

SOUTH AFRICA

in the

KOREAN WAR

CLUB COLLECTIVE DISPLAY STATUS REPORT 01/08/20
(It's improved with good feedback from two new sources.)



Circa 1950 - 1952. Christmas Greeting Card from the USAF 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing.
The US equipped No. 2 Sqn SAAF, 'The Flying Cheetahs', with the WW2 F51D Mustang fighter.
Following training in Japan No. 2 Squadron SAAF was deployed to the USAF 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing.
The top right image shows the SAAF's RAF-style roundel with leaping Springbok.
(Image Supplied by 'Hutch' Hutchinson.)

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postmaster@southafricanphilatelyclub.com



A Club Collective Display

South Africa in the Korean War (1950 - 1953)

A collection of images submitted to date (01/08/20) by members.



I previously proposed that Club members participate in building up a collective display on the Korean War. My reason for suggesting this is because I think the subject is fascinating and worthy. (Suggestions from members with other interests about creating other such collective displays are welcomed.)

No. 2 Squadron SAAF punched above its weight in this conflict and acquitted itself with honour. The 'Flying Cheetahs' won the respect of the Americans who at the outset questioned whether men from Africa could fly, this despite the SAAF's long history of flying and fighting alongside the USAF in WW2. Sadly, I have never seen a display on 'South Africa in the Korean War'. It's about time we had one!

I have now received new material from Dave Young and Dr Jim Findlay. Their articles show that the postal history of SAAF in the Korean War has been studied and published but also that their work exists as a stepping stone to a larger display of subject matter. In this issue I will now draw on their research to build up a bigger, more comprehensive Club display that will hopefully do justice to the SAAF. But whether it will ever be the 180 sheet display I'd like to see remains to be seen.

I have personally managed to collect a small number of affordable items on this subject. If, like me, you have some of this material - it is hard to come by - I hope we can combine what we have and slowly come up with an on-line display that honours those South Africans who participated in this struggle and, more importantly, reminds others why South Africa found itself fighting to maintain democracy in Korea. As part of that understanding we need to shed our illusions and remember that the reason the new Nationalist government sent white South African boys to defend South Koreans from communism was to keep the spectre of black African liberation movements aided by Russia away from their farms and daughters.

So, if you can swallow that and have some pieces you would like to share with the Club, please email them to me as 300 dpi JPG files. Also, if you have questions, please email me:

Steve: <postmaster@southafricanphilatelyclub.com>

PLEASE NOTE:

**WHAT FOLLOWS IS NOT YET A FORMAL DISPLAY - BUT
IT IS NOW STARTING TO MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION!**

**PLEASE CONSIDER PROVIDING FEEDBACK.
MY VIEWS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE CLUB.**

Map of Korean Peninsula

Korea occupies a peninsula that hangs almost entirely off north-eastern China except for a small fraction of its border that touches Russia. With the Yellow Sea to the west and the Sea of Japan to the east, only the relatively narrow Tsushima Strait separates Korea's southern tip from Japan. It shares a small border with Russia. As a result of its position, Korean independence has traditionally been decided by its neighbours.



Historic Background to the Korean War

Korean civilization was dominated at varying times by three sophisticated but different kingdoms. Its modern history began when the Joseon dynasty (1392 - 1910) was established. Between 1592 and 1637 the Joseon dynasty experienced invasions by Manchus and the Japanese. The Joseons enlisted Chinese aid to resist both of these invaders. When the Qing Manchus conquered China, the Joseon dynasty was left isolated and entered a period of decline just as European influence was growing in Asia. Early stamp albums refer to the 'Corean' peninsula as 'Joseon' or 'Choson'.

A late period of reform and independence occurred during the Korean Empire (1897 - 1910), an era dominated by Imperial Russia's Asian expansion. When Japan emerged victorious from the Russo-Japanese War (1904 - 1905), it asserted itself as the rising Asian power. It forced the Korean Empire to become a protectorate, then aggressively and illegally annexed it in 1910. Japan renamed the country Chosen and proceeded to ruthlessly crush Korean resistance to its rule. A Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea took root in exile in Manchuria, China, Siberia and the US where its leaders came under the influence of competing political ideologies.

Many in the West believe that WW2 began with the German Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939. Today, a growing number of historians suggest that WW2 began in Asia when the Japanese invaded China in 1937 and even earlier in Africa when Italian Fascists invaded Ethiopia in 1935. China's 'Eight Years' War of Resistance' to Japan was long and heroic, a defining period in its modern history. As the first Allied power to resist a major Axis force in WW2, China's contribution is often overlooked by many in the West who have a more Eurocentric view of the causes of the 20th Century's and History's greatest global war.

With Japan's war primarily against China, the USA and European colonial empires who had possessions in Asia - Britain, France and the Netherlands - Japan signed a Neutrality Pact with the Soviet Union in April 1941. The Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact saved Russia the cost of fighting World War 2 on two fronts and allowed it to concentrate all its forces against Nazi Germany in Europe. In return, Japan received a carte blanche to wage war in China, elsewhere in Asia and the Pacific. The Neutrality Pact freed the Japanese to fight on several Asian fronts despite being over-extended and gave them the confidence to attack the US naval base at Pearl Harbour.

The failure of this seaborne aerial attack in late 1941 and the loss of its aircraft carriers at the Battle of Midway in June 1942 saw the war turn against Japan as the US developed an irresistible aircraft carrier and island-hopping amphibious marine landing force. By late 1943 the fate of post-war Germany and Europe was being decided by the Allies. Sensing opportunities for communist expansion in Asia similar to those developing in Europe, Joseph Stalin, the Soviet leader, pledged at the Tehran Conference in November 1943 that he would enter the war against Japan once Nazi Germany was defeated.

After Germany's defeat the Soviets began to transfer elite veteran units from Europe to the Far East. After building up powerful armoured forces, they launched a devastating attack against the unsuspecting Japanese in Manchuria on the day the USA dropped their second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, three days after the near total destruction of Hiroshima in the world's first nuclear bomb attack. With its elite forces redeployed to the Pacific theatre to fend off a US invasion from the south, the Japanese defenders of Manchuria were annihilated by the Russians. Japan surrendered a week later on 15th August. A last-minute Russian attack gained swathes of strategic territory in Manchuria and north Korea for little cost.

Fearing that the Soviets intended to seize the entire peninsula, the United States moved troops into southern Korea, occupying the area south of the 38th Parallel after Japan's surrender. Next, the two powers unilaterally decided to divide Korea into two occupation zones, one Russian, one US, thereby creating two spheres of opposing geo-political interest. 'Allies' in name only, the Korean War, grew out of the mutual mistrust between Russia and the USA. The country was effectively divided and would remain so for generations. The stage was set for an epic conflict between a rural, agricultural north that favoured peasant communism and a democratic and later capitalist and industrialised middle-class south.

For the first time in thirty-five years exiled Koreans were allowed to return home to participate in the country's political life. In the Russian controlled north a communist guerrilla leader, Kim Il-sung, was encouraged to take power in a communist state. For their part, the US rushed Syngman Rhee, an anti-communist active in the Provisional government, back to southern Korea from the USA. The defeat of the Germany, Japan and Italy led to the creation of a new world order based on rival Eastern (authoritarian and communist) and Western (democratic and capitalist) institutions.

