**Reflections on the Regiment**

It is said that the soul of a nation is shaped from the stories of its people.

The same might be said for the soul of a Regiment.

While transiting South Korea on leave recently, I made a private detour to the Korean monument to Australian and New Zealand Armed Forces at Gapyeong (Kapyong).

It is a tranquil site, nestled in steep hills near the Gapyeong River, surrounded by verdant forest and fertile farms. Disturbed only by the sounds of an occasional passing motor car, chattering birds and a trickling stream, it is a grateful but humble tribute by the Korean people to those Australian and New Zealand troops who committed to the defence of South Korea. Poignantly, it is sited on the very soil where the desperate battle of Kapyong was fought by 3 RAR. What an honour to touch the ground where quietly courageous and gritty men wrote the first chapters of the chronicle that is The Royal Australian Regiment.

As I walked the monument gardens, I recalled the human stories of that battle. I heard the bugle calls mustering wave after wave of enemy soldiers against the immovable men of Major Bernard ‘Ben’ O’Dowd’s A Company. I saw Corporal ‘Gunner’ McMurray dragging a stretcher on hands and knees, determined to evacuate the wounded despite the oppressive enemy machine gun and rifle fire. I smelt the sweat on Captain Reg Saunder’s battle tunic as he desperately rushed his men from C Company to reinforce the forward defensive positions.

These anecdotes have been passed down to subsequent generations of Australian infantry soldiers. These anecdotes have shaped the soul of our Regiment.

