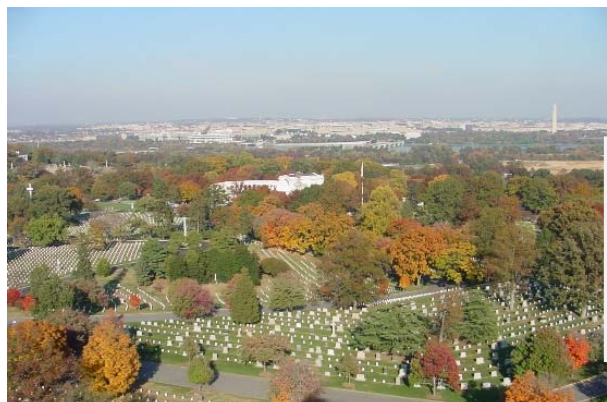


Veterans Day, 2008



VETERANS DAY, 2008, dawns with our Nations engaged in another world-wide war and probably overcommitted—*stretched*—in every resource required in that war EXCEPT the hearts, body strength, and commitment of Korean and American troops. They have only just begun to fight and will continue fighting to win—rather like those of us in 1950 when we finally went on the offensive, landed at INCHON, turned the City and the national government over to President Rhee, broke out of the NAKDONG PERIMETER and drove the North Koreans back across the 38th Parallel.

At that time bloody reverses still remained in the KOREA WAR, 58 years ago, and millions died—tens of thousands of them Americans, millions of them Koreans—over two million South Koreans; the North Koreans and Chinese have never revealed their losses.

And since then, what? An uneasy truce for fifty-five years, over 2,000 American and Korean deaths, and an added three million US veterans of KOREA, 1955-2007, and no peace treaty yet. Now our old enemies in that war are nuclear equipped, and again violating signed agreements after two more years of talk, talk, talk.

Today Americans honor veterans, living and dead, from all of our wars, *and from times when there were no conventional wars* while in both nations there was still a draft and men served many months of their lives as obligations of citizenship, doing that which they would not have chosen to do on their own. Whether cooks or machine gunners, mechanics or mortar men, mail clerks or tank crewmen, in hot weather, in cold, in exotic places or just two weeks a year and one weekend a month drills at home, on NIKE sites, or living at home, ALL serving in the armed forces of the United States. The Republic of Korea does so on June 6: **VETERANS!**

Our Nations owes their VETERANS all that is reasonable to expect until the day we warrior-defenders pass away, regardless of the type, place, and duration of service—so long as that service was honorable. That debt is part of the on-going costs of freedom and is not to be ducked when making budget decisions. *It is owed and was promised.* Part of the costs— as in **FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.**

Our service in “our” war was not in vain: we were never whipped—defeated—because **WE NEVER QUIT!** And our young men and women at war today will never be whipped because they will not quit. The US and ROK warriors in the Vietnam War did not quit—the US quitters in that war were right here at home living a life of ease as we bled. We can see and hear, today, too many here at home trying that dance of the defeated—quitters—again trying to convince the rest of us that we cannot trust our fighting forces, who ask nothing other than to be allowed to win AND to be assured that the Nation’s promises to them are honored. **FREEDOM IS NOT FREE.**

While we are honoring veterans today, let us not neglect to honor their (our) parents, wives, and children who *also served their enlistments of separation, single parenting, juggling bills, fighting health struggles, usually ALONE* because the nations needed their loved ones. Thank God that the US Veterans Administration and others are beginning to seriously realize that PTSD, and broken bodies, are lifelong sentences for our loved ones as well as for ourselves—PTSD and broken bodies are contagious in a family, part of the **COSTS OF FREEDOM.** In the US, we should have reached that conclusion much earlier while dealing with the large number of broken homes associated with Vietnam veterans instead of berating those veterans as somehow being deficient. They were let down by their Nation.

We did not quit in KOREA and today the northern aggressors and their supporters do not own or occupy a square millimeter of the REPUBLIC OF KOREA. Following our examples of sacrifice, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA did not quit either. Today it is a leading nation of the world.

Our fighting forces will not quit in the war on terror.

FREEDOM IS NOT FREE. Thank you, veterans of all honorable service, in any of the Services of our two nations, in all eras of our history. We remember you as kinsmen and mentors.

Louis T Dechert, Chairman