THE 1934 CHOSEN POSTAL ROUTE TO EUROPE

The Korean Peninsula lies in the middle of a triangle between Russia, China and Japan, which explains why this rugged mountainous country, 925km long and averaging 240km in width, has been a focal point of rivalry between these powers, more especially China and Japan. Following the war between China and Japan from 1894 to 1895 the independence of Korea was recognised. However in 1905 Japan defeated Russia in a conflict and proclaimed Korea a protectorate formally annexing the country in 1910, thereby terminating Korea's brief independence. **Korea was renamed Chosen by Japan**, a name that appears on Atlases from 1910 and for the following 35 years. Until 1945 Koreans were totally subjugated by Japan who forced them to contribute towards Japan's agricultural and industrial requirements. All key posts were held by the Japanese denying opportunity and benefits to Koreans. Schools were forbidden to teach the Korean language.

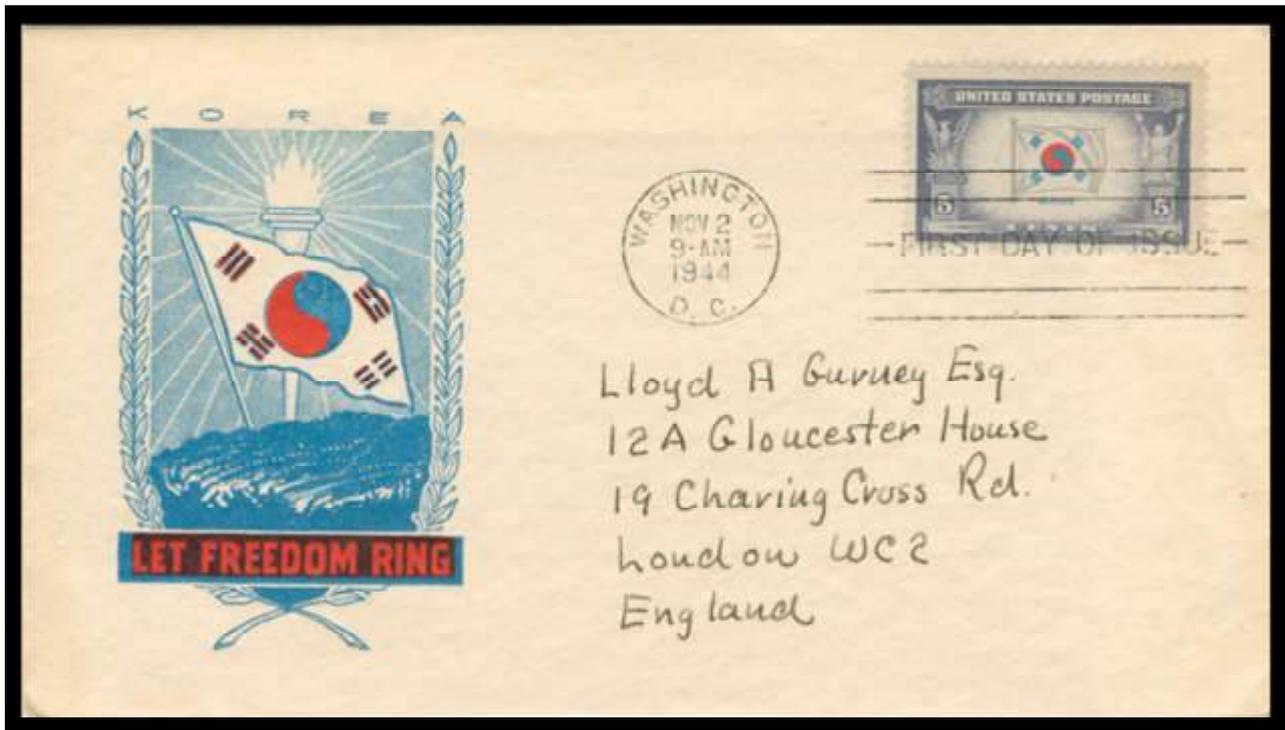
Mail from Japan / Chosen to Europe either took the sea route around Asia by way of the European Shipping Lines or across the Pacific to the U.S.A. by rail to the Eastern seaboard and then to Europe. The time taken for the first option was 40 days and the second option a further 30 days.

Japanese mail was therefore forwarded by the steam ship lines linking the Dalny, Port-Arthur and Vladivostok terminals of the Trans-Siberian Railway with the ports of Nagasaki and Tsuruga. The sailing time was one to two days. Maritime services between Dairen (Dalny) and Nagasaki, which were performed by Japanese mail ships, assured the link between Japan and the Trans-Manchurian/Siberian Railway.



The item illustrated was posted from Fusan, Chosen (now Pusan in South Korea) on 10th May 1934. Addressed to Berlin the card is further annotated **via Siberia**. Mail from Japan and more uncommonly Chosen, in the 1934 period, were franked mainly with 6 Sen postage. A most unusual postal history item.

A Promise of Freedom



1944. FDC. 'Let Freedom Ring'. Overrun Countries Series. Washington 'NOV 2 1944' to London (undated).
Samp Issue Date: November 2, 1944. City: Washington, D.C. Quantity: 14,999,646. Printed by: American Bank Note Company.
U.S. #92, 5¢ Flag of Korea, Overrun Countries Series, honors the nations invaded by Axis powers during WW2.
It pictures the flag of Korea, which features the Chinese Yin and Yang symbol and symbols of Taoist philosophical ideas.

Historic Background to the Korean War (continued)...

With World War 2 won, the peace was fraught with political tension between these rivals. In 1945, George Orwell, the socialist author of 'Animal Farm' and '1984', coined the term 'Cold War' to describe the post-War global tension that gripped relations between the erstwhile Allies. To Western governments the Soviet Union's actions made it increasingly apparent that it intended to "export" communism to other nations. For the Soviets, theirs was a victory of Communism over Fascism (authoritarian nationalism aided and abetted by capitalism). To them, Capitalism was the enemy. The establishment of Communism (sweetened to 'democratic socialism') in the countries they had conquered was the Victory they had fought for.

With East and West utterly divided by economic ideology, Russia determined to keep the country's of Eastern Europe within its sphere of influence and subject them to communism. As early as 1945 Winston Churchill famously used a phrase not of his own to describe an 'Iron Curtain' descending over Europe and dividing East from West. The emergence of North Korea as a communist state led by Kim Il-sung was seen as proof of the assessment that Russia was "exporting" communism to other nations. As a result, the USA began to develop a foreign policy based on the "containment" of communism at home and abroad. In Korea, where both Rhee and Kim Il-sung wanted to unite the divided peninsula under the economic and political policies of their respective governments, the possibility of conflict was heightened.

With much of Eastern Europe and Asia under Soviet influence there was a growing realisation in the West that the march of communism had to be halted. In 1948, just as the US was beginning to withdraw its troops from South Korea, the Russians blockaded rail, road and water access to West Berlin. They hoped to force the US, British and French out and make Berlin the showpiece capital of the new communist East Germany. The Allies responded with the 'Berlin Airlift'. A huge fleet of transport aircraft flew down a narrow corridor to deliver food and fuel to West Berlin from their airbases in West Germany. SAAF personnel participated in the 'Berlin Airlift' (1948 - 1949), the first significant and determined response by the West to Russian political and military intimidation. Ultimately, the Russians blinked and their blockade was ended. They would eventually decide to divide the German capital by building the 'Berlin Wall'.

The Berlin Airlift 1948 - 1949



1948. Christmas Greeting Card from RAF Fassberg.
(Image Supplied by Bruce Millar.)

The American promise of freedom was also made good to the Germans of West Berlin also. When the Russians blockaded West Berlin the Allies began to fly in supplies on a massive scale. Twenty South African Air Force crews, some 50 men, participated in the Berlin Airlift. They flew 1240 missions in what was the first major crisis of the escalating Cold War. It was a precursor of what was to come. The Korean War was to be the first 'hot war' of the Cold War. Some 800 SAAF personnel would serve in Korea over the three years of that conflict. Most SA servicemen were rotated every year.

