responsibility. Patrols will NOT fire on any personnel until they have given due warning and until they have given the orders to halt three times.”

5.166 27 October 1953, 2 RAR: “Supplies of hobby material are now available in the education centre. These include model planes, ships and speedboats. The demand for these models is great, and another consignment has been ordered from Japan.”

5.167 3 RAR Operation Instruction, 28 October 1953: in their area of responsibility south of the Imjin, only rifle and Owen gun, no LMGs to be carried.

5.168 By November 1953, the Canadian Brigade was undertaking EXERCISE SHAKEUP in its role as the Division screen forward of the Imjin. The Canadian Brigade training program post-Armistice was “geared more to long-term development than active preparation for immediate hostilities”.^{lxvii}

5.169 ‘*Three years in Korea*’, a US Army I Corps pamphlet, was issued in late 1953:

“The truce negotiations, which had been in progress for the preceding two years, reached an end with the signing of the Armistice Agreement at 1000 hours on 27 July 1953... The word was passed to the lowest echelons of the Corps and firing ceased a few minutes before the historic hour. As the realisation that the fighting was over spread among the front-line soldiers, they emerged slowly from their bunkers, not in an elated mood as might have been expected, but with the knowledge that another phase of the War had been reached and a sober understanding that the truce represented a temporary ceasefire requiring a continuation of the alert, ready-for-action attitude of the past. ... In every mind is the knowledge that an enemy may come; in every heart is the determination to turn it back.”

5.170 On 13 November 1953, 3 RAR ambushed and surprised 9 members of the ROKA stealing from an old camp (Area 6) and handed them over to the Field Security Detachment. Thefts then stopped.

5.171 In the Division Operations Intelligence Summary of 14 November 1953, “... it is clear that at the moment [enemy] preparations, opposite the Divisional front at least, are defensive rather than offensive in character.”

5.172 In the Division Operations Intelligence Summary of 22 November 1953, “...There is little evidence to show that the enemy reacted in any way to EX SHAKEUP. NO unusual movement of personnel or vehicles was observed...”

5.173 23 November 1953, 2 RAR: A surprise SCRAM was achieved in 2 hours.

5.174 A 26 November 1953 news report in the Melbourne *Herald* stated of the Australian troops:

“... Their tented camps are being strengthened against the secondary enemy: the piercing cold that will soon intensify on the wind from Siberia. Tents get the treatment with sandbagging, floorboards and the lethal looking but effective petrol stoves or ‘choofers’. Quonset huts are going up to give sheltered messing, laundry facilities and room for the hobbies and vocational training which both Australian battalions will provide if the truce holds.”^{lxviii}

5.175 On 27 November 1953, 2 RAR Routine Orders relayed a message from the Federal Secretary of the RSL: “The RSL have unbounded admiration for your service in Korea, which upholds the highest traditions of Australian battle service”.

5.176 The BCFK Weekly Review for 28 November–4 December 1953 reported 35 incidents involving 659 bandits: killed 29, captured 6.^{lxviii}

5.177 The Division Operations Intelligence Summary of 28 November 1953 reported a significant decrease in enemy sightings over the previous week, most likely for the following reasons:

- a. restricted visibility due to adverse weather...;
- b. defences astride the DMZ have now been completed up to a certain 'priority' level whereby troops are now being released to concentrate on road and rear installation improvement and tactical training;
- c. winterisation activities".

Point b. was considered the most likely reason.

5.178 The 1 British Commonwealth Division War Diaries for the period essentially report visits, meals and conduct of the occasional exercise. Throughout the period, the Division undertook OPERATION CONTINUE, which was the occupation of battle positions, training for the resumption of hostilities. EXERCISE SHAKEUP involved the occupation of the Division battle positions timed with the withdrawal of the covering force (25 Canadian Infantry Brigade) into the defensive positions. They took the lessons learned from each of these exercises and incorporated them into their training and doctrine. For example at the GOC's post-Armistice EXERCISE SHAKEUP conference 21 November 1953: "The GOC highlighted the lessons learned from the Exercise to be incorporated into the Division's training and operating procedures, expressed a wish to complete all Kansas Line bunkers before the 'freeze-up', stated concern at physical fitness standards, and identified a need to establish suitable tracks for movement of the covering force (25 Brigade)".

5.179 The BCFK Weekly Review reports that for the period 1 December 1953 to 7 April 1954, apparently large-scale anti-guerrilla activities by ROK National Police resulted in 229 enemy bandits killed and 379 taken **PW**^{lxix} [emphasis added].

5.180 On 4 December 1953, 2 RAR Routine Order on reckonable service towards 12 months' Korean service mentions time in hospital for self-inflicted wounds and VD not counting as service in Korea; it makes no mention of operational causes of hospitalisation.

5.181 In the Division Operations Intelligence Summary of 6 December 1953 there is the comment that:

"... [Enemy] DMZ figures rate high as against sightings elsewhere. However, it is considered that this is just normal enemy policing activity".

5.182 On 9 December 1953, 2 RAR reported being taken off patrolling and checkpoint duties and would now focus all their efforts on building the Kansas Line.

5.183 At his conference on 15 December 1953, the GOC advised that "all training during the first four months of 1954 will be designed to prepare the Division for mobile warfare".

5.184 In the 8th Army Intelligence Summary of 15 December 1953, following the interrogation of a 13-year-old, the G2's comment was:

“The above interrogation reveals that the enemy is training boys and young women to infiltrate friendly units. It is highly probable that many agents of this type are already in the employ of units and individuals within 8th Army.”

5.185 On 29 December 1953, the Department of External Affairs advised the High Commissioner in New Delhi:

“Although a replacement field ambulance is not needed under present conditions, one would definitely be required should hostilities again break out. Units selected would then be needed at very short notice.”^{bxxx}

5.186 In its Operations Intelligence Summary of 9 January 1954, 1 British Commonwealth Division concluded that “since early January 1953, it has become increasingly apparent that the number of CCF tanks in Korea has increased.”

5.187 On 14 January 1954, these orders were issued to the 3 RAR Pintail Bridge guard:

- “15. a. All members will carry rifles whilst on duty.
- b. Ammunition of scale 50 rounds per rifle will be kept at the guard tent.
- c. Each sentry will have 10 rounds per rifle. 5 rounds in the mag and 5 in the charger. All ammunition to be carried in the pocket. Weapons will not be loaded without orders from the guard commander.”
- d. Order to fire: The guard commander will make every effort to arrest unauthorised personnel without use of firearms. If arrest is impossible, the sentry will shout HALT OR I FIRE and on orders of the guard commander will place a round in the breach. If no effect, he will repeat it. If still no effect and no other way of effecting arrest, the guard commander should order the sentry to fire WITH INTENT TO WOUND.”

5.188 From the end of 1953, the 1 British Commonwealth Division War Diary increasingly refers to sporting competitions between units as a major form of activity.

5.189 In January 1954, these orders were issued to the 3 RAR Tokchong Ammunition Point guard:

“Use of firearms: only for protection of military or personal property, protection of personnel. Action before discharging firearm: picquet will shout in a loud voice HALT OR I FIRE. On orders of the guard commander, he will load. If no effect, he will repeat it. If still no effect and no other way of effecting arrest, the guard commander should order the sentry to fire WITH INTENT TO WOUND.”

5.190 On 30 January 1954, 1 British Commonwealth Division conducted EXERCISE POLECAT 3. The purpose was to clear the Division area of unauthorised personnel north of the Imjin River. 3 RAR reported that no unauthorised personnel were apprehended.

5.191 On the same day, the Division Operations Intelligence Summary reported that information gathered from across the Division front “would suggest that the enemy is conducting widespread exercises on a larger scale than hitherto reported”.

5.192 The official history of the Canadian Army in Korea records that:

“In the latter part of January 1954 the Canadians assumed a special state of readiness in case China should decide to renew the war after an unfavourable turn in the political conference, or if India released non-repatriated war prisoners should the Conference fail to take place”.^{lxxxix} [Note: The Conference did not proceed, prisoners were released, no incidents occurred.]

5.193 In February 1954, 3 RAR reported that their anti-tank guns were withdrawn.

5.194 On 10 February 1954, 2 RAR issued an administrative order:

- A. If 24 hours warning of the resumption of hostilities is available, the deployment of unit echelons will be carried out in stages according to the state of the alert.
- B. If no warning of the resumption of hostilities is received, deployment of A and B echelons will follow that of F echelon.”

5.195 The 1 British Commonwealth Division Operational Intelligence Summary of 13 February 1954 reports that:

“On 27 July 1953 1 Commonwealth Division was opposed on the left and the centre by 137 Division, 46 CCF Army and on the right by 2 Regt, 1 Division, 1 CCF Army. Relative positions have NOT apparently been altered by the withdrawal of forces from the DMZ.”

5.196 From this time onwards, the Operations Intelligence Summaries are preoccupied with withdrawal of CCF forces from North Korea.

5.197 On 15 February 1954, 3 RAR reported that the Battalion HQ Batman's tent was entered by 2 armed members of 1 ROK Division who stole some items of personal equipment. As a response, more security patrols were mounted.

5.198 23 February 1954, 2 RAR Routine Orders dealing with ‘Game shooting’:

“With effect 15 February 1954, all game shooting will cease inside the Division boundary.”

5.199 On prevention and control of rabies:

“Subunits will maintain a register of privately owned dogs. RMO will arrange to inoculate all such animals against rabies. Stray dogs found in Company areas will be taken to 1 COMWEL Division Provost Company, who will take steps to find the rightful owners or arrange disposal.”

5.200 The 1 British Commonwealth Division Operations Intelligence Summary of 27 February 1954 reports “that the North Korean Government has started training additional guerrilla forces to provide reinforcements for those presently operating in South Korea.”

5.201 By March 1954 (before 1 RAR takes over from 2 RAR), the reporting of the Division sector has become quiet, largely concentrating on routine administration. Enemy numbers are trending down and intelligence reports at all levels stop talking about what the enemy is doing and now advise on enemy battle techniques.

5.202 28 Brigade Operations Intelligence Summary for the first week of March 1954 reports that:

“Radar and UNC pilot observations indicate extensive reconnaissance surveillance activity is taking place north of the DMZ and along the coasts of North Korea, where UNC reconnaissance flights have been intercepted or followed... The enemy has continued to overfly UNC territory in violation of the Armistice; 28 enemy violations have been alleged by the UNC... The enemy air forces are presently so disposed that hostilities could be initiated against UNC forces in Korea with little or no warning.”

5.203 On 15 March 1954, 3 RAR captured two boys camping on the Kansas Line. They were handed over to the Field Security Detachment.

5.204 The official history of the Canadian Army in Korea records that the Canadian Prime Minister (Rt Hon Louis St Laurent) opened the Canadian recreation centre (Maple Leaf Park) on 8 March 1954 north of the Imjin River. “The facilities included an auditorium, a gymnasium, a Red Cross centre, and NAAFI wet and dry canteens”. On 18 March 1954 he told the Canadian House of Commons:

“...the morale of all our men is splendid. I was very happy to find that since the actual fighting has ceased, they have been able to overcome, by their own efforts, many of the inconvenient features that interfered with their physical comfort in the surroundings in which they find themselves... and this conviction of each and every one of them that he is a Canadian doing a Canadian job... in the joint effort to prove aggression to be unprofitable”.^{lxviii}

5.205 In April 1954, as part of establishing the Battalion in Peace Camp, 1 RAR issued routine administrative instructions including for Battle/Non-Battle casualties; also instructions for railhead guard at Tokchong:

“Weapons and ammunition: Guards will be armed with rifles and bayonets. 10 rounds of .303 per man will be issued to the guard Commander before leaving 1 RAR location. This will not be issued to individuals unless authorised by OC Troops Railhead Tokchong.”

5.206 The 1 British Commonwealth Division Operations Intelligence Summary for 3 April 1954 recorded that:

“On the I Corps front from 22 to 28 March 1954 a total of 20,227 personnel, 10 tanks, 10 artillery pieces, 1,089 motor vehicles and 530 horse-drawn vehicles were observed opposite the I Corps front. These figures represent a substantial increase on the number of personnel and vehicles sighted during the previous period. The general pattern of enemy activity remains unchanged: personnel were engaged in movement to and from training areas and classes, parade ground activity, attending lectures, maintenance work on roads and tracks, and physical training. Work on main battle positions was restricted to general repair and maintenance.”

