NSW GOVERNMENT HONOURS KOREAN WAR VETERANS

Sunday 25 July 2010

More than 100 veterans of the Korean War today attended the annual State reception in their honour.

It was hosted by Premier Kristina Keneally, the Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans Affairs, Frank Terenzini, and 2010 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholars at Government House.

From June 29, 1950 to July 27, 1953, some 17,000 Australian sailors, soldiers and airmen served in the Korean War. In total, 340 Australians were killed, 1,216 were wounded and 29 were prisoners of war.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the day North Korean forces invaded the Republic of Korea.

"Our brave Australian forces in Korea served their country with pride and commitment – their courage and sacrifice should never be forgotten," Ms Keneally said.

"Today, we say to them: we remember you, we respect you, and we recognise your sacrifice in the name of Australia.

"The Korean War is not only a significant legacy of Australia's Anzac history; it also represents a lasting friendship forged between Australia and South Korea."

Earlier this year, NSW was officially represented at recent 60th anniversary Korean War commemorations in Seoul by Minister Terenzini and the 2010 Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholars – NSW high school students.

The pilgrimage included visits to several battlefields including Kapyong, the site of Australian troops' most important battle of the Korean War.

"These eight senior high school students proved worthy ambassadors for NSW and their schools," Mr Terenzini said.

"The scholars have returned equipped with a better understanding of Australia's participation in the Korean War – and that's crucial in ensuring the sacrifices of Australian servicemen and women are remembered for generations to come."

Background facts:

- The 1st, 2nd and 3rd Battalions, Royal Australian Regiment served in Korea.
- The Royal Australian Navy had nine ships operating in the region, and the Royal Australian Air Force deployed 77 Squadron during the conflict.
- The Korean War was the first occasion on which members of the United Nations acted collectively to repel aggression. Twenty other countries contributed combat and medical units to the UN Command in Korea.
- Although the official ceasefire agreement was signed on July 27, 1953 our troops continued to have some involvement in Korea in a peacekeeping capacity until 1957 as part of the United Nations Command forces.