When the FDC (top left) was issued, WW2 was still raging in Europe and the Pacific. It shows that from as early as November 1944, the USA was publicly committed to removing the yoke of Japanese militarism and imperialism from the Korean peninsula and replacing it with Western-style democracy. Prior to WW2, Korea had already been under Japanese control for decades. In 1939, more than five million Koreans were forced into labour camps and tens of thousands more were forced into the Japanese military. (Indeed, some of the Korean pilots flying alongside the SAAF had learned their trade flying for the Japanese against the USA in WW2.) During the Japanese occupation, traditional Korean culture was discouraged. Use of the Korean language was forbidden. Tens of thousands of Korean women were forced to become "comfort women" (prostitutes) for the Japanese Army.

After the war, Syngman Rhee (1875 – 1965) served as the first President of South Korea, from 1948 to 1960. He spent almost all his early life in exile, much of it in the USA where he lobbied the US administration to approve the existence of a Korean provisional government headed by himself. He would lead democratic Republic of Korea throughout the the Korean War (1950 - 1953). Rhee's government was characterised by authoritarianism, corruption, limited economic development, strong anti-communism and by the late 1950s growing political instability, corruption and public opposition.

Back to Berlin Again.... and Again



1999. GB Stamp Booklet. 1st Class Books x 4/HB17 Berlin Airlift

Berlin Airlift stamps were issued on 12 May 1999 by Royal Mail.

“On the 27th September 1948, the Union Government of South Africa committed 50 South African Air Force (SAAF) crew to the Berlin Airlift. The SAAF would provide two contingents of air-crew to the airlift, most seconded to RAF Transport Command and even one SAAF registered C-47A Dakota transport aircraft (No. 6841) made its way to Berlin to be put into service.”

(The Observation Post - SA Military History.)

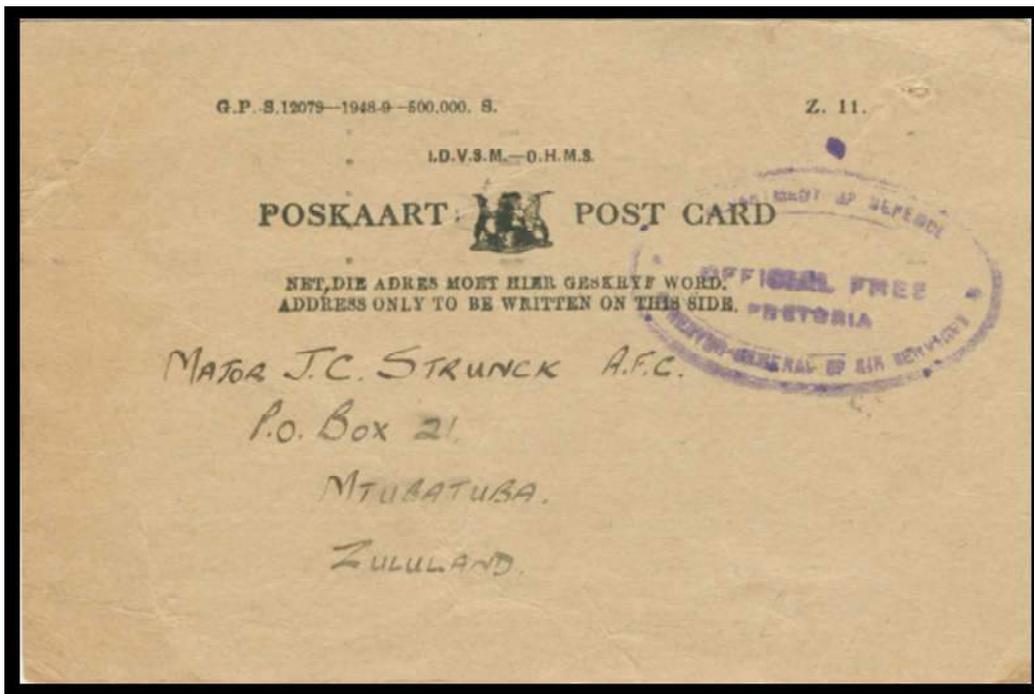


1999.Cinderella ex. GB Stamp Booklet. 1st Class Books x 4/HB17 Berlin Airlift

I like this cinderella's portrayal of Tempelhof Airport in the background. Tempelhof was one of Berlin's first airports which Hitler had totally rebuilt in the 1930s as a Nazi show-piece. It was widely admired when it was completed. It was one of three iconic pre-World War II airports, the others being London's old Croydon Airport and Paris's Le Bourget. It was the receiving end of most of the Berlin Airlift of 1948–49.

Little of this has to do with Korea other than that Berlin was where Cold War tensions became most acute when the Allies led by the USA squared up to the Russians and dared them to do their worst. The Russians backed down in Berlin but in Korea they used North Koreans in the first instance and the Chinese in the second to fight a conventional war on their behalf against the United Nations led by the USA.

A Reminder of a Possible Call-Up

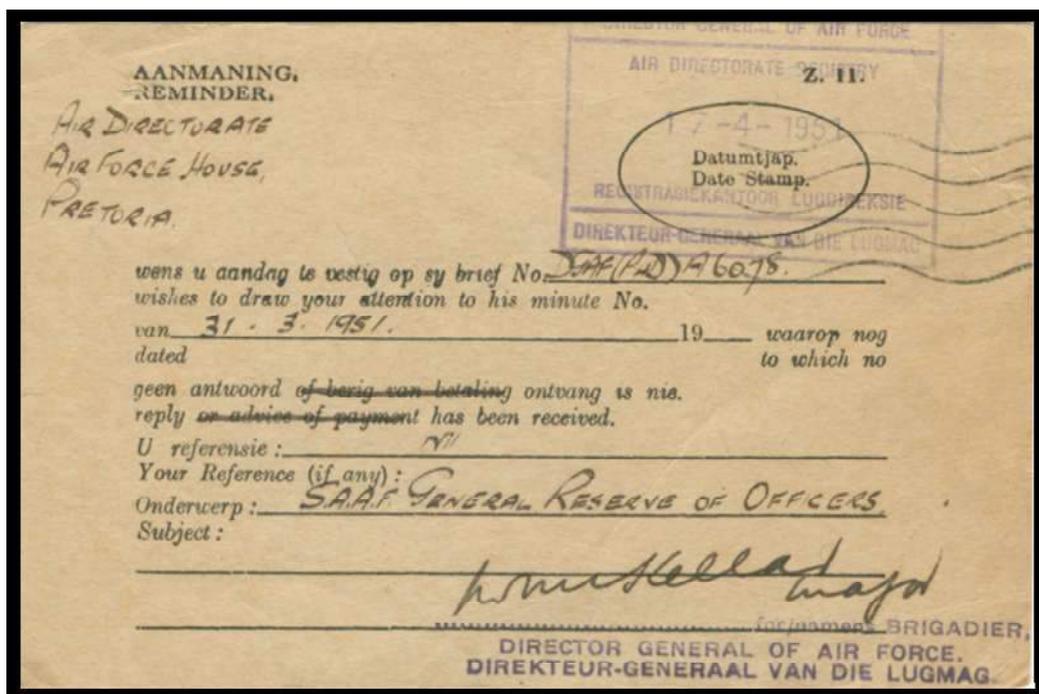


Circa 1951. OHMS Post Card from Air Directorate, PRETORIA '17-4-1951' to MTUBATUBA (undated). Sent from Department of Defence OFFICIAL FREE, Pretoria (oval purple cachet) to Zululand. The recipient, Major J C Strunck, was on the Air Force Reserve Register and had failed to reply to a communication.

