

60 YEARS ON

On the eve of Anzac Day, the 3rd Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment – 3RAR – marked the 60th anniversary of the Battle of Kapyong, with a ceremonial parade at Holsworthy in Sydney.

The event held considerable significance this year as it was the final time 3RAR will conduct this commemorative parade at Holsworthy, before relocating to Townsville early next year.

Commanding Officer 3RAR Lieutenant Colonel Trent Scott said the parade was a very significant occasion on the Australian Army's calendar.

"This is an annual commemoration that holds a special place in the hearts of a large number of past and present members of the battalion," Lieutenant Colonel Scott said.

"This year there were also special elements to the event, given it has been 60 years since our predecessors were instrumental in halting the Chinese attack, and also because this is our final ceremony for Kapyong Day to be held in Sydney."

In attendance was the nation's most recent Victoria Cross for Australia recipient, Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith, who was a proud member of 3RAR before joining the Special Air Service Regiment.

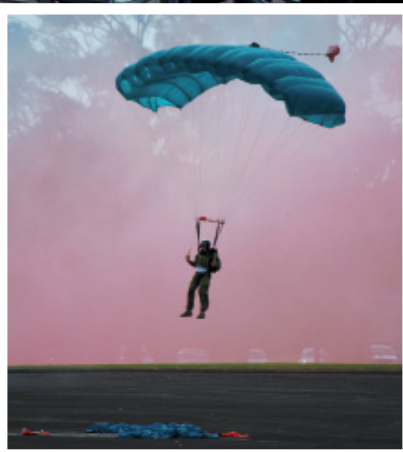
Lieutenant Colonel Scott said it was extremely important for 3RAR's soldiers to remember their predecessors and to understand the legacy they continued to uphold.

"The spirit from that time is still alive and well in the battalion, but today's soldiers also need to be mindful of the legacy they intend to leave behind for future generations."

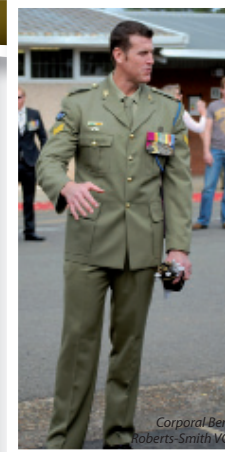
Kapyong Day activities also included addresses by veterans, displays and demonstrations by 3RAR soldiers, a luncheon for all attendees and mess functions in the evening.

In addition to the events at Holsworthy, 20 3RAR soldiers travelled to North Korea to visit the Kapyong battlefields.

Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith VC assists Kapyong veteran Colonel Ben O'Dowd on parade.



Kapyong veteran Colonel Don Beard attaches the Kapyong streamer to the 3RAR Regimental Colours.



Corporal Ben Roberts-Smith VC

BATTLE OF KAPYONG

In November 1950, the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF) entered the Korean War.

This resulted in the reversal of recent successes and, during the harsh winter of 1950, the Allies were forced to withdraw across the 38th Parallel.

On 4 January 1951, Seoul fell to the Communists.

The Chinese winter offensive was eventually halted and, in February/March, UN forces began to push the CCF slowly back, with Seoul recaptured by US troops on 14 March.

By 22 April, 3RAR, as part of the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade, had advanced as far as Kapyong where it was held in reserve some 50km behind the front line, which was held by 6th Republic of Korea (ROK) Division.

On the night of 22 April, the Chinese launched their spring offensive and the 6th ROK Division withdrew in disorder through 3RAR's position.

The next evening, the main Chinese force reached 27th Brigade's and 3RAR's perimeter – the Chinese outnumbering the Commonwealth force five to one. For two days, wave after wave of Chinese soldiers flung themselves at the Australians and their allies, but they were eventually exhausted and demoralised and their offensive blunted.

During the battle, 3RAR showed such tenacity and dependability, it earned itself the nickname it still uses today – 'Old Faithful' – and was later awarded the United States Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation.

Today, the Battle of Kapyong is the cornerstone of a proud battalion's calendar, a Kapyong Citation Streamer attached ceremonially to the Regimental Colour during the annual commemorative parade.