5.207 On 3 April 1954, 1 RAR Routine Orders provided warning of minefields in the Kansas Line area and advised that minefield traces were available from Battalion HQ. It also provided orders for the various picquets, which included the statement:

“You will be responsible to ensure that NO unauthorised pers enters the [various locations] ...

“If the intruder runs away, you will load your rifle and call out TWICE ‘Halt or I will fire’. If he will still NOT halt, then shoot to kill.”

5.208 Before leaving Korea, 2 RAR, held a commemorative parade on 4 April 1954 at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery, Pusan. The Honour Roll in the Order of Service identified the dead from 2 RAR for the period 17 March 1953 to 5 April 1954 and for 3 RAR from 28 September 1950 with no end date. However, Private Wilson

of 3 RAR, who died in a vehicle accident on 30 July 1953, is not mentioned in this Honour Roll.

5.209 On 5 April 1954, a summary was prepared of charges of Armistice violations by both sides. The Communist side declared 21 ground and 235 air charges of violation against UNC and the UNC declared 11 ground and 38 air against the Communists.^{lxxxiii}

5.210 On 19–22 April 1954, 1 RAR took part in 28 Brigade EXERCISE MOMENTUM using blank ammunition (10 rounds per rifle). First line live ammunition was carried in unit vehicles. No live ammunition was issued.

5.211 On 26 April–3 May 1954, 1 RAR took part in Divisional EXERCISE IMPETUS. Under Division Instructions, no live ammunition or grenades were to be carried on the man. Issue scales of blank ammunition were provided. 1 RAR issued blank ammunition, 10 rounds per man.

5.212 A report of 4 May 1954 from the Swedish and Swiss members of the NNSC recorded their concerns about the “utterly ridiculous” claims of the Czech and Polish members that the UNC is being obstructionist; they refute that. The NNSC was clearly becoming a major bone of contention between UNC and Communist sides, and between the USA and South Korea—a messy situation politically.^{lxxxiv}

5.213 On 7 May 1954, a new Division Junior Officers Club was opened on the south bank of the Imjin River “in a very picturesque setting” with dining room, bar, lounge, tennis, badminton and swimming.

5.214 In an Order of the Day on 10 May 1954, the GOC 1 British Commonwealth Division complimented all ranks on the recent Divisional Exercise and stated:

“the summer months will provide problems of a completely different nature. I know you will deal with these as they come and ensure that our readiness for war and your physical fitness will remain on their present high level. The ability of this Division to react to a challenge will, I know, be reflected in our work and play during the next few months.”

5.215 From 15 May 1954 the Operations Intelligence Summary provided a new monthly highlight on North Korea, reporting enemy strength at just over 1 million. Both CCF and KPA numbers had increased, not reflecting any build-up but the utilisation of returned POWs, normal recruiting and a more realistic evaluation of enemy strengths. From this time, the 1 British Commonwealth Division War Diary starts to have entries of ‘Nothing to report’.

5.216 On 20 May 1954, the Division provided a warning instruction for friendly frontline troops of an atomic burst. Further instructions in this vein were issued over the coming months. It seems likely that as part of its force reduction strategy, the UNC were contemplating other means of deterring further aggression.

5.217 On 22 May 1954, the Division Operations Intelligence Summary reported an incident in the IX Corps sector when a Greek Regiment OP was fired on. The OP did not return fire.

5.218 On 23 May 1954, the Department of External Affairs reported an interview with General Bastin, UK and Commonwealth member on the MAC. He was quoted as saying that the current dividing line between the Koreas was the most appropriate, and that the fortifications on each side were “most formidable”. He doubted that the South Koreans on their own could withstand an attack from the north, because Communist air supremacy would make all the difference. He also stated that the British Commonwealth Division was “absolutely first class. The troops were given plenty of training and were otherwise kept busy.”^{lxxxv}

5.219 On 25 May 1954, a new Division Senior Officers Club opened on the **north** bank of the Imjin River. [Note: Emphasis added. The grid reference quoted in the 2 RAR War Diary is for a location on the north bank of the Imjin River.]

5.220 In May 1954, 1 RAR weekly routine was reported as: 4 days work on Kansas, 1 day individual and section training; Saturday morning administration; Saturday afternoon sport; Sunday rest.

5.221 On 30 June 1954, a patrol from the Lone Pine Patrol Camp disturbed a group of Koreans, who fled when approached.

5.222 From mid-1954, more of the routine 1 British Commonwealth Division documents, instructions and reports were increasingly graded ‘Restricted’ rather than ‘Secret’ as previously. Operations Intelligence Summaries increasingly reported on events in Indo-China, and Army Corps and Division intelligence summaries continually made the observation, ‘No significant change in enemy patterns of activity’.

5.223 In July 1954 there was a shooting incident involving a civil police boat in the Han River estuary. No damage or injuries were reported.^{lxxxvi} The BCFK Weekly Review for 10–16 July 1954 reported that as a result of the incident, the UNC charged the Communists with bringing automatic weapons into the DMZ and opening fire on authorised civil police. The Communists denied the violations, and no satisfactory solution was obtained.^{lxxxvii}

5.224 On 7 July 1954, there was an incident of unexploded ordnance blowing up in a village where 3 RAR was operating. A Korean suffered minor injuries.

5.225 The 1 British Commonwealth Division Operations Intelligence Summary for 10 July 1954 reported the apprehension of four suspected enemy agents in the 1 Marine Division area. In addition, fairly reliable reports concerned the existence of two KPA reconnaissance units directly across the Imjin River from 1 Marine Division.

5.226 On 19 July 1954, the 1 RAR Tokchong Guard fired on Korean thieves, killing two, wounding one.

5.227 The 1 British Commonwealth Division Operations Intelligence Summary for 24 July 1954 included the following 8th Army analysis of enemy espionage activity from the Armistice to 30 June 1954:

- 160 suspected agents turned over to 8th Army; 71 found to be actual agents.
- 12 agents apprehended in the Korean Communication Zone.

- 202 persons illegally crossed into ROK through the DMZ (includes deserters and refugees, not agents entering the South by skirting the DMZ).
- Of 83 apprehended agents, 29 were despatched from North Korea prior to the Armistice.

5.228 On 27 July 1954, a neighbouring unit to the north reported a 'raid' on the Intelligence Office [Thieves again?]. They attempted to escape across the Lozenge minefield in 3 RAR's area. 2 were killed, 2 severely injured.

5.229 On 30 July 1954, 1 British Commonwealth Division laid down procedures for requesting tactical support of air-dropped atomic weapons.

5.230 On 31 July 1954, a group of enemy tanks was reported in the DMZ well to the north-east of the 1 British Commonwealth Division area.

5.231 The BCFK Weekly Review for 31 July–6 August 1954 reports that the Communists charged the UNC over incidents at Inchon, Pusan, Kunsan and Seoul. In particular, shots were allegedly fired and bombs thrown into the compound of Neutral Nations Inspection Teams at Pusan on the night of 1 August 1954.^{lxxxviii}

5.232 As at 5 August 1954, the 3 RAR officer strength was only 56% effective due to manning shortfalls and leave.

5.233 In the Division Operations Intelligence Summary of 7 August 1954, 8th Army reported a Soviet operational intelligence unit in North Korea.

5.234 On 13 August 1954, a 3 RAR soldier stole a rifle and ammunition and started firing at random in Delta Company area, inflicting a flesh wound on another soldier. He surrendered on learning of the soldier's wounding.

5.235 On 13 August 1954, 1 RAR achieved EXERCISE SCRAM in 1 hour 25 minutes.

5.236 On 25 August 1954, there was a training incident involving Australian and ROK Army troops, who were dressed in CCF uniforms for an exercise. There was a clash, but no casualties. The ROK troops left the area.

5.237 On 29 August 1954, the CO 3 RAR selected the site for Camp Gallipoli on the south bank of the Imjin River.

5.238 On 4 September 1954, 1 British Commonwealth Division reported a powerful syndicate of ROK war veterans in the Inchon area engaged in "various extortion and shakedown rackets".

5.239 On 10 September 1954, the 1 British Commonwealth Division Operations Intelligence Summary noted an 8th Army assessment that the "enemy continues to maintain a defensive attitude with NO significant trend noted".

5.240 The official history of the Canadian Army records of this period that:

“The continued build-up of the Korean armed forces to a point where these could, if necessary, wage a successful defensive war, enabled the UN Command to reduce its own strength. Accordingly, the Commonwealth Division was destined to become, in effect, a Brigade Group, though known as the ‘New Commonwealth Division’...” It was announced on 13 September 1954: ‘It has been agreed that the Canadian forces will be reduced by approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ and that the remaining Canadian element will consist of one infantry battalion, one field ambulance, and the necessary elements for their administrative support’.”^{lxxxix}

5.241 On 14 September 1954, a NZ petrol point was raided by ROK Army soldiers. NZ soldiers were tied up and beaten.

5.242 On 18 September 1954, 2 Korean nationals were apprehended in 1 RAR officers’ lines, and shots were fired. The men were handed over to the Field Security Detachment.

5.243 A 1 British Commonwealth Division Operational Instruction of 18 September 1954 on area security (classified Restricted) reported enemy forces as:

- “(1) Enemy agents continue to enter South Korea and the probability of such persons infiltrating 1 Commonwealth Division area still exists...
- (2) Undesirable elements of the civilian population in South Korea continue to enter the Divisional area to organise petty or major larceny of military property for black market disposal.
- (3) Armed raids by ROK Army personnel to secure military property may well take place. A further area security operation was undertaken at the end of October.”

5.244 The same Instruction gives orders for opening fire as:

“At night personnel approaching a sentry, patrol or ambush will be challenged in English and Korean (‘JUNGJI SUNDA’). In the case of an ambush or patrol operation in the hills during the hours of curfew, fire may be opened if the order is not obeyed on the first occasion it is given. On roadblocks, checkpoints and bridge guards, sentries will challenge twice before fire is opened.”

5.245 The Instruction further advises that:

“... at roadblocks, checkpoints and bridges, a sentry may open fire at any time without warning if his life or the life of a comrade is endangered.

“A sentry may open fire after due warning if government property is endangered, if, in his opinion, NO other action will prevent damage to the property.

“At all times the minimum of force necessary will be used. This does NOT APPLY if the sentry or post is attacked or if fire is returned.

“Sentries on duty by day will be armed with a rifle and bayonet and 50 rounds of .303. The magazine will be loaded but NO round will be in the breech. Sentries by night will be covered by a second sentry who will be tactically sited and armed with an automatic weapon (LMG).”

5.246 In October 1954, 3 RAR commenced pulling down their camp for re-erection in Camp Gallipoli.

5.247 A report of 1 October 1954–31 March 1955 from BCFK reported that:

“The new Commonwealth Division, in strength a Brigade group, was formed and redeployed by 15 November 1954... The Division spent the winter months settling in and building its hutted accommodation. By February all units were installed in their new locations and training was able to start again.”^{xc}

5.248 At Appendix C to the report is a list of honours and awards made to members of BCFK operational units and headquarters: there are no operational or gallantry awards made.

5.249 A historian writing on 28 Commonwealth Brigade records that:

“Only the 1st Battalion Royal Australian Regiment, reduced to 21 officers and 509 other ranks by November, remained in Gallipoli Camp as the representative Australian element of the British Commonwealth contingent of the United Nations forces until they also left Korea [sic] on 24 March 1956.”^{xcii}

5.250 By 7 November 1954, 1 RAR was occupying the new Camp Gallipoli, with most members housed in Quonset huts. Construction of the Camp was complete by December.

5.251 By the 13 November 1954 Operations Intelligence Summary, content had diminished to two pages.

5.252 In a Melbourne *Herald* article of 20 November 1954, the newly returned CO of 3 RAR, Lt Colonel S H Buckler, said in part:

“North Koreans were doing exactly the same as United Nations troops—digging in. They could be seen from forward observation towers preparing defence positions. The Battalion was stationed near the main battle positions and was ready to occupy them immediately.”