Presumably, Major Strunck was a potential candidate for service in Korea.

This item deserves further investigation.

Did Major Strunck serve in Korea? Did he have any choice in the matter?



Reverse of above.

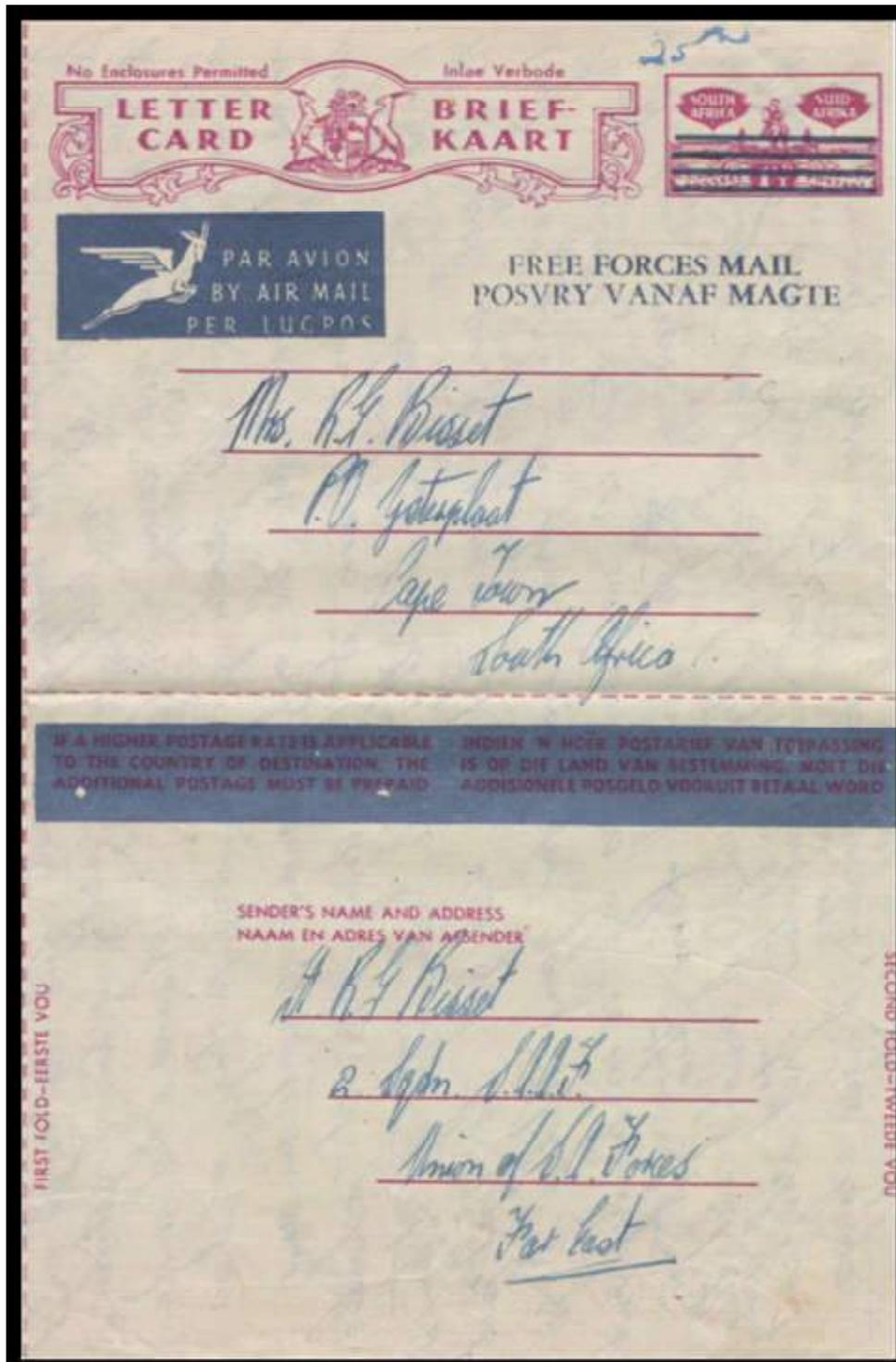
Crossing the Line. En route to Korea: 1951



Above: Considerably Reduced to Fit 'Crossing of the Line Certificate'.

Issued to Air. Mech. D (Desmond) A Hutchinson, No. 2 Sqn SAAF, aboard M/S Ruys, 23rd November 1951.
 (Image Supplied by 'Hutch' Hutchinson.)

SAAF Korea to South Africa: 1952



1952. Airmail Letter Card from 'Union of SA Forces, Far East' to PO Ysterplaat, Cape Town.

The writer has dated the letter 25th Feb 1952.

The plum Letter Card's rate of 1½d has been cancelled with four black bars.

On the reverse the note that applicable higher postage rates must be paid has been over-printed.

The rate is FREE. As a consequence, the letter is not cancelled with a datestamp.

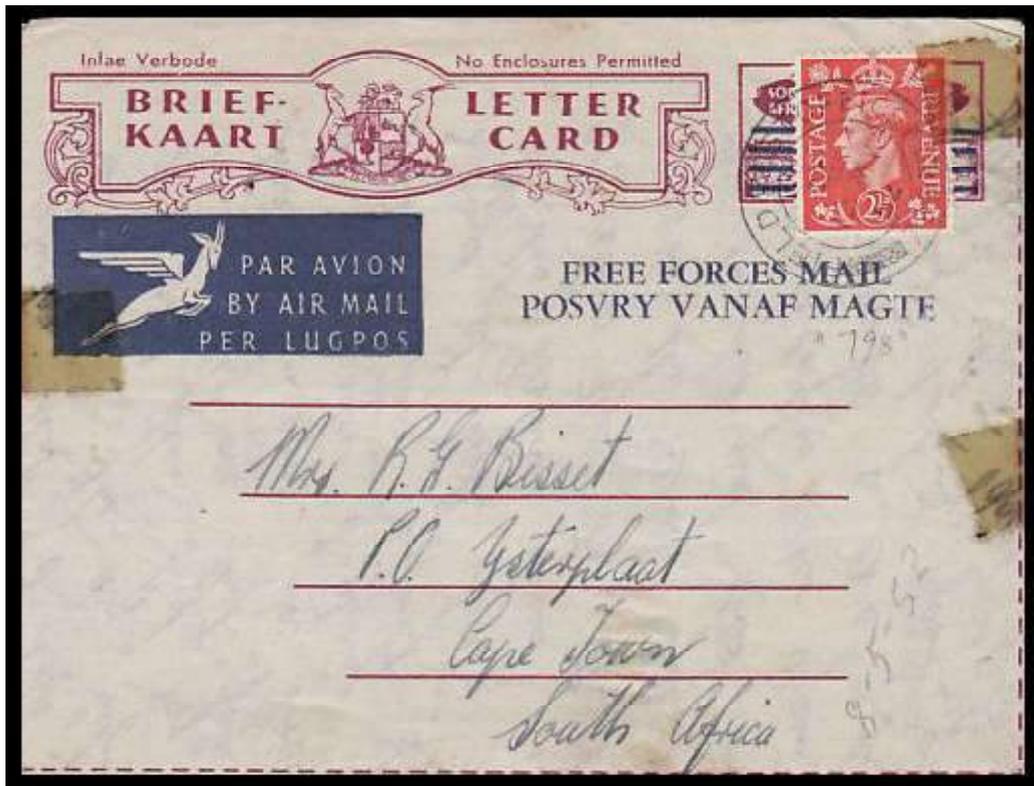
This letter is addressed by H R G Bisset to his wife at AFB Ysterplaat, Cape Town. This is presumably the writer's home station. Gerhard Kamffer RDPSA states that this "postage free aerogramme was made available for members of the SAAF members from May 1951 to January 1953. It was overprinted by the Government Printer in December 1950". (SA Philatelist April 2016).

