



Asia Lee Campbell was hosted at a Luncheon for Korean War Veterans at the Blue House in 2019.



## My Journey to Remember Them

By Asia Lee Campbell

Over the past six years, as a little ambassador, I've made it my mission to keep the memories of Korean War veterans alive in the hearts and minds of all South Koreans. My journey started with a heartfelt letter to an unknown soldier. It was because of that letter I met Charles Wittwer, a Korean War veteran from the United States. I met Charlie and his son at the war Memorial of Korea. Charlie wasn't able to speak very well, but he did share a few stories with me. His son told me his father never fully recovered from his experiences during the Korean War. But being back in Korea and seeing the country that we have become has really helped.

I was lucky enough to travel to the Netherlands, England and Belgium the next year to meet more Korean War veterans. It was in the Netherlands that I made a special connection with a Dutch veteran, Herman Ten Seldam. Although we only spent a short time together, we shared a special bond. It was because of Herman and Herman's friend Willem Brouwer from the Van Heutsz museum, that I was given my first real mission as a little ambassador.

As we all know, the Regiment Van Heutsz fought very bravely during the Korean War. We also know because of their small numbers, they were assigned members of the KATUSA to fight alongside them. Over the course of the war, 20 KATUSA soldiers died standing next to their newfound brothers in battle. Sadly, these 20 soldiers have gone unnamed for almost 71 years. With the help of Willem Brouwer from the Van Heutsz museum, our very own Go Han-bin, and many others, it has been my mission to find all the names of those fallen soldiers so that they can be properly honored as the heroes they were. I am happy to report that we have found 13 of the 20 soldiers so far. But we can not stop until all of them are found.

During this special mission, I met a very nice lady, Park Ji-eun. Her father was one of the 20 fallen KATUSA soldiers. However, because she was only 100 days old when he left to fight for his country, she never knew him. Sadly, she did not have a single photo of her father. So, as a little ambassador, I felt it was my duty to help reunite her with her father's photo. With Willem's help we were able to locate a photo of her father and finally bring some peace to her heart after 71 years.

Many people have come to know me because of the

different military uniforms I wear. They often see me sneaking into different ceremonies at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery. One annual ceremony I've attended since beginning my journey has been Turn Toward Busan. I've met so many wonderful people at Turn Toward Busan each year. My Dutch papa, Herman, even attended in 2017!! In 2019, I met Vincent Courtenay, the founder of Turn Toward Busan. We only met briefly, but I was surprised to learn that he knew all about me. And I was even more surprised when he gave me my next mission. Almost 71 years ago, a young Canadian man, not much older than me, lied about his age so he could join the Canadian army to fight alongside his fellow Canadians in the Korean War. Sadly, Private Elliot Gordan McKay from PEI was killed in battle at the young age of 17. However, because he lied about his age, his grave maker at the United Nations Memorial Cemetery says he was 18 when he died. This young man was a member of Mr. Courtenay's regiment. I was honored that he would trust me with such an important mission. This may seem like a simple request, but it's very important to Mr. Courtenay and the late Mr. McKay's family. With the help of Mr. Danagher, the Canadian Ambassador to Korea, we were able to get Mr. MacKay's grave marker changed at the UNMCK!

One of my favorite things about being a little ambassador is being able to meet so many wonderful people. Everyone I meet holds a special place in my heart. But, every so often, I meet someone that I share a special connection with. Someone, who truly believes in what I am doing. Someone I now consider to be a part of my family. Her name is Pia Blomberg, and she is from Sweden. I met Pia in 2017. We instantly connected. We have stayed in constant contact since that day. I have learned a lot about Pia's mom, who served as a nurse in Busan during the war. In fact, I wore a replica of her mom's uniform to honor her mother's memory and to honor all of the nurses who risked their lives to care for the soldiers and civilians during the Korean War.

I am part of a generation that has only known peace and prosperity. I've always had enough food to eat, access to education, and loving friends and family. However, there are many Koreans alive today that still remember the hardships of the war. A time when food was scarce and families were separated.

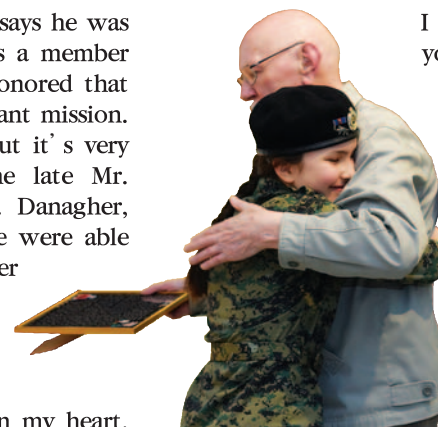
It has been 71 years since the Korean War. In that time, South Korea has become one of the leading

countries in Asia and around the world. We have set an example to other countries that peace is not only possible, but also sustainable. We also know how important it is to remember how we got here, and most importantly, we remember who it was that made all this possible.

My journey started with a heartfelt letter to an unknown soldier. A letter that would forever change my life and the lives of the people I've met over the past six years. However, for Korean War veterans, their journeys started 71 years ago when they volunteered to risk their lives for our small unknown country. Their bravery, resilience, and sacrifice helped lay the foundation for what Korea has become today. Many of those brave men made the ultimate sacrifice so I could have a future. A future where all Korean children could grow up in a peaceful nation.

To all of the Korean War veterans who read this letter, I speak for all Koreans when I say thank you. Thank you for your bravery and for your sacrifice. Thank you for traveling across the ocean to come to our aid. It has been a blessing to have met so

many of you. I only wish that I could meet many more of you, so I could show you in person how much you mean to us. I will keep all of your stories close to my heart. And it is my mission to make sure you are never forgotten.



Aisa hugging British veteran James Grundy, who finished his lecture at the auditorium of Nam-gu Office in May 2019.

## A Granddaughter of All Korean War Veterans

Asia Lee Campbell, a 13-year-old middle school student, is nicknamed "the Little Ambassador" and is considered as the granddaughter of all Korean War veterans. She has attended numerous Korean War ceremonies over the past 6 years in Korea. She has experienced being a spokesperson on TV and on social media. Asia was born in Nam-gu, near the UN Cemetery, and is living there. Her father is Canadian and her mother is Korean. She is a Korean and Canadian citizen. For several years, she has been spreading her gratitude to Korean War veterans through numerous television programs, the media, and ceremonies. She was appointed as the Youth Ambassador for Public Relations of the UNMCK and a co-leader of the National Supporters of the Korean War last year. She is the busiest and most famous, enthusiastic and influential middle school student of her age in Korea.