5.253 He praised “the living conditions, food and amenities being provided for Australians in Korea.”^{xciii}

5.254 On 30 November 1954, an interview was reported between the Department of External Affairs and General Murray, a past GOC I British Commonwealth Division:

“The MAC was now concerned with relatively few minor incidents of violation of the truce, which were in many cases satisfactorily settled. The only movement from South Korea with North Korea was by a few agents pushed across the DMZ by the Americans. These were mostly amateurs and were almost invariably caught by the Communists. .. There was very little chance, too, of any infiltration of any agents from the North to the South... Present force holding the southern front... was now far too strong for any breakthrough by the Communists in North Korea.”^{xciii}

5.255 Australian Army veterans provided the following comments in submissions to the Working Party about the period from the Armistice to November 1954:

(Infantry soldier, 1 RAR): “Really when I try and think back, we could never relax, even during stand-down periods. We were always on tension and waiting for something to happen... I felt, like everybody else, that the threat was positive and they would come back over the DMZ. Our Rules of Engagement was [sic] always made known to us, they were, Shoot to Kill, ...”

(Officer, 1 RAR): "... when my predecessor... was... with 1 RAR (post truce) the dental van conveying 102 Dental Unit was on exercises. The van stopped in a village and a boy jumped into the van, stole whatever he could grab, and left the van. A South Korean army military police patrol passed by at this time and [name] told the South Korean officer of the theft and pointed to where the boy had run in the village. The military police chased the boy and a shot was heard. The members of the dental unit were horrified as they believed the boy had been shot dead."

(Infantry soldier, pre-Armistice): "Doubtless there was some stress, some skirmishes, some injuries and even some low-level loss of life during the post-Armistice period. But any attempt to equate this period with the rigours of service during the full-scale Korean War is to display a complete lack of knowledge and understanding of the experiences of those who fought the War..."

5.256 Australian Army and other veterans provided the following comments about the period in evidence to the Working Party at public hearings:

(Member, philanthropic organisation): "And Korea was just one of those things. I felt sorry for the Digs that were up there. The Brits had a hard time of it. If anyone deserved a medal for active service, I'd say it would be the National Service kids from UK. The Australians after the ceasefire, I reckon they must have had a ball, because there was no area where they would have been subject to constant worry or anything like that."

(Officer, 3 RAR): "The Commanders (if anything) were—I'm talking about Battalion now, because that's what I was in—very alert to the potential dangers and what sort of an environment we were in. They didn't know. They had to be prepared for the worst. They had to train. They had to operate. And honestly the first six months (I found) just went so quickly because there was no time to do anything, to worry about anything. It was all work—training and work. New defences had to be prepared and they took over 12 months to prepare these, back in the new line. Everything went on that went on during the war, except that there was no obvious shells flying around or bullets. It was probably a bit like a terrorist situation now, where everyone's worried about what might happen; there is no knowledge of when it might happen or if it's going to happen. So there was really... the people there (I felt) were very much on warlike service."

"... I can remember the CO sending an officer back out of the lines because he had the temerity not to wear his tin helmet or headwear when he was travelling in a vehicle. It was a bad model for the rest of the Battalion, because that was the orders: they were warlike. It was, 'Alright you might be shot at'. Maybe that officer had other problems as well, but I can remember we used to talk about that. No, no, everything was on a warlike [footing], it was as if war was occurring, to my knowledge."

(Soldier, 3 RAR): "The thing that occurs to me at this stage, is that we were told—and we were very strongly told—this is not an Armistice, this is a ceasefire. You must be on the alert at all times. We used to send out patrols. Patrols were armed with ball ammunition, grenades—both [M]36 and phosphorus..."

"NCOs who had Owen guns, or individual riflemen who had Bren guns, were not allowed to put loaded magazines into those weapons until a heavy contact, or an instruction to do so was given. The reason being, the Owen gun was subject to a misfire effect, or an accidental firing effect. However, those of us who carried .303 rifles had a loaded magazine. However, there was no ammunition in the breech, no ball ammunition in the breech..."

"Nothing up the spout—that's the term, yes. And by and large, it was a pretty tense time. We used to go out on patrols, as did the enemy from their occupied zone, and we used to go through minefields and in general we had officers or senior NCOs who knew the minefield area and used to take us through it and teach us the safe passages through those minefields. And until we were completely familiar with our area, we were not allowed to lead a patrol, if you were an NCO."

"We were issued with ammunition and when on stand-to or on 'sentry go' we had to, if there was anybody approached us, we had to say, "Halt, who goes there"? They either had to give a password or identify themselves and if they didn't do that, after the second warning, you were told to shoot with lethal intent. In other words, shoot to kill. On stand-to, our weapons were always loaded with the safety catches on, and we weren't allowed to fire unless we got a blast on the whistle, or instructions from an NCO."

(Medic, pre- and post-Armistice): "... The truth is the soldiers were in tents but they were very well housed. They had plenty of good clothing. The food was good. In fact the food was just as good as when I came back to Australia and served here. So there was no real... It was cold, I agree with that. There was some tension, but from speaking to some of my friends who went back for second terms in the infantry, they did do patrols, but nobody got shot. They looked at the Chinese and the Chinese looked at them."

(Soldier, 1 RAR): "... we wore a helmet [in the DMZ]: I think it was written 'MP' on, or Military Police. That was because under the truce conditions, to be patrolling you had to have those on, so the enemy knew who you were... That must have been part of the agreement... Well, in Malaya I was more threatened because there was a known enemy, but in Korea, yes, I was under the impression that I was on active service. I mean, we received danger money. I think we got 2/6d a day, wasn't it, danger money."

Air Force – conditions experienced

5.257 A history of the US Air Force in Korea records that:

"The Armistice meant the end of the shooting war in Korea, but the Far East Air Force's duty was not yet completed. The 16 nations affirmed that if the Communists renewed armed attack they would be prompt in resisting aggression. USAF Chief of Staff, General Nathan F Twining, cautioned the men of FEAF: 'Yours is now the role of watchfulness and preparedness, for you must continue to be the most vigilant and best prepared of all the forces that guard... the security of the free world.'

"The Korean Armistice agreement... marked the attainment of UN and US military objectives in Korea.

"Although recognising that the threat of air assaults and naval blockages against the Chinese mainland may have helped, UN commanders believed that the pressure of air attack within Korea had forced the Reds to accept the Armistice terms."^{xciiv}

5.258 On 27 July 1953, 91 Wing War Diary includes the following entry:

"It was interesting to note the reaction of Wing personnel to the news of the Truce. The ceasefire negotiations had dragged on for so long and with such marked lack of sincerity on the part of the Communists that the actual signing came as something of an anti-climax. None of the hilarious relief and celebration which marked the ceasefire with Japan in 1945 was evident. The general attitude was somewhat cynical of the outcome of the Armistice—a feeling of 'Well, what now?' Most of us feel sceptical that the Armistice can be developed into a satisfactory peace and are apprehensive that the War might well be resumed with increased ferocity."

5.259 In August 1953, 36 Squadron carried out a series of PW special flights and then engaged in routine transport tasks. On 1 February 1955, operational control of 36 Squadron was transferred to HQ US Far East Air Force, delegated to 5th Air Force, nominal control only, so the Squadron continued to supply the transport needs of BCFK.

5.260 On 7 September 1953, 91 Wing recorded:

“Since the cessation of hostilities, No. 77 Squadron operational activities have consisted of after-dusk and predawn standby. Training has comprised various exercises and mock operations, some in conjunction with other units of 5th Air Force and RN carriers. These exercises are designed to keep the Squadron at top efficiency so that in the event of renewed fighting, the Squadron could be airborne within 30 minutes.”

5.261 On 21 September 1953, a North Korean pilot flew a MiG 15 to Seoul and defected.

5.262 On 6 October 1953, 91 Wing made this comment on the September period:

“In accordance with the 5th Air Force preparation to meet a treacherous Communist attack should the peace talks fail, No. 77 (I/F) Squadron has four Meteor aircraft at runway readiness from half-hour before dawn, and again until half an hour after dark. The remaining effort is devoted to operational training at approximately one-third normal operational intensity.”

5.263 On 23 October 1953, 91 Wing reported an accidental discharge from 20 mm Meteor aircraft cannon resulting in the death of a US serviceman. Disciplinary action was taken over this incident.

5.264 A 91 Wing report of 30 October 1953 for the month of October stated:

“The number of aircraft accidents and incidents occurring is causing concern. The most obvious and possible cause is the lack of experienced pilots being posted to No. 77 (I/F) Squadron.”

5.265 A January 1954 91 Wing report for that month stated:

“Several unidentified aircraft alerts occurred during the period but no hostile action took place and although USAF fighters were scrambled, no interceptions were made.”

5.266 A RAAF History Unit report of July 2005 notes that:

“After the Armistice 77 Squadron reverted to training and GCI [Ground Controlled Intercept] scrambles. The unit maintained a 30-minute alert for 2–3 months after the ceasefire.”

5.267 In January–March 1954, the 77 Squadron War Diary records three Yellow Alerts over the period and a scramble on 18 March 1954.

5.268 On 18 May 1954, there was an Air Alert Red when a Communist aircraft flew over Seoul.

5.269 A 91 Wing brief of 30 September 1954 about 77 F/I Squadron stated that: “The Squadron is employed in the interceptor/fighter role with a secondary role of ground attack”.^{xcv}

5.270 For the period March–November 1954, 77 Squadron was based at Kunsan. The War Diary records: no hostile incidents; training, maintenance, practice scrambles, and sport.^{xcvi}

5.271 Professor Robert O'Neill observes of RAAF post-Armistice activities:

“Considering the amount of flying which the squadron was undertaking after the armistice, ... accidents were not abnormally frequent. They emphasise, however, that although the war was at an end, pilots' lives were still at risk in a difficult environment. The weather was often poor for flying. Fog and low cloud limited visibility for pilots when airborne and ice contributed to accidents on the ground. Furthermore maintenance facilities were far from ideal, even though some of the Meteors had been heavily used during the past three years and required special attention.”^{xcvii}

5.272 RAAF veterans provided the following comments in submissions to the Working Party about the period from the Armistice to November 1954:

(Airman, 77 Squadron): “The Meteors of our Squadron were always ready for action and flew sorties almost daily, weather permitting. Our Meteors were always fully armed and fuelled...”

(Officer, 77 Squadron): “On arrival in Iwakuni, Japan, in September 1953, I was briefed by 91 Wing on the operational situation in Korea... The possible likelihood of a resumption of full hostilities by the North Koreans was stressed.”

(Officer, 77 Squadron): “We were aware of the constant threat of a resumption of the War, since our air base at Kimpo was three minutes flight time from the DMZ and certain to be a prime target for an opening air strike—subsequently demonstrated by the unopposed penetration and landing of a single MiG 15...”

5.273 RAAF veterans provided the following comments about the period in evidence to the Working Party at public hearings:

(NCO, 77 Squadron): “We had alerts at irregular intervals, which of course is the standard practice with these sorts of things. When these alerts occurred, all personnel who could be spared from the aircraft line immediately entered slit trenches in full battle equipment, including weapons. The whole perimeter of the base was protected by 8th Army AAA and these people delighted in clearing their guns at all sorts of inappropriate hours and it was pretty noisy.”

(RAAF officer):

“Witness:

But when they were at Kimpo, yes, they were on standby and they were ready to be scrambled—and they were scrambled two or three times a day, because the other aircraft would come over, that sort of thing.

“Garry Nehl:

So the pilots were rostered on to be actually sitting on the strip in the cockpit?

“Witness:

Oh, yes.”

(Aircraftman, 77 Squadron):

“Ian Crawford:

Your orders would have identified the type of threat that you could face from... were these North Koreans, Chinese, or South Korean?

“Witness:

Yes, we came in contact with a few ROK Army personnel. That was after we left Kimpo. We went to Kunsan and no-one apparently knew we were coming, because we had the Americans fire on us one night. [For] which we retaliated—lucky for them we were... And we had them fire

on us. We also had on our first night a confrontation with the ROK Army, which we challenged and we never had any more confrontation with them at all after that. They were told to keep out of the area. But as I said, nothing actually changed from before the Armistice to after the Armistice. It's just still the same."