AFS Ysterplaat: Circa 1950



Circa 1950. AFS Ysterplaat (originally AFS Brooklyn).
The Douglas DC-4 Skymaster entered service with SAA in May 1946.
On 1st April 1949, AFS Brooklyn was renamed AFS Ysterplaat.

SAAF Korea to South Africa: 1952



1952. Airmail Letter Card from 'FIELD POST OFFICE 798' '8 5 52' to PO Ysterplaat, Cape Town.

The plum Letter Card's rate of 1½d has been cancelled with four black bars.

A 1951 GB KGVI SG 507 2½d GB has been applied.

As a consequence, the adhesive has been cancelled with a datestamp, FPO 798.

(Image supplied by Mike White.)

Although assigned to USAF 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing, No. 2 Squadron SAAF was a part of the British Forces fighting in Korea and, presumably, its post used the British postal system. As such, the SAAF contingent used GB stamps, not South African ones. However, confusion existed as to what the correct postage rate was. The previous letter card shows that it was sent 'FREE' but the above was not. Why?

Some suggest that SAAF and other personnel serving in Korea attached stamps *'just to be sure'*.

KOREA-S AFRICA [SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT] 1952(May 8)

South Africa bi-lingual 1½d Air Letter modified for Korean War military use overprinted with 4 Bars deleting value & Free Forces Mail (Flaps sealed with cello tape & stains remain) to Capetown endorsed from H.R.G Bisset, 2 Sqdn SAAF, Union of S.A. Forces, Far East bearing GB 2½d tied FPO 798 d/s [These air letters were issued on a rationed basis & mail was free only to South Africa however there was confusion amongst the enlisted men & often postage is added]

US\$350

The cover shown left was supplied to the SA Philately Club by:

Mike White

Worldwide Postal History.
Censored and Military Mail.
mikewhiteuk@aol.com

Christmas Greetings - Ho Ho Ho!



Circa 1950 - 1952. Christmas Greeting Card from the USAF 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing.

The US equipped No. 2 Sqn SAAF, 'The Flying Cheetahs', with the WW2 F51D Mustang fighter. Following training in Japan No. 2 Squadron SAAF was deployed to the USAF 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing. The top right image shows the SAAF's RAF-style roundel with leaping Springbok.

(Image Supplied by 'Hutch' Hutchinson.)

Flag Waving on Stamps: 1951



1951. South Korean Stamps 'Participation in Korean War'. Flags in National Colours.
Each country participating on the Allied side in the Korean War was acknowledged with two stamps.
The stamps shown are the two created for the Union of South Africa.

I was very surprised to see that the 2011 Stanley Gibbons catalogue valued these two stamps quite highly, the SG 178A green at £12.00 used and 178B blue at £10.00 used

Comic Book Heroes - No Laughing Matter: 1963



1963. 'Whaam!' by the American artist Roy Lichtenstein.
Whaam is one of the best-known works of pop art. It is the most iconic image of the Korean War.
It uses a comic-book style to show a US Mustang destroying a Mig 15 which explodes in flames.
I think it absolutely has to be in any display showing the SAAF in that conflict. Do you agree / disagree?

No. 2 Squadron - Mustangs: 1951 - 1952.



Circa 1951 - 1952. SAAF ground crew wearing US fatigues work on 2 Sqn. Mustang.

Note blast damage to the hangar and senior 'erk' wearing SA-issue brown overalls.

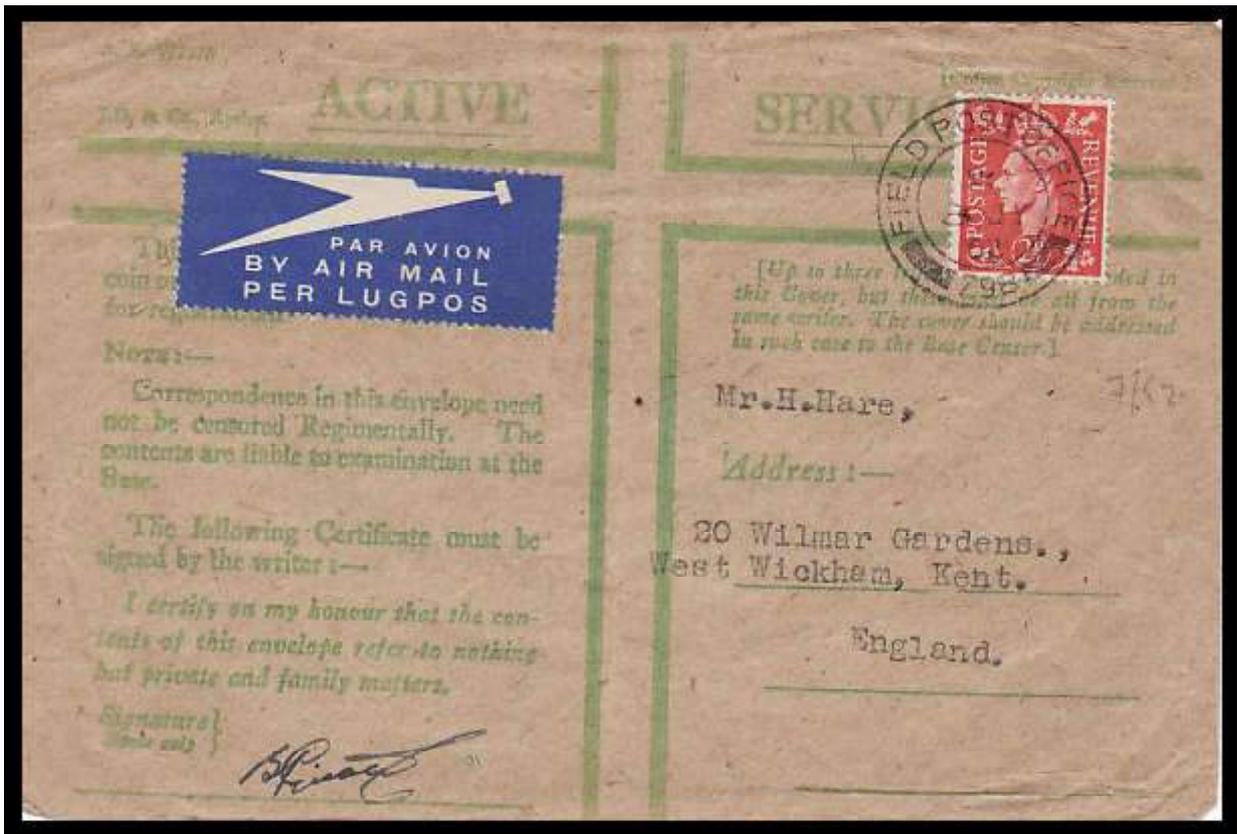
No. 2 Sqn flew Mustangs for almost the entire war. It was only in the last six months of it that they got to fly the F86 Sabre jet, the iconic fighter of the Korean War, along with the Mig 15. The Americans also provided SAAF personnel with US fatigues. In one of these airmail letters home a South African serviceman writes how tired he is of wearing olive green and how he cannot wait to step out in a blue uniform again!

