



# South Africans in Korea

852 Served, with an initial 200 selected from 1000 volunteers

A single squadron, 2 Squadron SAAF

12,076 sorties

74 of the 94 Mustangs and 4 out of the 22 Sabres were lost

36 killed

8 POW's

P51D Mustangs and later F-86F Sabres

No South African decorations awarded

48 American DFCs awarded

178 American Air Medals awarded

## Why were no South African decorations awarded?

South African introduced its own medal series in 1952.



Before 1952 the DFC and DSO would have been applicable for the pilots in Korea.

They were replaced with awards such as the Honoris Crux. This was not awarded until 1973. Unfamiliarity with the new system was likely the cause.



## Is it a copy?

There are two original versions of the SA Korea Medal. The original was produced in 1953. It was issued up until the 1980's off blank stock (always named). In 1990 they needed more, and so a new striking was created.

1990's Version	1950's Version
The 1990's original version has a chrome-like plating. Still solid silver.	No plating. Solid silver.
Only one designer initial on the face.	Both designer's initials are visible on the face.
Edge is rounded.	Edge is flat as you would usually expect.
Note the solid suspender. This is original, but a "top up issue" from the 1990's.	Note the voided suspender and two designers initials towards the bottom. This is an original 1950's issue.
	

The medals were held by the South African Defence Force. They were sent to the South African Mint for naming. Naming instructions were not provided. Sometimes naming formats vary. Naming should be the same as WW2 medals.

The South African Korea Medal and the UN Korea Medal should have the same format as they were named at the same time. This may or may not include a service number.

## Swemmer

Frans Adriaan Swemmer's medals are a classic progression of the new South African series of long service medals which begin in 1952 when the British system was replaced.

He joined the infantry on 3 September 1939 as a Lieutenant. He then joined the SAAF and qualified as pilot in May 1943. He was sent to Italy in 1944 to 41 Squadron flying Mk V C's for high altitude interception. They were then made responsible for the protection of Palestine.

He was court martialled in 1945: "***Being guilty of an act in flying which was likely to cause loss of life to a person...on 5 June 1945 at Camp Formido aerodrome when...dived and flew...over the runway of the said airfield at a height of approximately 50 ft., which act was likely to cause loss of life to himself as pilot of said aircraft***".

His group is slightly unusual in that he does not have the usual Africa Star which most South Africans got, due to his late qualification as a pilot.

Swemmer was in the first batch of volunteers to Korea. On 5 January 1951 Swemmer's **aircraft developed engine trouble while on a close support mission**, and he was forced to land at K-13 (Suwon).

On the 4<sup>th</sup> March Swemmer again had bad luck in Mustang 305. '0645 Hrs Lt. Swemmer took on an armed recce. **Engine cut. The aircraft overshot end of runway and he crashed landed in rice paddy fields. Aircraft badly damaged.**'

Returning from Korea Swemmer became an instructor of light aircraft. ***Soon he was again in trouble and charged with being drunk and fighting with civilians in a bar.***

In 1956 he was awarded his first long service medal (bronze, 10 years).

In 1962 he was awarded his next long service medal (silver, 20 years).

From 1965 to 1967 he was OC 40 Squadron. He then returned to instructing and became Chief Instructor at the Central Flying School in Dunnottar.

In 1970 he was awarded his third long service medal (Gold, 30 years) and the Commendation by the Commandant General SADF for improvements in efficiency and safety.

In 1973 he was finally awarded the Southern Cross Medal, after being denied twice before. The Southern Cross Medal is for outstanding devotion to duty in war or peace and is very sought after.

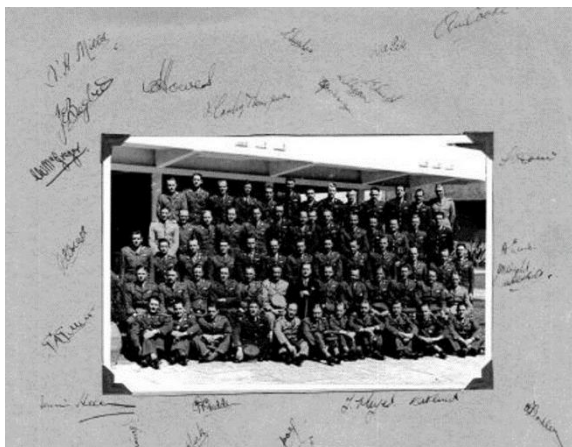
He was pensioned in 1980. In 1982 they offered him a contract under probation to come back for a year but he rejected it.



## Turner

Richard (Dick) Turner joined up in 1943 and was selected for pilot training. He was in Italy in early 1945 and straight into action.

He was first sent to Egypt in November 1944, and then to Italy in January 1945. Along the way he was included in a group photo with Edwin Swales VC.

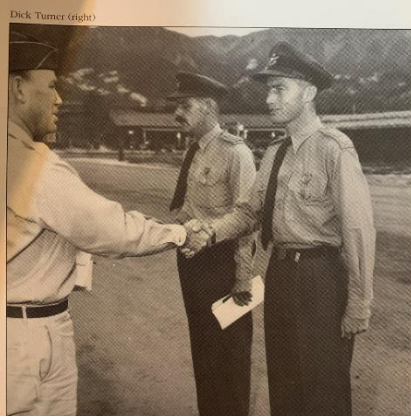


***After only 6 weeks he earned the DFC. "...in March 1945 he took part in a low level attack on an enemy fuel dump. In the operation, he was hit in the chest by small arms ammunition. His collar bone and arm were broken. Although in much distress, this brave pilot flew his aircraft to base. Many of the vital actions for landing having to be performed with his left hand, he operated the flap mechanism by using his broken arm as a level, putting the weight of his body on the arm to depress the lever..."***

This was the end of his war as he was sent to Egypt again after hospital until October 1945.

Turner stayed on, and was one of the later batches of pilots to be selected for Korea.

His low level flying prowess proved him well in Korea, where he was awarded the American DFC. ***"...Major Turner distinguished himself by meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a P51 type aircraft...as a leader of a flight of 12 P051 aircraft, was prebriefed to attack with napalm and machine guns, vehicle storage sheds and personnel shelters near the village of Idong...well camouflaged in a featureless area with considerable number of automatic weapons situated in close proximity...with faultless precision Major Turner attacked, scoring direct hits...such accurate placement of ordnance inspired all who followed and the complete target was covered with fire and smoke when the squadron withdrew..."***



Much fuss was made when the 18<sup>th</sup> Air Wing flew the 45,000 sortie. Turner flew sortie 44,996 and had just landed to see an American receive the honours. Turner was awarded the Air Medal for his number of flights.