Conditions of service and the reasons for providing them

5.274 In a cablegram of 27 October 1953, the Australian High Commission, London, advised the Treasury, Canberra:

- "2. United Kingdom Treasury has asked service departments to review question of gratuities [for Korean service] in the light of cessation of hostilities in Korea, but no decision has yet been reached. Up to the present no move has been made to review special leave provisions.
- "3. Service after hostilities ceased in July last does not qualify for entitlement to Korea Medal."^{xcviii}

5.275 On 29 October 1953, the Secretary of the Department of Defence wrote to the Assistant Secretary, Defence Division, Treasury:

"As stated by the Acting Prime Minister on 26th July 1953, at the time of the conclusion of the Korean armistice 'it is inescapable that United Nations forces will have to remain in the region for some time An armistice means the cessation of hostilities but this is only the first step towards a peace settlement'. General Wells has recently advised that the resources of the 1st Commonwealth Division are fully extended in preparing their new positions. In the use of troops on rehabilitation work in Korea, the United Nations Command has laid down the principle that 'nothing should detract from the maintenance of combat readiness'. Fighting has ceased in Korea but the foregoing illustrates the instability and fluidity of the present situation there.

....

"The Queen approved (Cable 74 of 24th September 1953) a terminal date for the award of the British Korea Medal (27th July 1953, cessation of hostilities). It is contemplated that this should also be the date of termination of eligibility for the Returned from Active Service Badge and Mothers' and Widows' Badge, issued for Korea.... However no terminal date has been fixed by the United Nations Command for the United Nations Service Medal for Korea, which is still being awarded.

...

"Operational benefits granted in respect of service in the 1939-45 War continued for some time after the cessation of hostilities on 3rd September 1945 (Pacific). For example income tax concessions continued until 30th June 1947. On the other hand, eligibility for campaign stars and medals awarded for the 1939-45 War ceased at the end of active hostilities in the theatre, or upon conclusion of the campaign for which they were granted. In the 1939-45 War therefore, the terminal date for campaign medals did not have any bearing on the terminal date for operational benefits. It may also be observed that in the 1939-45 War, the cessation of hostilities was not followed by an unstable position such as at present exists in Korea."^{xcix}

5.276 A message of 24 November 1953 from the Australian High Commission, Ottawa, reads in part:

"Gratuities for Canadian Forces in Korea

"Treasury Board recently decided that Canadian troops, serving in Korea after 31st October, were no longer entitled to active service gratuity benefits on the grounds that, since the

cessation of hostilities, they were in the same position as other Canadian forces serving abroad in non-belligerent theatres.”^c

5.277 In November 1953, Treasury wrote to the Secretary of Cabinet on the issue. Defence had expressed the view that service conditions should continue as operational because of the possibility of a flare-up of fighting. Treasury made the point that there was no precedent to continue operational benefits until a peace treaty was negotiated. In World War II, the treaty of peace with Japan was not signed until 8 September 1951, while eligibility for war service benefits ceased on 30 June 1947.^{ci}

5.278 Appendix A to Cabinet Agendum GA/148 of 2 December 1953 [from Treasury] for the General Administrative Committee of Cabinet reads in part:

“Action taken by other Governments consequent on cessation of hostilities

“Following cessation of hostilities of 26th July, 1953, the following action has been taken by other Commonwealth Government concerned in the Korean operations :—

(a) U.K.

The Queen has approved that the terminal date for awards of the Korean medal is 27th July, 1953. No service after that date is qualification for the medal. The question of special gratuities for personnel in Korea and special leave entitlements is under consideration.

(b) Canada

Re-establishment benefits, which include gratuities, terminated on 31st October, 1953. Members posted to Korea after 26th July, 1953, do not qualify for benefits.

(c) New Zealand

No change pending outcome of Armistice negotiations.”^{cii}

5.279 On 14 December 1953, a briefing note was prepared for the Minister for Defence on the above Cabinet Agendum:

“The Agendum brings to the notice of Cabinet that operational benefits are still applicable for service in Korea.... [C]onditions in Korea are unstable. Whether it is expedient to review these benefits at present is a matter of Government policy.”^{ciii}

5.280 The General Administrative Committee of Cabinet recognised at its meeting on 18 December 1953 that the terminal date for the British Korea Medal had been fixed, but no terminal date had been fixed for the UN Service Medal. The Committee further recognised that “in the 1939–45 War there was no relation between the terminal date for campaign medals (ie cessation of hostilities) and the date for the cessation of operational benefits.” In relation to general conditions of service: “The general feeling was that consideration of the subject [termination of special benefits for service in Korea] was premature at this stage.”^{civ} The minutes record that:

“After giving the matter very careful consideration, the Committee was unanimous in the view that it would be extremely difficult to justify any alteration in the conditions of service while the question of a peace treaty in Korea is still under consideration.”^{cv}

5.281 An internal minute dated 2 February 1954 from the Minister for the Army to the Secretary of the Army states:

“In view of the cessation of hostilities in Korea, it is important that the utmost care should be exercised in the provision of amenities for the troops in that area...”^{cvi}

5.282 On 7 April 1954, the Treasury Finance Committee reported to the General Administrative Committee of Cabinet regarding special benefits for members of the forces in Korea:

“With regard to new postings, the Committee was of the opinion that in the interests of morale, and to avoid administrative difficulties, it is undesirable that differing conditions of service should apply.”

5.283 It was recognised that the Canadian authorities were having major recruitment and replacement problems because of their removal of special benefits after the Armistice. The minutes further note:

“The Committee also recorded the opinion that, **although actual hostilities in Korea have ceased**, cognisance should be had to the fact that servicemen in Korea would be called upon to engage in operations in the event of a recurrence of hostilities following a breakdown in peace negotiations.”^{cvi} [Emphasis added]

5.284 Members of BCOF (Japan) who were posted to the Korean force became eligible from the date they were posted; those who remained in Japan were not eligible.

5.285 On 7 April 1954, the Treasury Finance Committee noted that:

“a number of Army personnel serving in Korea had been specially enlisted and were entitled to certain benefits not applicable to normal service in the ARA. **It would amount to a breach of contract to withdraw those benefits** while such personnel remain in Korea”.^{cvi} [Emphasis added]

5.5 December 1954 – April 1956

Strategic background

5.286 Professor Robert O’Neill sums up this part of the post-Armistice period in the following terms:

“In early 1955, Australia joined with Britain, Canada and New Zealand in pressing for American agreement to reduction of the Commonwealth brigade group in Korea to approximately a battalion. The United States rejected the proposal in April but offered in the following month to withdraw its objections provided that the residual Commonwealth force was called by a name which implied that it was not merely a battalion and not simply composed of infantry. The Eisenhower Administration accepted British proposals that the force should be renamed the British Commonwealth Contingent, Korea, with a headquarters element of a reduced brigade and the addition of a small element of Royal Engineers, to give the appearance of a diverse force which could be expanded should tensions in Korea increase. Most of this contingent was provided by Britain. However, American acceptance was conditional on the delay of implementation of the next phase of withdrawals until April 1956.

“The four Commonwealth governments accepted this condition, and the second Australian battalion, 1 RAR, which was by then substantially under-strength, withdrew on 5 April.”^{cxix}

5.287 In the Report of Proceedings by the Flag Officer Second-in-Command, Far East Station, for November 1954–February 1955, there is the general observation that:

“... the situation has remained generally unchanged, though there have been noticeable reductions in the strength of UN forces deployed in [Korean waters], and a reorganisation of the command is now taking place... [11 November] The Squadron anchored [at Chinhae] in company at a few minutes past 8 a.m. after saluting the Republic of Korea with 21 guns.”^{cx}
[Note: This indicates that this was in the nature of a ship visits program by this stage.]

5.288 On 10 December 1954, the Chief of the General Staff said at a Military Board meeting:

“He would like to touch on the Korean campaign. The maintenance of our force in Korea had been a heavy burden on our resources”.^{cxii}

5.289 Advice to the Working Party from Dr William M Donnelly, US Army Center of Military History, in August–September 2005 sums up the US perspective as follows:

“After many revisions of the blueprints for a residual force in Korea, the Department of Defense instructed the services to plan for three divisions, one Army, one Marine, and one United Nations, plus combat support and combat service support units to remain there. In December 1954 Secretary Wilson decided that the Marine unit would return to the United States, leaving two Army divisions in Korea.”

5.290 In January 1955, BCFK, on behalf of HQ Far East Command, required a list of casualties which occurred during ‘the Korean War’, giving the dates as 25 June 1950–27 July 1953.

5.291 On 11 February 1955, the Minister for the Army sent a letter of thanks to the leader of a Concert Party following its tour of Japan and Korea:

“Dear Mr Bell,

“Now that your orchestra has returned from a very successful tour of Japan and Korea, I desire to offer my thanks for your efforts in raising such a fine party ...

“To men not actively engaged in warfare, the routine of Army life may become a little monotonous and a bright show does much to keep up the morale of the troops and certainly gives them something to look forward to during their leisure moments...”^{cxiii} [Note: This paragraph was not included in the draft letter submitted for the Minister’s signature, and appears to have been inserted personally by him.]

5.292 The following is an extract from the Defence Committee brief for the South-East Asia Treaty Council meeting on 23 February 1955:

“Australia’s proposed contribution of 2 destroyers or frigates to the [Far East] Strategic Reserve is now dependent upon the release of the one RAN destroyer or frigate now serving in Korean waters under the UN Command.”^{cxiiii}

5.293 On 15 March 1955, information was provided to ‘the 16’ [ie the nations contributing forces to the UN command] about Communist increases of equipment in North Korea: aircraft by 450; artillery by 49%; tanks by 8%; self-propelled guns by 8% and armoured vehicles by 61%.^{cxv}

5.294 On 21 March 1955, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on US moves towards introducing updated military equipment into Korea:

“Move on build-up in Korea.

New York, March 21, AAP.

“The United States has asked its Korean War allies to consider repudiating part of the Korean Armistice agreement, says the *Washington Post*. Last night, a State Department spokesman declined to confirm the report, but said: ‘Communist violations of the truce, and the increase in military strength in North Korea, are causing us serious concern....’^{cxv}

5.295 On 22 March 1955, an internal Department of Defence signal again discussed proposed reduction of forces in Korea, while indicating the importance of maintaining the multinational character of the reduced commitment:

“The requirement was for a token Commonwealth land force in Korea at Battalion group strength in which all countries should be represented, and this token force should not be regarded as a balanced fighting unit and need not therefore be provided with its own artillery.”^{cxvi}

5.296 On 24 March 1955, the New Zealand Ambassador in Washington advised Wellington of continuing political risks in South Korea:

“In press reports the South Korean Assembly unanimously passed a resolution that the ROK should immediately exercise its right of self-defence to oust NNSC teams from South Korea.”^{cxvii}

5.297 On 31 March 1955, *The Economist* published this article about a build-up of modern armaments on the Communist side:

“Red build-up in Korea

There is alarming evidence of a build-up in the striking power of the North Korean force, particularly—the most sinister aspect—in the air... Increases between July 1953 and February 1955: Air Force from Nil to 450 aircraft; mortars from 444 to 900; howitzers from 648 to 724; tanks from 343 to 370; self-propelled guns from 158 to 170; armoured vehicles from 176 to 284.”^{cxviii}

5.298 On 1 April 1955, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published an article about continuing South Korean opposition to the Armistice:

“South Korea’s plea to UN

Seoul, March 31, AAP/Reuter.

The South Korean National Assembly today unanimously voted to petition the United Nations and the 16 nations which fought in Korea to declare the Korean Armistice agreement void. The South Korean Government said ‘After the failure of the Geneva Conference that it was no longer bound by the agreement.’^{cxix}

5.299 A Department of External Affairs minute of 1 April 1955 stated that:

“On 8 February 1955 the Americans revealed that for some time they have been concerned at the accumulating evidence of a Communist build-up in North Korea beyond the point permitted by the Armistice agreement. The ambassadors of the ‘16’ were told at this date that the position in Korea was becoming ‘increasingly dangerous’ because of ‘systematic violations’ by the Communists of Article 13 d (Non-introduction into Korea of reinforcing military equipment). Admiral Radford said the US thought the ‘time might come when our side would be obliged to declare itself discharged from further observance of 13 d...’^{cxx}

5.300 On 7 April 1955, the Australian Embassy in Washington informed Canberra that US advice on the issue of North Korean air power build-up was that:

“the military threat is not imminent on present indications, but it overhangs the whole picture and if it became imminent it might be too late to do anything about it.”^{cxix}

5.301 An article dated 17 April 1955 in the US military newspaper *Stars and Stripes* said of the build-up:

“Late in February this year, the allies charged the Communists with illegally introducing into North Korea at least 150 MiG fighters... The UN Command asked [for] an NNSC investigation. The UNC supported its charge with aerial photographs showing there wasn't a single airfield in North Korea [at the time of Armistice] capable of handling jets.”^{cxix}

5.302 Hansard reports that on 28 April 1955, the Minister for Reconstruction, Mr Kent Hughes, told Parliament:

“I went ... north of the 38th Parallel to the Imjin River in Korea. Australians stationed there are almost a lost legion, forgotten by the vast majority of people in this country. Those troops are carrying the traditions of the AIF and the ANZAC spirit in the interests of the free world”.