The SAAF had gained experience of the Mustang in Italy during WW2 when No. 5 Squadron converted to the Mustang Mk III from Kittyhawks in September 1944. It operated a number of Mustang Mk IIIs (P-51B/C) and Mk IVs (P-51D/K) in Italy. The Mk IV and Mk IVA came into SA service in March 1945. These aircraft were generally camouflaged in the British style, having been drawn from RAF stocks; all carried RAF serial numbers and were struck off charge and scrapped in October 1945. In 1950, the USA supplied No. 2 Squadron with F-51D Mustangs.

The Mustang performed well in South African hands before being replaced by the F-86 Sabre in 1952 and 1953. At this point, the South African stock of Mustangs were provided to the South Korean Air Force.



SAAF Korea to England: 1952



1952. 'Honour' Letter from 'FIELD POST OFFICE 798' '3 JY 52' to GB.

A 1951 GB KGVI SG 507 2½d GB has been applied.
The adhesive has been cancelled with a datestamp, FPO 798.
The reverse has been type-written SAPO 5301.
(Image supplied by Mike White.)

The above cover was most likely philatelic in origin. Mr H Hare of the address shown was an collector of British Military Forces postmarks of this period. I have two similar 'Honour' letter covers addressed to him in my Simons Town Royal Navy collection which show the 'Fleet Mail Office' postmark.

KOREA - GB...SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT KOREAN WAR.. 1952 (Jul 8)

Active Service printed Honour envelope by airmail to West Wickham, Kent endorsed on reverse SAPO 5301 bearing GB GV1 definitive 2½d tied Field Post Office /FPO 798 cds.
US\$250

The cover shown above was supplied to the SA Philately Club by:

Mike White
Worldwide Postal History.
Censored and Military Mail.
mikewhiteuk@aol.com

1



1947

Antonov An-2 (Colt)

Single-Engine Biplane Utility Aircraft

2



1944

Ilyushin IL-10 (Beast)

Twin-Seat Single-Engine Ground Attack Aircraft

3



1947

Lavochkin La-11 (Fang)

Long-Range Escort Fighter

4



1946

Lavochkin La-9 (Fritz)

Single-Seat Monoplane Fighter Aircraft

5



1949

Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15 (Fagot)

Single-Seat Jet-Powered Fighter Aircraft

6



1929

Polikarpov Po-2 (Mule)

Single-Engine, Twin-Seat Multirole Biplane / Basic Trainer Aircraft

7



1942

Tupolev Tu-2 (Bat)

Twin-Engine Fast Bomber / Multirole Aircraft

8



1946

Yakovlev Yak-18 (Max)

Trainer Aircraft / Light Bomber Aircraft

9

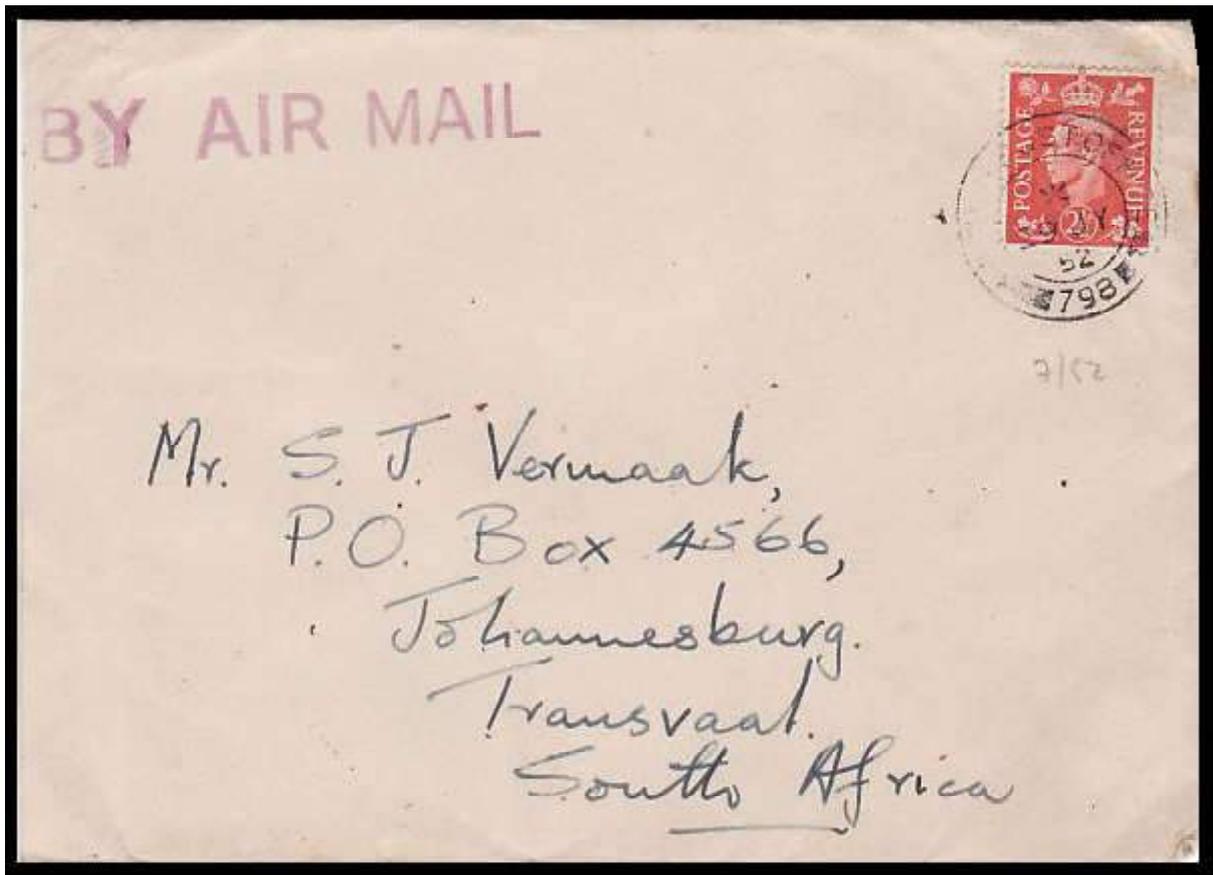


1943

Yakovlev Yak-9 (Frank)

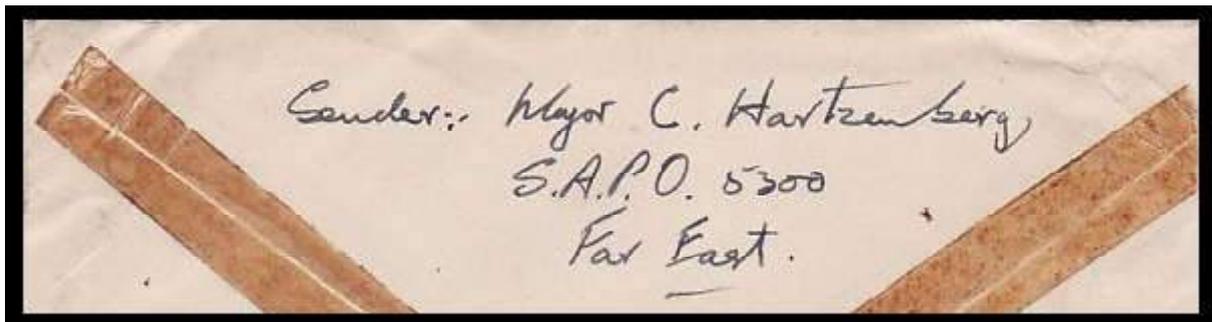
Single-Seat, Single-Engine Fighter / Fighter-Bomber Aircraft

SAAF Korea to South Africa: 1952



1952. Cover from SAPO 5300, Far East '29 JY 52' to JOHANNESBURG

A 1951 GB KGVI SG 507 2½d GB has been applied to send it at the airmail rate
A 'BY AIR MAIL' cachet applied in red. The adhesive has been cancelled with a datestamp, FPO 798.
The Sender is Major C Hartzenberg (Paret reverse below).
(Image supplied by Mike White.)



