

History of the Memorial

The Memorial was created by the Lothians and West of Scotland Branch of the British Korean Veterans Association to honour the memory of their fallen comrades. It consists of an arboretum of 1,100 native Scottish trees, two mounds in the shape of the Ying and Yang on the South Korean flag and between the mounds a shrine in typical Korean style with the name boards of all those killed. It is the only memorial in the UK dedicated solely to the Korean War that lists all the names of those killed. There is a picnic area and several benches for those who wish to spend some time in reflection.

The idea for the Memorial was first aired in 1994 and £90,000 was raised by the Branch. The South Korean Veterans Affairs Department offered to send 100 1metre Korean firs to go on the mounds but unfortunately could not get an import licence so sent seeds instead and these were grown at the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh and Shotts Prison. West Lothian Council very kindly granted the Trust a site at Witchcraig, near Bathgate and they also now maintain the grounds. The Memorial was dedicated before 400 guests on 25th June 2000, the 50th anniversary of the start of the Korean War.

The first shrine was a small wood and glass building with engraved wooden panels of the names which required steady maintenance and was subjected to one act of vandalism, so the Trustees decided to rebuild it in a more permanent structure similar to a Korean shrine. About £62,000 was raised. Architect, Mr Raphael Dunbar, of West Lothian Council, designed a proper Korean style shrine and construction started in December 2012. It consists of a green oak frame and roof, the metal name boards on stone walls and eight tons of traditional Korean tiles, which were brought from Korea and laid in five days by a specialist Korean tiler from Seoul. The new shrine was dedicated on 27th July 2013, the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice.

Where to Find Us

Scottish Korean War Memorial
Witchcraig Wood, Torphichen
West Lothian

Signed from Linlithgow Town Centre
From M8 follow signs for Beecraigs Country Park



The Scottish Korean War Memorial



A short history of the Korean War

After World War 2 Korea, which had been occupied by Japan since 1910, was divided along the 38th Parallel into two zones of occupation with Russia to the north and USA to the south. On 25th June 1950 the North invaded the South with the intention of uniting Korea under communist rule. Due to its well trained and equipped forces the North quickly occupied Seoul and drove south over the Han River.



The UN Security Council passed a resolution of military support for the South and the USA despatched forces from its occupying army in Japan. Britain ordered ships of the Far East Fleet to sail to Korean waters and mobilised 29 Infantry Brigade to sail from the UK. At the same time HQ 27 Infantry Brigade and two battalions were sent from Hong Kong and these were joined by 3 Battalion Royal Australian Regiment. The US and British forces formed a perimeter protecting the vital port of Pusan, based on the Naktong River. The USA landed two Marine Divisions at Inchon, near

Seoul, and this forced the North to withdraw from the Pusan area. The UN forces then drove them north, occupied Pyongyang and continued to just short of the Yalu River border with China. At that point an army of 130,000 Chinese 'Volunteers' attacked the UN forces and drove them south again beyond Seoul and the Han River. The UN forces then regrouped and attacked across the Han, relieved Seoul again and drove north to a line roughly along the 38th Parallel. At this point the UN Security Council ordered them to stop and dig in as South Korea's border had been restored.

Shortly afterwards talks to arrange an Armistice were started at Panmunjom. For the next eighteen months these talks continued and many fierce battles were fought along the line as the North tried to improve its position. Eventually the Armistice was signed on 27th July 1953, establishing a demilitarised border. No Peace Treaty has yet been signed.



1 KOSB keep watch over the Imjin River



1 A&SH at Kunnu Ri, North Korea



1 Black Watch night patrol at the Hook