5.303 In May–July 1955, the UNC continued to express its concerns about the bias of the Communist countries on the NNSC and violations of the Armistice by North Korea and China, particularly in relation to the introduction of new equipment.^{cxiii}

5.304 On 2 May 1955, CINC BCFK reported to the Department of Defence a discussion with General Ferenbaugh, Commander 8th Army, about British Commonwealth force reduction proposals and the possible implications for the role of 1 British Commonwealth Division:

“Americans are operationally very sensitive about Korea. Moreover, they regard Gloucester Valley, in which 1 COMWEL Division is deployed, as the most probable axis of attack by Communists. They are NOT satisfied that interim plan... is sound and are very unhappy about it... My position and that of 1 COMWEL Division is becoming increasingly embarrassing. Americans have expressed hope that we shall give them at least two months' notice.”^{cxiv}

5.305 The Department of External Affairs continued to argue the case for retaining Australian forces in Korea, whereas the Department of Defence position was that they were more urgently needed elsewhere. On 4 May 1955, the Australian Embassy in Washington cabled Canberra as follows:

“Commonwealth countries' proposal to reduce their force in Korea at this time and the probable effect such action would have on the decision of other participating countries is a matter of concern to the US Government. In face of current tension in the Far East this [US] Government believes further reductions in the size of UNC would have a serious adverse impact militarily and politically, on free world interests in Asia. If Commonwealth forces are further reduced, less powerful and less concerned nations will find it difficult to continue their contributions. Should such reductions continue, the international composition of UNC would be jeopardised and the point would soon be reached where continued existence of UNC would be in question. It is the view of the US Government that continued existence of UNC is important to the maintenance of Armistice and to stability in the area of Korea... Further reductions in UNC forces will seriously weaken the capacity of the Command to meet the ever-present possibility of Communist aggression. Proportionate reductions... had not been matched by withdrawals of Communist Chinese troops which in any event remain in close proximity to the line of demarcation. US Government does not plan further to reduce its combat forces in Korea at this time.”^{cxv}

5.306 On 10 May 1955, the Australian delegate to UNCURK informed Canberra:

“US Ambassador and senior member of UNCMAC reported that ‘8 Sabres on routine reconnaissance escort were attacked by 8 MiGs, later increasing to 30 MiGs during the fighting. The US believes there were 2 kills and 2 probables, no US planes were damaged.”^{cxvii} [Note: The incident occurred over international waters in the area of the Manchurian border]

5.307 A Defence Joint Planning Committee Report of 11 May 1955 assessed the gap between Australia’s military commitments and resources. The Committee, which included then Brigadier T J Daly (former commander of 28th Commonwealth Brigade in Korea from March 1952 to March 1953), considered the difficulty of meeting Service commitments with the force in being, and recommended reducing or withdrawing forces in Korea if this could be done without jeopardising American goodwill.^{cxviii} The relevant extracts from the report are at Annex 5E at the end of this Chapter.

5.308 On 13–16 May 1955, the Defence Committee considered the force reduction proposals and reached the following conclusions:

- “No change in military situation since Commonwealth agreed to proposed force reductions.
- Agreed US view that further Commonwealth force reductions would affect other participating nations, affecting international character of UNC.
- Australian force reduction of withdrawal would assist in meeting increasing commitments at home and abroad.
- No wish to suffer loss of American goodwill by pressing for reductions.
- Malaya commitment has overriding priority for defence of Australia.
- Due to current recruiting and discharge rates, Army contingent in Korea cannot be maintained at strength beyond August 1955.”^{cxviii}

5.309 On 19 May 1955 the Minister for External Affairs wrote to the Minister for Defence urging maintenance of the commitment in Korea in order to retain US goodwill:

“We are asked by the Americans to allow a small Australian military and naval force to remain in Korea for international purposes, and no doubt to make slightly easier the political decision that American forces in Korea should be maintained... If we do other than agree with the American request, it seems to me that we put ourselves in rather a humiliating position vis a vis the Americans. We stick our toes in about the location of a battalion and at the same time we seek the right to have our say in matters of high military policy in the east. The Defence Committee’s recommendation acknowledges the importance of retaining American goodwill... I believe that the position of Australia in the east is substantially different from that of the United Kingdom, Canada or New Zealand vis a vis the United States... I realise that in present and immediately prospective circumstances, we are short of troops to meet our obligations in Korea and in Malaya. I would believe that it is this situation that we should tackle rather than shorten sail in Korea.”^{cxix}

5.310 Nevertheless, the Department of Defence informed CINC BCFK on 20 May 1955 that: “So far as Australia is concerned, under existing conditions, the present Army component could not be maintained at strength beyond August 1955”.^{cxx}

5.311 In the meantime, there was continuing disputation in Korea over the role of the NNSC. The Australian High Commissioner in London advised the Department of External Affairs on 21 May 1955:

“As a result of Pentagon initiative, agreement has been reached that NNSC should be told bluntly by UNC that its operations were reacting to the serious disadvantage of UN forces, and that UNC proposed in future to regard Article 13 d of Armistice agreement as inoperative.”^{cxxxii}

5.312 In late June 1955, Commonwealth military representatives met at the UK War Office to discuss the proposed Commonwealth Contingent Korea (CCK). A record of the meeting dated 30 June 1955 states in part:

“Our object in retaining forces in Korea was political rather than operational... The proposed operational role envisaged was to be a small general operational reserve... one company at a time might occupy a post in the DMZ.”^{cxxxiii}

5.313 On 16 July 1955, a note by the UK War Office [Army Headquarters] reported the thinking of the UK Chiefs of Staff Committee about the reduced role envisaged for British Commonwealth forces:

“Owing to the withdrawal of the Canadian Battalion, the Commonwealth Division in Korea is unbalanced and the American commanders in Korea are reluctant to leave it holding its important sector and are seeking to move it to another part of the line. This move is planned to take place in September... It is therefore suggested that the title of the residual force should be Commonwealth Contingent Korea.”^{cxxxiii}

5.314 The same day, the UK Chiefs of Staff reported that:

- “there was a need to make urgent fresh approach to US authorities because the maintenance of forces in Korea involved a heavy manpower bill.
- Australia in particular wished to withdraw its Battalion by end August 1955 to meet the Malaya commitment.
- New Zealand wanted an early decision for future planning.
- As a result of withdrawal of the Canadian Battalion, the British Commonwealth Division minus was unbalanced and American commanders ‘are reluctant to leave it holding its important sector and are seeking to move it to another part of the line’.”^{cxxxiv}

5.315 A Defence Committee minute of 29 July 1955 included the comment that:

“General Wells said that the US attitude on the task in Korea was different from the Commonwealth... The Commonwealth thought that the Americans were holding the forces at too high a pitch of readiness.”^{cxxxv}

5.316 On 2 August 1955, CINC BCFK held a discussion with General Lemnitzer [CINC UNC] who made it clear that he “would oppose on his level any further reduction of 1 British Commonwealth Division. He was concerned with the paucity of non-ROK effectives in Korea and for that reason had moved 8th Army Headquarters back to Seoul” [from Japan].^{cxxxvi}

5.317 On 5 August 1955, an internal Department of Defence paper observed that “the UK War Office proposes that the British Commonwealth base in Kure should be

run down, and that the force in Korea should be supported from existing Far East Land Force base facilities in Singapore through an advanced base at Inchon.”^{cxxxvii}

5.318 Managing its South Korean ally was still providing significant challenges for the UNC. On 7 August 1955, UNCURK advised that “on 2 August the ROK Office of Information released a ‘Government Statement’ outlining the intention to regain territory south of the 38th parallel still held by the Communists and to eject the NNSC from the ROK”.^{cxxxviii} On 11 August 1955, the Australian Embassy in Washington reported back to Canberra what the US Secretary of State [Dulles] said about the NNSC: “It isn’t as though the future of the Republic of Korea was being imperilled... The US has no intelligence reports confirming a ROK statement that a new Communist aggression was dangerously near”.^{cxxxix}

5.319 Amid rising tension in South Korea, a *Sydney Daily Telegraph* article of 11 August 1955 reported:

“Call to new war in Korea

London Wed.

South Korean army leaders yesterday demanded that the US regard the Korean Armistice as ended. The Army leaders called on the US to ‘resume fighting for our unification before we are left alone’... US military police poured streams of water from fire hoses and tear gas on 300 South Korean war veterans trying to storm a Wolmi-do Island compound housing Communist members of the NNSC.”^{cxl}

5.320 Defence Committee minutes of 15 August 1955 record discussion of a reduction of Commonwealth forces in Korea, specifically a RAN ship—while noting the unfavourable US State Department reply to proposed withdrawal of the ship from UNC in Korean waters:

“As indicated in US note of 30 April, the US Government in accordance with its unified command responsibilities, would view further reductions in UNC forces in the near future with concern. This view applies to naval as well as ground forces...”^{cxli}

5.321 During this period Australia was attempting to balance competing imperatives to redeploy its forces from Korea to higher priority areas, keep in step with its ‘old Commonwealth’ allies, and at the same time maintain its special relationship with the USA. A summary of a Cabinet Decision of 17 August 1955 reads in part:

“The UK Government should be informed of the Australian Government claims to joint approach to US. Invited Minister for External Affairs to discuss matter with Mr Dulles at ANZUS meeting; agreed tentatively that if US reaction is unfavourable, one Australian Battalion should remain in Korea but at diminishing strength.”^{cxlii}

5.322 In a 23 August 1955 Report on the State of the Army, the only mentions of Korea are as follows:

- paragraph 8 c: “the Battalion in Korea cannot be maintained at strength after August 1955”.
- paragraph 15: “With the easing of tension after the signing of the Korean Armistice ..., authorised establishments were reduced and the enlistment rate dropped.”
- paragraph 21: “Three Battalions of the RAR, which forms the basic infantry component of the regular field force, took part in the Korean operations... It is therefore a matter a particular regret that a deficiency of some 2,000 personnel in the field force will

necessitate a reduction in its strength overseas to one Battalion Group. This will mean the withdrawal of the Battalion Group from BCFK”.

- paragraph 33, Conclusions: “... It is evident that:
 - a. the field force cannot fully or efficiently perform all its functions of
 - 1. providing a mobile striking force ready for instant use.
 - 2. providing a Battalion Group for service with the British Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve...^{cxliii}

5.323 On 2 September 1955, the Australian Embassy in Washington contacted Canberra with a draft Commonwealth note to go to the US Government agreeing with the US position on force reduction: “The continued existence of UN Command is important to maintenance of the Armistice and to stability in the area of Korea; and that international composition of UN forces should be maintained...” The note then went on to identify the proposed composition of the CCK.^{cxliv}

5.324 There was continuing anti-Communist agitation in South Korea. In September–October 1955, headlines from the official *Korean Republic* newspaper read:

“30 September	Demonstrations intensified at ports of entry
“3 October	50,000 denounce spies in NNSC demonstrations.
“6 October	Demonstrations against truce teams continue.
“7 October	No let-up seen in demand for NNSC expulsion.
“8 October	Anti-NNSC protests enter 10th week. ^{cxlv}

5.325 On 14 September 1955, the Minister for External Affairs and the Australian Ambassador to Washington held a meeting with the US State Department:

“The Minister expressed the need to have our men in Korea brought back to Australia for training of forces there. He understood the US wanted forces to remain in Korea:

- a. in case there should be an outbreak of fighting
- b. for public relations purposes” [to retain the UN character of the force in Korea].^{cxlvi}

5.326 Hansard for 29 September 1955 records a statement to Parliament by the Minister for the Army:

“In Korea, the three Battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment served with distinction during the United Nations campaign and the policing of the demilitarised zone, and won the acclaim and praise of the free nations”.