KOREA - S. AFRICA...SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT KOREAN WAR.. 1952 (Jul 19)

Plain envelope by airmail to Johannesburg endorsed on reverse from Major C. Hartzenberg, S.A.P.O. 5300 Far East
bearing GB GV1 definitive 2½d tied Field Post Office /798 cds
US\$250

The cover shown above was supplied to the SA Philately Club by:

Mike White

Worldwide Postal History.
Censored and Military Mail.
mikewhiteuk@aol.com

A New Queen of South Africa



King George VI died on 6 February 1952.

His daughter, Princess Elizabeth, became the new monarch. The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place on 2 June 1953 at Westminster Abbey, London. During the coronation service, she took an oath, was anointed with holy oil, invested with robes and regalia, and crowned Queen of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon.

The Korean War ended on 27 July 1953, some eight weeks after Queen Elizabeth was crowned. Korean War covers to South Africa are found with both KGVI and QE2 stamps affixed. KG VI stamps were used for the entire war while stocks lasted among the FPOs and the troops.

The first QE2 definitives are the SG 517 1½d green and SG 519 2½d carmine red of 5 December 1952. As these QE2 stamps were only used in the last eight months of the war, it is more difficult to find Korean War covers with QE2 stamps attached than those of her father, KG VI.



Left: SG 517 1½d green and SG 519 2½d carmine red definitives of 5 December 1952.
Right: SG 532 2½d red Coronation commemorative of 3 June 1953.

Queen Elizabeth II would cease to be South Africa's queen when the country left the Commonwealth and became the Republic of South Africa on 31 May 1961.

SAAF Korea to Austria: 1953



1953. Airmail Cover from 'FIELD POST OFFICE 798' '21 MY 53' to VIENNA, AUSTRIA.

The grey Airmail Cover has a pair of 1952 GB QE2 SG 519 2½d carmine red applied.

The adhesives have been cancelled with a datestamp, FPO 798.

(Image supplied by Mike White.)

As part of the British Forces fighting in Korea, the SAAF contingent used GB stamps, not South African ones.

KOREA - AUSTRIA..SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINGENT KOREAN WAR.. 1953 (May 21)

Pictorial airmail envelope to Vienna endorsed from Sgt D.M. Zynch, 2nd Squadron S.A.A.F., 18th Air Base

Group, APO 5301 bearing GB QE11 pair 2½d tied Field Post Office /798 cds & with plain brown resealing label with violet circular Allierte Zensurstelle /133 /Z.1 hand stamp alongsidedespite being

addressed to Patka this appears to be commercial mail

US\$250

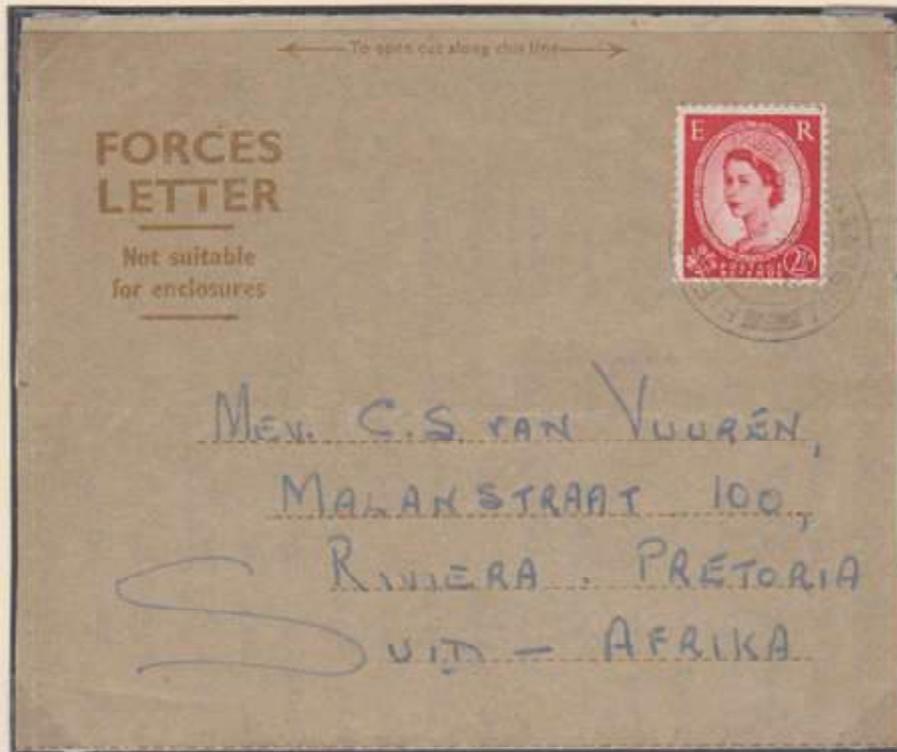
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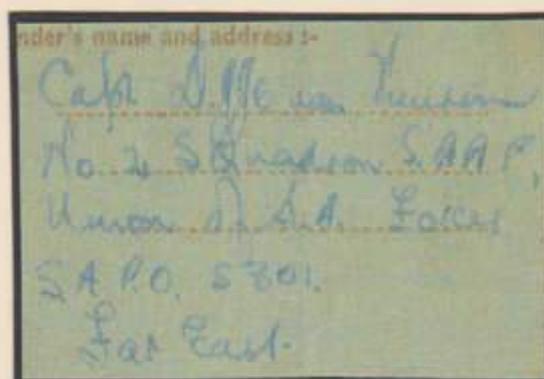
**MAIL FROM MEMBERS OF THE BRITISH FORCES
SERVING OVERSEAS 1952 -1967.**

KOREA.



F.P.O. 798.
Pusan - Korea.
24/5/53.

2½d. Australian 'Forces Letter' from a Capt. Van Vuuren of the South African air force (No. 2 Squadron known as the 'Flying Cheetahs'). This rate was for servicemen writing home. The British F.P.O. 798 operated at Pusan 31/12/51 - 4/8/53.



Scan of reverse showing sender and address.

The South Africans were British Commonwealth troops with the United Nations fighting North Korea and later the Chinese on the Korean Peninsular. They arrived 27/9/50 and fought to the end using American Mustangs and later Sabres. They flew 1,000 sorties in the first six months and a total of 12,067 by the end of the war.

This sheet was supplied to the SA Philately Club by:
Jamie Smith.

No. 2 Squadron F86 Sabre: 1953



Circa 1953. SAAF ground crew wearing US fatigues work on 2 Sqn. Sabre.
Note proudly displayed SAAF markings and pilots blue forage cap.
The SAAF flew F86 Sabre jets for the last six months of the war.



IF YOU HAVE ANY KOREAN WAR ITEMS, PLEASE CONSIDER SHARING THEM WITH US!

I am gutted. I had about 20 of 'Hutch' Hutchinson Korean War photos scanned. These showed SAAF personnel on Korean AFBs and on leave in Korea. These I now appear to have lost. For those who are interested in Hutch's time in Korea, I attach what I wrote in about 2013. Hutch has since passed on.

