

**SPEECH BY MINISTER GRAHAM WEST
DEDICATION OF THE KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL
SYDNEY
SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2009**

Minister Kim

Consul-General

The Hon Barrie Unsworth

The Hon Barry O'Farrell

Air Marshal Binskin

Parliamentary colleagues

Reverend clergy

Distinguished guests

Fellow citizens

And above all, veterans of the Korean War whose
presence honours this day.

Fifty six years ago tomorrow, the guns fell silent on the
Korean peninsula ...

... and a cold and bitter conflict came mercifully to an
end.

As the duties of war ended, the tasks of peacetime began.

Binding up the broken and wounded.

Caring for the widow and the orphan.

Rebuilding the cities and towns.

And turning peace into freedom ... freedom into prosperity.

All these things were done ... and were done well.

But one peacetime task – in many ways the greatest peacetime task – was not adequately accomplished here at home ...

... and that was the task of remembrance and gratitude.

For reasons which seem inexplicable today, the merits of the Korean War – and the courage of those who prosecuted it – were overlooked and neglected.

Today, in the nation's greatest city, we make good on an unfulfilled duty ... the omission of which has done us no credit and much harm.

We affirm that the United Nations personnel conducted themselves with honour and with valour.

We affirm that every life lost was precious and every sacrifice was worthy and justified.

And therefore, today ...

... we dedicate this memorial to the men and women who bore the burden of those three terrible years:

To the fallen, who died for values worthy of their lives.

To those who came home from battle, scarred by memories and wounds.

And to the grieving families, for whom even the passing of decades cannot heal the pain of their loss.

This place is a tribute to the dead and haven for the living.

A place where veterans and their loved ones can think and pray and remember.

Where children can come to learn the story of Korea anew – as they must and will.

And where we, the NSW community, can formally gather on ceremonial days to mark an immeasurable debt of honour.

This is a memorial of gratitude as well as of remembrance.

We thank our Allies ... whose names are listed on the pathway ...

And the great Republic of Korea ... whose children paid by far the greater part of the sacrifice ...

... and whose proud and ancient culture is reflected in the symbols that adorn and constitute this memorial.

Today, we inaugurate this monument with a simple, timely pledge.

No more will Korea be neglected.

No longer a “police action” sidelined to the edge of history.

No longer a “forgotten war”, robbed of its rightful place and role.

This memorial will correct all these things.

It has been planned and designed with the guidance and care of veterans themselves.

It has been built by gifted artists and craftsmen to endure the assaults of time and weather.

And it has been consciously located in a place of honour
at the gateway of this city.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While-ever this memorial stands ... it will tell the story of
ordinary people who did extraordinary things.

It will honour those who fell.

Comfort those who returned.

And prompt gratitude in those who inhabit the freedoms so
fiercely won.

In partnership with Minister Kim, the Korean War Veterans
...

... and on behalf of the people of NSW and people of
Korea...

... We will solemnly dedicate this memorial.