5.327 An UNCURK report of 6 October 1955 refers to Korean press articles relating to “US agreement... with the ROK demand for withdrawal of remaining NNSC teams from South Korea.”^{cxlvii}

5.328 On 9 November 1955, the Minister for the Navy issued the following press release:

“HMAS *Condamine* to reach Sydney from Korean area a day early

... the *Condamine* would be the last RAN ship to be sent direct from Australia to the Korean area during the Armistice period. In future the RAN commitment in Korean waters would be met by the periodic despatch there of one of the two Australian warships serving in Malayan waters with the [Far East] Strategic Reserve... From the beginning of hostilities in June 1950 until the declaration of the Armistice in July 1953, nine ships of the Royal Australian Navy, including the aircraft carrier *Sydney*, had served in the foremost operational areas, and, since the Armistice, at least one ship of the Australian Fleet had always been engaged in Korea on patrol and other duties.”^{cxlviii}

5.329 On 10 November 1955, the Defence Joint Planning Committee reported on the withdrawal of 1 RAR from Korea:

“The Australian Army problem

The four main factors which affect the problem of the timing of the withdrawal of 1 RAR from Korea are:

- a. the Army’s already acute manpower shortage would be aggravated by any further delay in the return to Australia of the forces in Korea and Japan which are urgently required in Australia to build up the strength of the Regular Army, particularly to augment the depleted staffs of National Service Training Units and of the Citizen Military Forces. In addition to 1 RAR in Korea, there are 800 Army personnel employed in the base in Japan, as well as approximately 100 naval and air force personnel. No significant reduction can be made in the strength of the base in Japan until 1 RAR has been withdrawn from Korea.
- b. From the time that date of withdrawal of 1 RAR is decided, some 2–3 months will be required to organise the withdrawal...
- c. The onset of winter in Korea has made the withdrawal of 1 RAR before the beginning of spring extremely difficult. An earlier withdrawal would... result in hardship to the Commonwealth forces and to our allies, as this would entail a redeployment of remaining forces in Korea with the difficulty of ensuring adequate winter accommodation at this late stage.
- d. The [UK] War Office has reached the conclusion that **the reduction must be deferred until spring** and the UN Command has expressed the hope that it would not be implemented before the spring.”^{cxlix} [Emphasis added]

5.330 The Australian Government took note of a Parliamentary Question asked in the British House of Commons in November 1955, together with Sir Anthony Eden’s reply:

“The Prime Minister: The Armistice which was signed in July 1953 has not yet been followed by a political settlement and the UN still has a part to play in Korea.

“Mr Shinwell: Does that ... mean that our troops are not to be returned to this country ... until there is a full political settlement in Korea?

“The Prime Minister: No, I did not say that... Some token Commonwealth force will certainly, I imagine, be required by the UN ... until we can get a settlement...”^{cl}

Navy – conditions experienced

5.331 The official history of the Royal Canadian Navy describes the closing stages of its involvement in Korea in these terms:

“There was indeed little need for even one Canadian destroyer in the Korean theatre, since there were more than enough ships available in the ROK Navy and in the regular squadrons of the USN and RN Far Eastern fleets to take care of the duties required of the United Nations naval forces. On 28 February, 1955, the Commanding Officer of *Sioux* informed the Canadian authorities that on 5 March the ROK Navy would be taking over all the patrols formerly carried out by the UN ships, that Task Group 95.1 was being dissolved and its former duties taken over by COMNAVFE and that consequently there would soon be no set employment for his ship. Certain exercises had been planned for *Sioux*, but when these had been completed about the end of March there were no prospects for further employment until June. Commander Rankin suggested that in view of these circumstances consideration should be given to the withdrawal of *Sioux* to Esquimalt without relief. The RCN could not of course act on this suggestion, as the withdrawal of any forces from the UN command in Korea was a matter of high-level policy.

“The last Canadian destroyer did not leave the Korean theatre until September 1955, more than two years after the signing of the armistice, but there is little need to detail the activities of the ships of CANDESFE during this period since they were mainly of a routine nature. The operational patrols carried out by the Canadian destroyers were in most cases patrols in name only and involved lying at anchor, usually off Pengyong-do, ready to prevent any major Communist violations of the seaward extension of the demarcation line or other breaches of the armistice, while most of the actual work of patrolling was carried out by small ROKN craft. When not on operational duty—and after the armistice all the UN ships spent far less time on patrol than before—the RCN destroyers carried out exercises within their own division and with the U.S. fleet, the Royal Navy and the ships of other members of the UN. There was also more time for combined recreational-operational cruises to such places as Hong Kong, Manila and other more interesting and less familiar ports in Japan than Sasebo and Kure. Such activities kept the ships busy during their long, uneventful tours of post-armistice duty in the Far East, and the morale problem, which under the circumstances might have been expected, never did arise.”^{ci}

5.332 The RCN commitment to Korea formally ended on 7 September 1955, when HMCS *Sioux* left her Japanese base for the passage home, although its operations in Korean waters had concluded in March 1955 when it was no longer required.

5.333 RAN veterans provided the following comments in submissions to the Working Party about the period from December 1954 to April 1956:

(Sailor, HMAS Shoalhaven): “The ship’s company was getting ready for church services in No. 1 dress uniform when it was called to ‘action stations’. A first degree of readiness was adopted, all hands closed up, all positions fully manned and all the ships guns primed and ready for action... We received a Red Alert and were told that hostile aircraft were approaching. Russian MiG fighters were sighted high in the sky and perhaps out of range of the main armament. ... Guns were loaded and ready to fire... Remained at action stations for approximately one hour.”

(Officer, HMAS Condamine): “During the fragile Armistice, when at anchor off the outlying islands bordering the DMZ, the ship remained in an operational state of readiness with armed sentries on the upper deck. Because of the sensitivity of breaching the Armistice in any way, ammunition was not provided to sentries, as a safety measure against the accidental or precipitant [sic] discharge of fire-arms!”

Army – conditions experienced

5.334 The 1 British Commonwealth Division Operations Intelligence Summary for 4 December 1954 reported that:

“the KPA appears to have a post-Armistice war leave program: reports indicate that for approximately 1 year following the Armistice, the only leaves granted were the R & R type, but it is evident that a schedule of regular leave is now in effect”.

5.335 The summary included an 8th Army report that:

“late in October 1954, the Intelligence Section, Seoul Metropolitan Police apprehended a ring of six North Korean agents. They had been utilised as informants and decoys from approximately November 1953 to October 1954, at which time they were discovered organising a communist cell in Seoul and were arrested for the second time”.

5.336 On 4 December 1954, the Division Column (RASC) became non-operational as its first stage of disbandment.

5.337 A 1 RAR Operation Instruction 40/547 of December 1954 about EXERCISE SCRAM directed (paragraph 8): “Ammunition will NOT be carried.”

5.338 The 1 British Commonwealth Division publication *Brief history of Korean War* issued 11 December 1954 states that the War concluded on 27 July 1953.

5.339 As a general comment, the 1 RAR War Diary activities mainly comprise work on Kansas Line, exercises, range practices, sport, parades, courses and mess dinners.

5.340 On 24 December 1954, 1 RAR held a Christmas Party for village children. [See the photograph of this event in Annex 5C at the end of this Chapter.]

5.341 The BCFK Weekly Review of 12–18 February 1955 quoted from a MAC report of two alleged violations on 5 and 8 February by a military reconnaissance aircraft and eight military jet aircraft penetrating North Korean airspace, which were fired on by North Korean aircraft. The UNC denied all knowledge and refused an investigation. In the same report, on 10 February the Communists identified two Belgian soldiers who had crossed the DMZ on 25 August 1954 and defected. One soldier returned voluntarily.^{ciii}

5.342 Charges, denials and counter-charges about Armistice violations remained a regular occurrence:

“On 9 and 10 May [1955] Joint Observer Team No 6 of the MAC investigated a Communist charge that 7 ROK agents had intruded into the DMZ, had ambushed North Korean civil police, and in the ensuing fight all but one had been killed. On the UNC side, it was alleged that the affair was a frame-up. The Communist patrol (which would have violated the Armistice agreement by being near the hut) took the bodies of a group they had surprised and killed back to their side of the line and arranged a plant. They blew up the bodies, making much more of a mess than would have resulted from the claimed explosion of a percussion grenade. Since grenades are forbidden weapons in the DMZ, the Communists had to construct an elaborate story of seizing two grenades from the intruders.”^{ciii}

5.343 A separate BCFK Weekly Report for 21–27 May states that the six men of the party killed had been shot to death and not killed by a grenade:

“This point was important in that it could be proved that a grenade could not cause the extensive mutilations noted... by the JOT... UNC denied all charges, producing conclusive reasons for so doing, and stated further, that the Communist practice of launching unsubstantiated charges against the UN for propaganda purposes was below the dignity of the MAC and a waste of time.”^{cliv}

5.344 A document of 11 May 1955 says:

“UNC MAC is continuing to prune its US staff very considerably. After several months of operation it was mutually agreed by both sides to reduce the Joint Observer Teams from 10 to 6 and their areas of responsibility remapped accordingly.”

5.345 1 RAR issued these Orders for Sentries on 1 June 1955:

“Firing.

a. You will fire only

(1) when your life or that of another sentry is in danger.

(2) If attacked.

(3) If a vehicle breaks through the barrier and does not halt you will fire AT THE TYRES.

b. USE MINIMUM FORCE.” [Note: the ‘Shoot to kill’ order has been removed.]

5.346 No. 3 Joint Observer Team issued a report on 2 June 1955 about an incident when six members of the ROK DMZ civil police went out to forage an aircraft engine lying in the DMZ. Communist police opened fire and two of the ROK police were killed.^{clv}

5.347 No. 2 Joint Observer Team issued a report on 22 June 1955 about an incident in the DMZ when two US soldiers on routine patrol strayed across the DML. They were apprehended by Communist soldiers well on the northern side of the line. The Communists behaved very well and eventually returned them.^{clvi}

5.348 1 RAR reported on 25 June 1955 that Teal Bridge was under water, low areas of Camp Gallipoli were inundated, roads were cut, Teal Bridge guard and DMZ Company had to be supplied by flying fox.

5.349 By September 1955, 1 RAR manning was so short that Companies were combined for field training and exercise purposes.

5.350 On 2 September 1955, the Defence Committee advised CINC BCFK that the Australian commitment against his requirements would be 220 Australian personnel short, and asked him to reduce his manpower requirements to fit an Australian ceiling of 1,683 personnel.^{clvii}

5.351 A 1 RAR instruction of 7 September 1955 about EXERCISE SCRAM stated in part:

“The next SCRAM will take place on 12 September 1955 at approximately 0800 hours. The Exercise will be of at least 24 hours duration and Companies will be stood down in time to

return to Gallipoli for the midday meal on 13 September 1955... No restriction on use of lights in Gallipoli or Kansas locations”.

5.352 By 26 September 1955, 1 RAR vehicle and personnel shortages were such that only the F[ighting] echelon could exercise. Manning returns indicate that 1 RAR was always short of riflemen but always surplus in drivers and often surplus in clerks, orderlies and batmen.

5.353 The following signal about the timing of force reductions was issued on 7 October 1955 by Army Personnel:

- “1. Understand immediate reduction of our existing force would involve considerable redeployment during winter months, resulting in hardships to both Commonwealth force and our allies.
- “2. Americans plan redeployment in the spring and **it seems to us that this might be most appropriate time to implement run-down.**”^{clviii} [Emphasis added]

5.354 On 24 October 1955, 1 RAR apprehended a Korean thief in the Sergeants’ Mess.

5.355 1 RAR manning levels continued to decline. On 31 October 1955, the war establishment was 741, manning was 595. On 1 November 1955, manning was down to 530. At 31 January 1956, manning was 526.

5.356 As at 17 December 1955, enemy strength was reported as a total of 683,800. The assessment was that CCF had been withdrawing a number of units. The NKA had taken over the CCF role. The CCF were removing units but leaving headquarters by name and a cadre force to allow a swift build-up in the event of hostilities.^{clix}

5.357 In February 1956, 1 RAR reported: “Operations: Perimeter and area patrols intensified owing to likelihood of raids by ‘slicky boys’ [organised Korean criminals].

