



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Schweizer Armee
Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT



Operation of the Swiss Armed Forces in the NNSC

Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission



Swiss military personnel present in Korea since 1953



2013: Celebration of the 60th anniversary of the armistice.

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

2



North- & South Korea



Situated between China&Japan

North and South Korean flags

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

3

In 1910 Japan annexed the strategically important peninsula of Korea and oppressed its population for decades. As Japan capitulated at the end of World War II in 1945, Russian troops invaded North Korea and American troops South Korea to disarm all Japanese units. This in fact meant a division into two parts for the country. All attempts by the UN to reunite Korea failed. In 1948 free elections took place in South Korea, yet these were boycotted by North Korea. The UN recognised the South Korean government appointed on 1 January 1949 as the legal government of all Korea, wherefore the USA started the withdrawal of its troops. In North Korea the "Democratic People's Republic of Korea" was proclaimed with a constitution similar to the Soviet Union. On 25 June 1950 North Korean troops attacked South Korea to expand the Communist rule over all of Korea. The UN resolution dated 27 June 1950 demanded military support for South Korea from all member states and with the resolution dated 7 July 1950 the USA was appointed leader for the UNC-troops (United Nations Command). The UN flag was authorised as symbol for the military alliance in support of South Korea. The UNC-troops immediately launched their offensive. Bitter fighting with heavy losses for both sides occurred until cease-fire negotiations started in June 1951 under the auspices of the UN.



North- & South Korea



A demilitarised zone divides North and South Korea since 1953

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

4

After two years of tough negotiations, the American Commander-in-Chief of UNC and the Chinese Commander-in-Chief signed an armistice on 27 July 1953.

As part of this agreement a balanced body of representatives was formed to safeguard the cease-fire, the 'Military Armistice Commission' (MAC). For South Korea the UNCMAC (United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission) and for North Korea the KPA/CPV MAC (Korean's People Army/China's People Volunteers Military Armistice Commission) had to monitor compliance of the armed forces of both parties with the provisions of the agreement.

The warring parties also agreed on forming two neutral commissions:

- Neutral Nations' Repatriation Commission (NNRC)
- Neutral Nations' Supervisory Commission (NNSC)

The United Nations Command nominated Switzerland and Sweden for this purpose. North Korea chose Poland and Czechoslovakia. All four states were regarded as neutral because none of them had participated in the Korean war with combat troops.



These signposts mark the Military Demarcation Line (MDL).

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

5

Fighting had been going on all along during the negotiations, since both sides had wanted to secure the best possible positions for a future agreement. The existing frontline (roughly along the 38th parallel) was accepted as the military demarcation line and ever since a demilitarised zone has separated North and South Korea.

The military demarcation line covers a distance of 241 km straight across the Korean peninsula. It is marked at regular intervals with some 1,300 simple signposts and is not reinforced at any point by further obstacles or fences. The demilitarised zone (DMZ) extends 2 km to the north and 2 km to the south from every point of the demarcation line. The DMZ originally served to separate the combat units along the front line, today however, it is one of the most heavily armed regions in the world. Mines make any passage impossible.

As a result, we have a strip of terrain across the Korean peninsula of almost 1,000 km² that has basically remained more or less untouched for 60 years with a correspondingly rich flora and fauna.



The Swiss Engagement

On 13 June 1953 the Swiss Federal Council decided to deploy a Swiss delegation to both neutral missions in Korea:

- 96 all ranks to the NNSC
- 50 all ranks to the NNRC



This step initiated the Swiss participation to peace-supporting missions for the UN.

It was a matter of course that all Swiss took along their personal weapon for self-protection.

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

6

The NNRC ended its activity on 21 February 1954, since it had fulfilled its mission (execution and completion of the exchange of prisoners). The NNSC still exists yet with an altered mandate.



The Mandate

Originally the NNSC' mandate was for a supervising body and was made up of the four states Poland, Czechoslovakia, Sweden and Switzerland. Their tasks were:

- supervise
- observe
- inspect
- investigate



The NNSC was supposed to supervise that both parties complied with the armistice agreement, which was mainly set up to prevent rearmament.

The NNSC was stationed on both sides of the Demarcation Line, within the Demilitarised Zone. It was staffed with officers from Switzerland and Sweden (proposed by the South) as well as from Poland and Czechoslovakia (proposed by the North). The four delegations fulfilled their duties jointly.

The cease-fire agreement between the two warring parties originally gave the NNSC the functions of supervision, observation, inspection and investigation. Already at the beginning of the mission, these extensive functions were, however, reduced to monitoring the exchange of military personnel and war material between North and South Korea at ten transfer locations (ports of entry) specified in the armistice.

What is called the Joint Security Area (JSA) was established in the original hamlet of Panmunjom where the lengthy cease-fire negotiations were held. Here the Swiss and Swedish NNSC delegations have their offices and accommodations.