How I found a Photo Album with Korean War Ephemera

Steve Hannath

In 2013, while I was visiting my mother who lived in the Methodist retirement home in Thornton, Cape Town, I was told that a resident, Desmond 'Hutch' Hutchinson, wanted to see me. He had heard that I "collected stamps" and apparently he wanted to show me his "stamp collection". Hutch was quiet, direct, no-nonsense kind of guy. His stamp collection turned out to be a ten disappointing plastic-backed volumes of modern Republican-era FDCs (First Day Covers), each accompanied with a set of matching control blocks.

Like my Mom, Hutch and his wife lived in a small retirement cottage. Hutch had turned his garage into a den where he spent much of his time cutting shapes out of wood with a fretsaw, glueing them together and painting them to sell in aid of charity at Christmas time. He was unhappy, he said, that the dealer he had bought his stamp collection from over many years now refused to buy it back at a fraction of the original price he had paid. I nodded sympathetically but did not offer to buy them myself for the R20,000, (£1000 at that time), which he thought they were worth. "The market is flooded with FDCs," I said. There followed an awkward silence as the conversation was forced to turn slowly to other subjects.

Clutching at straws, I remembered that earlier Hutch had said to me that he had been in the South African Navy. "So, how did you join the Navy?" I asked.

He laughed. "I'd been in the Air Force in Korea," he replied.

"Wow! Korea!" I gasped, "That's really interesting." I was genuinely impressed and pleased to meet a South African Korean War veteran. "The Flying Cheetahs, hey? Mustangs and Sabres? Mig Alley! The Yalu River. General MacArthur!" I blurted it all out, my mind suddenly filled by staccato burst of stream of consciousness verbal gunfire, a Walter Mitty "kapocketa kapocketa" moment intermingled with Roy Liectenstien's "Whaam" in glorious comic colours, my life suddenly returned to boyhood and Saturday mornings swapping DC Comics outside the Savoy Cinema in Rosebank. "Seen, seen, seen, swap!"

"You got it," he grinned with surprise. "No. 2 Squadron, South African Air Force. That was me!" Without any further hesitation he said, "Let me show you my photo album."

Wow! A photo album. The afternoon became a delight. Hutch's photo album opened up on a Christmas postcard from the 18FBG (18th Fighter Bomber Group) to which the Flying Cheetahs were assigned. It showed the simple, sweet-natured but immensely strong southern hillbilly cartoon character, Lil Abner from Dogpatch, flying a Mustang with a bag of Christmas presents, bombs and rockets, no doubt all intended for the enemy. Various squadron emblems were shown on the cover. In the top right corner was the SAAF roundel enclosing a leaping Springbok. Wow, I thought, postal history postcards don't get better than this. They don't but then I saw his Crossing of the Line Certificate. Double Wow and Whammy!

Hutch told me that he was born in Forest Hill, Johannesburg, one of the notorious southern suburbs where men were "breakers", (Afr. breaker, a tough character), "not softies like those in the larney, monied, smart arse northern suburbs". I hadn't heard anyone talk so bitterly about Johannesburg's white north / south suburban divide since I was in the army. It brought back memories of some of the guys in my company, angry young men, some still boys, who would sooner talk with their fists than argue with you. "We were a tough lot," Hutch said matter of factly. "We were known as 'the Chain Gang'. We all carried chains."

During the mid to late 1940s Hutch rode a BMW motorbike. He bought it while serving an apprenticeship as a carpenter. During this time he was called up into the ACF (Active Citizen Force) in the first intake after the end of WW2 and posted to the Witwatersrand Rifles after basic training. I got the feeling he thought the Army a waste of time. In my experience that is the opinion of conscriptees everywhere. He was looking forward to qualifying and earning a journeyman's wages, "the big bucks". Much to his surprise and anger, his employer, Duncan Bain, a well-known Johannesburg furniture company, made him redundant on the day he qualified. This, apparently, was company policy. They did, however, agree to him returning to the company after five years. This was not an uncommon practice.

Having lost his job, Hutch was forced to sell his beloved motorbike. He walked the streets of Jo'burg looking for work. "There was none. Times were hard," he remembered. "There weren't many jobs to be had. Those that were were going to returning servicemen who had fought in WW2. And a lot of them struggled to find work when they got home after four or five years in the forces."

A relative suggested he join the SAAF who were looking for carpenters to maintain the wooden frames of aircraft, like Hurricanes, Spitfires, Mosquitos, etc. Hutch followed his advice and went to the Milner Park Depot where he was accepted and enlisted in the SAAF. He was set to work on Ansons initially, then graduated to 'Spitties' (Spitfires) and Harvards. "Back then a lot of planes were made of wood or had wooden parts," he explained. "Even some of the early jets, like the Vampire, had a mixed wood-and-metal airframe. Its cockpit was wood. In fact it was a largely wooden jet with the exception of the twin booms."

When the Korean War began, Hutch volunteered to serve 'overseas'. He thought it would be "exciting and different, less boring". He travelled by train from Pretoria to Durban and then from there to Korea in great style from Durban aboard the "Willem Ruys", a Dutch passenger liner in which he experienced the 'Crossing of the Line' ceremony. The voyage was a treat, he said, "in real luxury". (Many years later, this ship was renamed the Achille Lauro. As such, she was hijacked by the Palestine Liberation Front.)

In the year that Hutch served in Korea, 1951 to 1952, No. 2 Squadron SAAF were flying Mustangs. Hutch was based initially at Chinhae, later at Pyongyang. Mostly he remembered Korea as being grey, bleak, cold and wet. He had high praise for the 'Yanks' who, he said generously shared their warm clothes and rations with the South Africans. Many of Hutch's photographs showed Mustangs being serviced in winter snow and summer monsoon puddles by SAAF ground crew dressed in US fatigues. Scattered throughout his album were photos of crashed and broken aircraft, others damaged by flak. Many of the buildings and hangars showed obvious signs of blast damage, most probably shellfire.

"It was no picnic, especially for the pilots," said Hutch. "Most planes had some wooden parts that needed replacing. That was my job!"

Hutch delightedly pointed out a photo of what he called "the Gooney Bird", a large US transport aircraft that flew in from Tokyo every day with ice-cream and fresh donuts. "We called donuts 'assholes'," he said, sounding effortlessly American as he said so. I was surprised that it did not sound out-of-place sixty years on in his retirement cottage. He had, of course, spent a year in Korea eating, sleeping and working alongside American boys of the same age, absorbing the cultural ethic, the food, comics and movies. His smile was that of a man remembering the deeds of his nineteen year-old self in his prime, serving in a combat wing of the US Fifth Air Force to which No.2 Squadron SAAF was attached.

Some of his photos showed the devastation that the war brought to Seoul, the South Korean capital, "caused by the North Koreans", said Hutch. In truth, both sides caused damage as they fought for control of the South Korean capital. Of course, the North Koreans had started the war by invading South Korea and all and any damage caused was largely due to that hostile decision. It was the reason why the UN called for its member nations to join together to fight for the liberation and freedom of South Korea.

Still, Hutch's photos and memories were a little one-sided. He had no photos or memory of the utter devastation caused to of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, which he never got to visit or see. The USAF carried out an extensive bombing campaign against North Korea from 1950 to 1953. During the bombing campaign against North Korea, the USAF used its entire arsenal of conventional weapons, including incendiary bombs and napalm. In the process, the Allies destroyed nearly all of North Korea's