5.358 Australian Army veterans provided the following comments in submissions to the Working Party about the period from December 1954 to April 1956:

(Medic, 1 RAR): “Because conditions were still very unstable, and we did not know if or when the North Koreans or Chinese armies would attack us again, they were very edgy and not to be trusted at all times. We lost a number of servicemen on live-fire exercises by drop-short ammunition, on regular patrols, through enemy fire, and uncharted land mines, exploding booby-traps and severe burns.”

(Soldier, 1 RAR): “We soon learned that we must carry our rifles with us at all time [sic] (no ammunition) and we were told that the North Koreans had massed artillery zeroed in on our Camp and if they decided to move it would be without warning... I was often detailed to go [to Seoul and Incheon] as a guard to the driver, and was issued with an Owen gun to do the job (again, farcically, no ammunition).”

(NCO, 1RAR with service in other theatres): “To any soldier, a latent enemy threat is always regarded as real as the whip and crack of bullets. When a soldier not only feels danger but is told from the highest level that danger exists, then he is entitled to believe that this is so.”

5.359 Australian Army veterans provided the following comments about the period in evidence to the Working Party at public hearings:

(NCO 1RAR with service in other theatres): “We knew there was an enemy there. We were told he was there and that he was the enemy, but we never fired a shot in anger... We lived hard, trained hard, we were isolated ... on a par [with service in the other theatres]...

“So the Government sent me to Korea. I can add to that and say, not only did they send me to Korea, but they sent me there for a definite reason, with a task to do. They in fact—figuratively anyway—pointed out, ‘There is the North Korean People’s Army—that’s your enemy. There is the line over which they must not cross. There are the fortifications that you will man. If they come over that point, you are required to kill them, stop them. And if it means the loss of life or limb as far as you’re concerned, so be it’.

“Now would you describe that as warlike or non-warlike? That’s why I believe I was in a warlike situation, and there’s no doubt in my mind that I was. That every soldier who served there after 1953 was sent to a warlike situation. You can’t tell a soldier, ‘Go over there and be prepared to fight and lose your life’ one minute, and then a couple of years down the track say, ‘Oh you silly people, it wasn’t real. You weren’t in any danger’. You can’t just do that. That’s what I say.”

(Soldier 1 RAR): “I know up in that Observation Post—just you and another guy—because in the still of the night, very strange sounds would happen and you tend to be very alert and the adrenalin’s going and you don’t know what’s happening out in front of you. You could have some of the other side, they could be just down the bottom of the hill, you don’t know, but I do recall that. And I know that personally at times, I was a bit anxious about that. And that sort of thing affected me later in life.”

(Soldier 3 and 1 RAR): “We patrolled the DMZ. We were over there watching [from] the towers at the North Koreans across the river through field glasses. We knew exactly what they were doing during the day, and when we patrolled at night we knew they were watching us. It was the most nerve-wracking thing to get to one end and then (you know) you’ve got to come back to the wire to get out again. And it was always a good relief to get out.”

(Soldier 3 and 1 RAR):

“Ian Crawford:

What orders did you have about responding to fire, when you came under fire?

“Witness:

Well, we were told not to open up, not to open fire on them. We did carry loaded weapons, a full magazine of weapons, and I think the very first time that they opened up, I discharged the full mag[azine] on them.

“Ian Crawford:

You returned their fire?

“Witness:

Returned their fire. I think nearly every one of us did. I don’t know whether we all emptied our mags on them, but I think nearly everyone in the patrol returned fire on them. And we had the Sergeants running up and down going crook: “Do you want to start the War up again?” and all this sort of business.”

(Soldier 1 RAR): “... as I mention in [my submission] about fellows who had been to Korea before, who were war veterans of Korea. They felt decidedly uncomfortable about sitting in a Camp Gallipoli knowing that you were within artillery range and they probably wouldn’t even need a sighter to hit the camp straight first off, it would be full-on straight away. And that was one of the reasons we used to do these evacuation drills from the huts was to get out of them as quickly as possible. There were trenches dug around the camp. We were heading for them.”

(Soldier 1 RAR): “Well, I’m carrying one little scar... it was a ricochet... We were under strict orders not to return fire across the DMZ, because it would give the North Koreans and the Chinese an excuse to come across again. ... on that one patrol there was one shot—the one that I got nicked here [pointing at his neck]—and quite a few of the other patrols I was on, we were fired upon, but they were at extreme range: 800 yards, maybe more... Well, my Platoon Sergeant was leading the patrol... and I told him what had happened. He looked at it and he said, ‘It’s only a bloody scratch. Forget about it.’”

Air Force – conditions experienced

5.360 The RAAF component in Korea had diminished to a transport flight of four Dakota aircraft providing support to BCFK by this stage.

Conditions of service and the reasons for providing them

5.361 On 6 March 1956, the Melbourne *Herald* published the following article about relative conditions of service for troops in Korea and Malaya:

“Are we at war or aren’t we? Diggers unhappy over conditions.

With the 2nd Battalion in Malaya.

Dissatisfaction is growing among Australian troops engaged in the terrorist war over their conditions of service in Malaya. The Government should review the position at once.

Infantrymen dodging bullets in Kedah are getting nowhere near the same benefits as troops in Japan and Korea **where not a shot has been fired in years.**

Troops, exhausted after two months of hard campaigning against terrorists in some of the worst jungle in Malaya are now asking: ‘Are we on active service or aren’t we?’”^{ckx} [Emphasis added]

5.362 The same day, the Secretary of the Department of Defence wrote to the Minister for Defence:

“Withdrawal of special benefits

“These benefits were approved by Canberra on 18 October 1950 immediately following the outbreak of the war in Korea.

“From time to time following the ‘ceasefire’ in Korea, the question of the withdrawal of the benefits was raised and on 29 June 1955 recommendations were made to Cabinet for withdrawal of the benefits but consideration of the Submission was deferred.

“This agendum now recommends that with the withdrawal of the main body of the Force from Korea/Japan, the special benefits should cease as from the time of arrival of the main body at the first port of call in Australia...”^{ckxi}

5.363 The Vice President’s Committee of Cabinet took Decision 75(VP) on 7 March 1956:

“The Committee:–

- (1) decided that in view of the impending withdrawal of the main body of the existing Force **and the non-operational role envisaged for the members who would remain**, the special benefits in respect of the Korea operations should cease to apply as from the time of arrival of the main body at the first port of call in Australia, the specific date to be agreed upon by the Minister for Defence and the Minister for Repatriation; [Emphasis added]
- (2) agreed that any member specially enlisted for Korean service should be withdrawn from the theatre unless he volunteered to serve in Korea/Japan under the conditions which supersede the special operational benefits;

- (3) agreed that on the cessation of the special operational benefits, members of the Forces who serve in Korea/Japan should be eligible for:–
 - (i) a local overseas allowance, if warranted, in accordance with principles established in respect of other remote localities;
 - (ii) income tax concession in accordance with Section 79B of the Income Tax and Social Services Contribution Assessment Act. (This section entitled members of the Forces to a deduction from assessable income of £120 per annum for service of 6 months or more during the income year in a declared area, or to such lesser amount as is decided by the Taxation Commissioner for shorter service in the area.)^{clxii}

5.364 This Decision marked the end of the special benefits for service in Korea and the introduction of more standard overseas conditions of service arrangements. Forces affected by the decision were approximately 90 members of CCK and about 859 at the base in Japan—the latter to close down by March 1957.

5.6 May 1956 – August 1957

Strategy

5.365 Professor Robert O'Neill sums up the closing period of post-Armistice service in these terms:

“The British Commonwealth Base at Kure was heavily reduced in late 1956 and closed in July 1957. The last Commander-in-Chief, British Commonwealth Forces, Korea, Lieutenant General R. Bierwirth, who had succeeded Wells in 1954, returned to Australia in July 1956, and the closure of the base was directed by Brigadier L. J. Bruton.

“The Commonwealth Contingent served in Korea for fifteen months, from 15 May 1956 to 26 August 1957. In late March 1957 the British Government decided to withdraw its component before the coming November, ostensibly in order to save money. The British may also have been showing some displeasure at American opposition to the Suez operations of late 1956. The British decision virtually obliged the Australian, Canadian and New Zealand Governments to withdraw their remaining army personnel from Korea, because they made up only a small part of the Commonwealth Contingent. Although the United States Government was reluctant to agree to this final withdrawal of Commonwealth troops from Korea, it did not withhold assent. On 12 April 1957 the Australian Government announced that its major remaining commitment to the Commonwealth Contingent, some eighty signals personnel, would soon return home.

“The RAAF component had been withdrawn in the initial reductions of late 1954 and early 1955. The single remaining RAN ship was transferred from the authority of the United Nations Command to that of the Commander-in-Chief, British Far East Station, based in Hong Kong, in 1955. Although regular visits to Korean waters were made by ships of the RAN in 1956 and 1957, the naval commitment effectively ended with the departure of the frigate HMAS *Condamine* from Kure on 9 October 1955. The sole remaining Australian military representation in Korea was a liaison officer of the rank of major, or the equivalent in the other services, whom the Government had agreed to provide once the Commonwealth Contingent had been withdrawn. He was accredited to the Commonwealth Liaison Mission, the residual Commonwealth body in Korea following the withdrawal of the contingent. His duties were assumed in 1967 by the Defence Attaché of the Australian Embassy in Seoul, a lieutenant colonel or equivalent in rank, whose seniority entitled him to 'front table' status at meetings of the Military Armistice Commission, the regulatory body of five senior officers

from each side established by the armistice agreement, which continues to meet regularly at Panmunjom to discuss violations of the demilitarised zone and other related matters.^{11cixiii}

5.366 Hansard records that on 19 June 1956, in response to a question about the UN Supervisory Commission and Armistice violations, the Minister for External Affairs, Mr Casey, responded that:

“the Swedish and Swiss Governments had protested that their inspection teams in North Korea were being rather crudely obstructed in carrying out their work of inspecting ports of entry for the movement of troops... In fact positive evidence has been provided that there has been a substantial build-up of both forces and arms in North Korea, through points of entry other than those specified in the Armistice agreement”.

5.367 A Defence Committee paper of October 1956 titled ‘Strategic basis of Australian Defence Policy’ had this to say about the Korean situation:

“The Armistice in Korea has resulted in the division of the peninsula into two bitterly hostile armed camps. The strengthening of the South Korean forces has been offset by the withdrawal of the majority of the UN forces. The South Korean economy is almost entirely dependent on continued US aid. In the face of US guarantees, the Communists are unlikely to undertake further military action in Korea which would almost certainly provoke direct US retaliation.^{11cixxiv}

5.368 CINC FARELF, General Sir Francis Festing, addressed a Special meeting of the Military Board on 15 January 1957:

“On Korea, General Festing referred to the fact that since the rundown of the BCFK he had become responsible for the maintenance of the small Commonwealth force remaining in Korea, which consisted of one infantry Battalion and a supply and maintenance component. He said that the reason for the force was purely political. He would welcome its disappearance as it was uneconomical, inconvenient and militarily futile... His personal view was that hostilities were unlikely to break out, but it was significant that the North Korean army was now more efficient than previously, and so also was the South Korean army. South Korea was maintaining 23 Divisions in the field, making it the fourth largest army in the world and the second largest Asian army... General Lemnitzer, to whom he had recently spoken, thought it possible that the Communists might use Korea to distract attention from their other activities, particularly if there were more trouble with the European satellites.^{cixv}

5.369 A Defence internal minute of 8 April 1957 stated:

“The Department of Defence has advised verbally that the US Government has been informed that consequent on the UK Government decision to withdraw its forces from Korea, the Australian Government proposes to withdraw the Australian Army component of CCK.^{11cixvi}

5.370 A minute of 23 July 1957 from Secretary of the Department of Defence to the Secretary, Department of Air advised that “Headquarters BCFK is disbanded with effect from 8 July 1957”.^{cixvii}

Navy – conditions experienced

5.371 The Report of Proceedings by HMAS *Anzac* in May 1956 included this entry about service in Korean waters: “Made passage from Nagoya to Paengyong-do 2–5 May 1956. Nothing reported”.^{clxviii}

5.372 In May 1956, HMA Ships *Tobruk* and *Anzac* submitted the following Korean patrol report:

“8. ... In all the visit to Chinhae was most interesting and I feel it was an ideal port in which to ‘show the flag’ as it is the centre of Korean Navy training.