Mandate changed in 1956

From 1956 on the main task of the NNSC is to mark a symbolic-institutional presence at the inner-Korean demarcation line and in that way to show that the armistice agreement is still valid.

No peace agreement has been signed up to date.

Yet Korea obstructed the Swedish and Swiss inspection teams to such an extent that a serious fulfilment of the mandate became impossible.

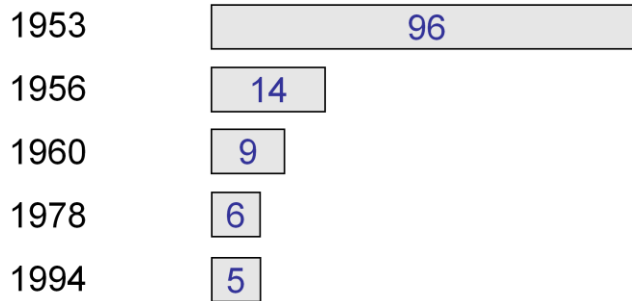
Therefore, already in the summer of 1956 until 1993 the NNSC ceased their controls but solely forwarded the war parties' reports on entering and leaving military persons to the Ceasefire Commission. The NNSC had changed from a supervisory body to an element providing rounds of talk. As a result, the four countries reduced the strength of their delegations step by step.

From 1956 on the main task of the NNSC is to mark a symbolic-institutional presence at the inner-Korean demarcation line and in that way to show that the armistice agreement is still valid. No peace agreement has been signed up to date.



Reduction step by step

Due to the changed mandate Switzerland reduced its effective strength of the NNSC delegation as follows:



In 1993 Poland and Czechoslovakia withdrew from Korea because of the political upheavals in Eastern Europe. Today five Swiss representatives and five Swedish representatives stationed in Panmunjom, South Korea, are on duty for the NNSC.

Occasionally, Polish delegates attend the meetings at Panmunjom - however through South Korea, as Poland has changed sides politically.



The Swiss delegation today



Make-up of the delegation:

Head of delegation: rank of a major general

Deputy head of delegation: reserve officer / career officer with the rank of a lieutenant colonel or colonel

Operations officer: conscript officer / career officer with rank of major or lieutenant colonel

Secretary: conscript officer / career officer with rank of major

Quartermaster sergeant: conscript officer / career officer with rank of captain or major



Expanded tasks since 2010

- participation in inspections of the UNCMAC armistice commission from guard and observation posts on the southern side
- observation of military exercises of South Korean and US armed forces
- observations of special investigations of the Ceasefire Commission when cease-fire violations are suspected





Expanded tasks since 2010

- participation as observers in monthly helicopter flights of the United Nations Command
- engagement in basic and progressive training of South Korean armed forces with about 60 presentations a year on duties and significance of the NNSC





Requirements and qualifications

NNSC-delegates must fulfil the following requirements:

- at least lieutenant (US: first lieutenant)
- certified professional training or completed studies
- availability at least 12 months
- Swiss passport
- good knowledge of both written and oral English
- physical fitness, team-worker, can take mental stress
- not older than 55 at the start of the assignment

•



Training



4 weeks of SUNMOC



1 week of mission preparation

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

14

The NNSC-delegates attend the 4 week military observer course UNMOC in Stans. Together with the military observers they are trained in observing, reporting, patrolling and mediating/negotiating. Freshening up of basic medical knowledge is part of the training programme as well as communication techniques, procedures and lessons on the different mission areas and conduct towards the media. Additionally the NNSC-delegates are instructed in „international military culture“ (social events, meetings, behaviour on the international parquet).

The course language is exclusively English.

Shortly before their deployment the NNSC-delegates are trained again for their mission area for one week in Stans.



Funding

Expenditure 2015: CHF 1,52 million

Budget 2016: CHF 1,28 million





The blue negotiation barracks stand precisely on the MDL.

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

16



Swiss delegation chief, Major General Urs Geber, since 2012.

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

17



The Swiss camp in Panmunjom

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

18



The lounge “Swiss Club” for Swiss NNSC members.

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

19



UNCMAC inspection of a guard post.

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

20



Participation of NNSC in a helicopter flight of the UNC.

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

21



Presentation of the NNSC's mandate.



New mission for the NNSC



Observation of joint exercises of South Korean & US armed forces.

Anlass, Datum
Schweizer Armee / Kompetenzzentrum SWISSINT / Funktion - Grad Name Vorname

23



International cooperation

Swiss citizens are appreciated by other armed forces because:

- apart from their military expertise, Swiss soldiers offer much civilian knowledge and skills
- Swiss soldiers enhance mission accomplishment thanks to their expertise with niche products that are in demand
- Swiss soldiers speak several languages
- Swiss soldiers are willing to make concessions.



Perception on location

Both local inhabitants as well as authorities and organisations appreciate Swiss soldiers because:

- Switzerland is neutral
- Switzerland has no colonial heritage
- and Swiss soldiers are thus best suited to serve as peace-keepers.