...

“12. Extra time in Chinhae is required to arrange sporting fixtures with the various ROK units and to take advantage of the excellent shooting to be had in the hills above the harbour.”^{clxix}

5.373 This patrol report concentrates entirely on a program of visits.

Army – conditions experienced

5.374 The CCK War Diary is completely routine and administrative. Australian personnel are subject to UK military law. On most days in late 1956 it was ‘NTR’—nothing to report.

5.375 In December 1956, there was CCK establishment review; the calculation of CCK establishments assumed that “Units are required to undertake a static role in peace conditions rather than a mobile role in war.”

5.376 Australian Army veterans provided the following comments in submissions to the Working Party about the period from May 1956 to August 1957:

(CCK Signals Squadron soldier): “Night-time security outside our immediate camp perimeter [Inchon] was maintained by armed patrols with frequent exchanges of small-arms fire around the large number of petrol storage tanks in the area... At our receiver station, signals personnel (inside the ammunition base) were armed at all times.”

(CCK Signals Squadron soldier): “Along with several other Australians serving in Korea I travelled to the DMZ to be greeted by the sole Australian representative. While in the DMZ we were given strict instructions to stay together at all times, even when going to the toilets. Nor were we allowed to speak to Communist representatives in the DMZ... They followed us everywhere we went plying us with questions, such as ‘Why are you a mercenary?’ or ‘Why are you an American lackey?’”

5.377 Australian Army veterans provided the following comments about the period in evidence to the Working Party at public hearings:

(CCK Signals Squadron soldier): “Well, we often got a message that... the Squadron had had a message to say that we had a week or two weeks to be out of Korea, or we’d be in a lot of trouble fighting and so forth, it’d be on again. It was expected that the fighting was going to break out again.”

(CCK Signals Squadron soldier): “...the threat we were expecting was more from the local inhabitants. For instance, if you happened to be on the REME compound they would come over the fence shooting, because

they wanted spare parts for the trucks they had that had been BER'd (or Beyond Economical Repair) and sold off to the locals, so they wanted to repair them and they needed spare parts. So their method of spare parts acquisition was to come and break into the compound.

"For us in the Signal Section, we never got that compound. We would do Sergeant's Mess, Officer's Mess, our own perimeter and internal. Now we were... again, we were issued a magazine of ammunition, but with the instructions that in hindsight (I think) were not the most helpful—and in fact (if anything) needed a bit of readjustment, in that here you are, you're on guard duty to fend off anyone that will come and try and break into anything or steal anything, but you're not allowed to shoot. The instructions were, 'You will not fire without the direct order of the Guard Commander'.

"Now I came under fire once and I ran and hid. Not because I'm a coward, but because I wasn't allowed to shoot back. And to make life even more precarious for anybody that was on guard duty, the Mess where the guard post was, was under a floodlight. So you can imagine how peculiar you feel standing under a floodlight and someone takes a pot-shot at you. You can't see outside the perimeter of light, so it's pretty terrifying."

Air Force – conditions experienced

5.378 No RAAF unit was operating in Korea during this period.

Conditions of service and the reasons for providing them

5.379 While Cabinet had specifically decided to terminate the special benefits for Korean service after 19 April 1956 on the ground that later service would be non-operational, it was prepared to keep the situation under review. A Cabinet decision of 6 June 1956 on conditions of service stated in part:

"[Cabinet] noted that should hostile action develop in Korea, it might be necessary to take steps to ensure that Australian Servicemen in Korea were covered by some type of repatriation benefits."^{cbxx}

5.380 On 8 June 1956, a signal was issued by Defence Melbourne to Britcom Japan about new allowances to replace the special benefits for operational service:

"Cessation of operational benefits... Treasury have now advised as follows 'Following cessation of the special operational benefits in respect of Service personnel serving in Korea and Japan the Treasurer has approved of payment of the following local overseas allowances to Service personnel on and from 20th April 1956.

- (a) Personnel serving in Korea. A special allowance of 4/6 per day plus exchange allowance at rates previously approved in respect of BCOF personnel and
- (b) Personnel serving in Japan. A special allowance of 1/- per day plus exchange allowance as above..."^{cbxxi}

5.381 On 12 December 1956, Army Headquarters issued an Administrative Instruction for the Australian component of CCK: "Note: Major differences between UK and Australian military law: Troops proceeding from Australia to Korea and returning to Australia are deemed to be on war service by virtue of D[efence] A[ct] [s.]54A and are not on active service..."^{cbxxii}

5.382 On 12 March 1957, the Public Service Board issued a memorandum to all departments, advising on the status of service in this part of the post-Armistice period:

“Korean ex-servicemen

“The regulations under the Re-establishment and Employment Act have now been amended by Statutory Rule No. 33 of 1956 to provide that service in Korea after 19.4.56 cannot be classed as service in an Operational Area.

“Accordingly, ex-members of the Forces who commence to serve in Korea after that date are not regarded as ex-servicemen for the purposes of the Public Service Act or the Re-establishment and Employment Act.”^{clxxiii}

5.383 A letter of October 1957 from Prime Minister’s Department to the British High Commissioner in Canberra advised that Australian soldiers in Korea would remain on ‘active service’ for the time being:

“I refer to your letter... concerning the proposal of the UK Government to bring ‘active service’ in Korea to an end on 31st October 1957.

“I am to advise that the Australian authorities see no difficulty in the proposal... However, it is proposed, for the time being, that the Australian soldiers in Korea should remain on active service.”^{clxxiv}

5.384 This situation was apparently preserved for technical reasons to do with legal and disciplinary arrangements for overseas service, and had no bearing on what conditions the troops were actually experiencing.

5.7 Overall conclusions

5.385 In the light of the material presented in this Chapter, the Working Party has reached the following conclusion about the nature of service and the conditions experienced by Australian forces in Korea during the post-Armistice period. These conclusions have a close bearing on the case for appropriate medal recognition.

Progressive force reductions

5.386 Both sides progressively reduced their forces as confidence in the ceasefire built and the tension reduced. Other strategic imperatives developing in South-East Asia also created pressure for the redeployment of forces committed to Korea, at the earliest opportunity. The graph in Annex 5A clearly shows that this progressive de-escalation of the conflict applied to both sides.

5.387 In spite of these reductions, the UNC was concerned to maintain a high-level deterrent posture through the appearance of the deployment of major forces at a greater apparent strength than they actually were. Formations called Divisions were only at Brigade strength, and so on. Units were increasingly ‘hollow’ and undermanned as the period progressed, as a result of non-replacement of troops as recruits were diverted to higher priority areas.

The nature of the threat

5.388 The nature of the threat changed from the expectation of formal military offensives to espionage and sabotage, the actions of lawless elements, and the restraining of a relentlessly aggressive South Korea.

5.389 However, there were conflicting signals about the threat at the politico-strategic, operational and tactical levels. In the broad, these can be characterised as follows:

- At the politico-strategic level: senior political figures, respective delegates at the MAC and the South Korean leadership operated in a climate of bellicose rhetoric and posturing characterised by strident language and threats, in the context of Cold War competition. There was a general air of mistrust about capabilities, intentions and adherence to the Armistice conditions.
- At the operational (higher formation) level: the view was that the Chinese were in a defensive posture and had no intention of altering it. The threat was seen as an unconventional one involving infiltrators, saboteurs and lawless elements. The Working Party's conclusion from these records is that higher formation commands had a picture of massive enemy strength but had assessed the likely course of action in terms of which the following is representative: "There is no indication, however, of an imminent offensive and for the immediate future the enemy is believed likely to organise, occupy and defend battle positions of the DMZ, simultaneously maintaining the ceasefire status but offering covert assistance to subversive elements in South Korea."
- At the tactical (unit) level: Servicemen were being told that they must prepare for an imminent threat, which they were trained hard to meet, and they were living just across the DMZ (within artillery range) from a massive and combat-hardened 'enemy' who was constantly referred to using that term. They were also living forward of the defensive positions which they would have been required to fight from in the event of an attack. They were therefore kept at a very high level of readiness and in the expectation of an imminent threat. Restrictions imposed by winter cold and summer heat and rain also led to high levels of military activity designed to keep forces engaged and productive. To ensure a state of readiness to meet a worst case scenario of a deliberate offensive or escalation from an incident, the chain of command issued directives, which would have been used at ship, battalion and squadron command levels to condition their units to a physical and mental state of readiness. There was no shortage of incidents, either experienced or reported from elsewhere in the Korean theatre, whether involving opposing forces or South Korean nationals, taken with the patrolling activity and the awareness of the minefield threat, to maintain a tension not experienced in a peacetime garrison.

5.390 In the light of these mixed messages, it could be said that the threat was more perceived than actual at the tactical level, but nonetheless understandable.

5.391 Although the strategic importance of Australia's contribution to the UN Command's presence in Korea after the Armistice is not a factor in the consideration

of this Review, there is no doubt that the implications of a renewal of hostilities, understood at the strategic level, would have influenced higher command guidance to units to a state of readiness to meet a Communist attack as well as establishing guidelines on avoiding provocations that could lead to escalation. The implications included the possibility of a wider war with China and the option to have recourse to nuclear weapons to contain a Communist assault, as well as the projection of force availability factors elsewhere in the world in the East-West confrontations of the Cold War. For Australia, there was an acceptance within the higher command and at government level of the need to maintain force levels in Korea to deter aggression and for other political and strategic reasons.

Conditions of service

5.392 It is generally acknowledged by earlier reviews, and reinforced by the evidence marshalled in this Chapter, that the conditions of service provided to those serving in Korea post-Armistice were provided for other than operational reasons.

The nature of service—‘warlike’, ‘non-warlike’ or ‘peacetime’?

5.393 The Working Party has reviewed the nature of service in the post-Armistice period against the currently accepted definitions of ‘warlike’ and ‘non-warlike’ service set out in Appendix 1 Part 1. These definitions are used as the test for assessing eligibility for a range of deployment conditions, including medals—and in particular the Australian Active Service Medal (AASM) and the Australian Service Medal (ASM).

5.394 The Working Party has concluded from the evidence that service in the period immediately following the Armistice up to 19 April 1956 (withdrawal of the last Australian combat troops) was ‘non-warlike’ within the meaning of that term as currently applied. Our reasons for this are as follows:

- the application of force was limited to defence of human life;
- military objectives were to avoid any outbreak of hostilities and monitor the ceasefire, reporting any incidents as they occurred; and
- in that context, while casualties might have occurred, they were certainly not expected on the basis of military operations against an armed enemy, and in fact none occurred as a result of hostile action. (This is not to say that service in this period was not hazardous; indeed, the conditions experienced were dangerous and exacerbated by the level of perceived threat). The Working Party notes a 14 October 2005 research report by Major T A G Kemp on Central Army Records Office documents 1953–1957:

“Research into Non-Battle Casualty Lists, fatality databases, indices and in-house proformae held at CARO resulted in the examination of a few additional dossiers. The small number of [Army] fatal casualties (4 [in the additional dossiers]) incurred after 28 July 1953 are all the result of accidents and illnesses not demonstrably related to warlike service. Injuries and illnesses reported upon as incurred in the period under review also appear to be unrelated to warlike service. Note that the terms ‘WIA’ and ‘KIA’ are not used in reporting after 27 July 1953”.

5.395 The Working Party's view on the nature of service is also reinforced by this 13 August 2005 research note by the Chief, Historical Support Branch, US Army Center of Military History:

"... there seems to be little evidence to suggest that post-armistice conditions approached those of the pre-armistice (that is, wartime) period, regardless of how trying or dangerous they appeared to the participants either then or now... The PLA occupied the positions opposing them across the DMZ, and the PLA had little interest in engaging in the low-level harassment and ambush warfare that came to characterize subsequent periods along the DMZ when the North Korean Army was the sole occupier."

5.396 The Working Party has also concluded from the evidence that service in the period between 20 April 1956 and 27 August 1957 (withdrawal of the Australian signals contingent) was peacetime service. This judgement reflects the conditions under which the unit was established; the security arrangements in which the signals unit operated; and the lower-level conditions of service which were deliberately applied to service during that period.

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