Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

The American Battle Monuments Commission wishes to thank you for the opportunity to present its views on S.1223, a bill to erect a national memorial on federal land in the District of Columbia or its environs, honoring members of the Armed Forces of the United States who served in the Korean War, particularly those who were killed in action, listed as missing in action, or were held as prisoners of war. The Veterans of that war commend you for holding this hearing, as it has been thirty-five long years since the unprovoked attack in force by the North Koreans across the 38th Parallel on 25 June 1950. If the 5,000,000 veterans of that war who are still living and the immediate members of the families of those who died in Korea are going to have an opportunity to view for themselves this nation's appreciation of their service, their achievements and most of all their sacrifices, then erection of a memorial should commence without delay.

A few statistics to put the Korean War into perspective — 5,720,000 Americans served in the military forces during the three-year period of the Korean War (1950-1953). Of that number, 103,000 were wounded and of the wounded 33,600 died; an additional 21,400 died of non-battle causes for a total of 55,000 service deaths in the Korean War. During the ten-year period of the Vietnam War, there were only three thousand more service deaths. This will give you some idea of the intensity of the fighting in Korea during its relatively short duration.

Title 36, Section 123 of the U.S. Code prescribes in part that the "American Battle Monuments Commission shall prepare plans and estimates for the erection of suitable memorials to commemorate the services of the American Armed Forces, and shall erect and maintain memorials in the United States and at such places outside the United States where the American Armed Forces have served since April 6, 1917 or shall hereafter serve, as the Commission shall determine." Accordingly, the Commission has had a Korean War Memorial high on its list of planned projects for a number of years. Unfortunately, the great cost of the Vietnam War and subsequent budget deficits mitigated against appropriation of the necessary funds.

In this regard, Title 36, section 128 of the U.S. Code states in part that "The (American Battle Monuments) Commission is authorized to receive funds from any state, municipal, or private source for the purposes of Sections 121, 122b, 123 to 125, 127, 128, 131, 132 and 138-138b of this title, and such funds shall be deposited with the Treasurer of the United States and shall be kept by him in separate accounts and shall be disbursed upon vouchers approved by the Chairman of the Commission." It is the Commission's strong belief that a federal agency should erect the Korean War Memorial with funds obtained through private donations and appropriations. This would preclude the major
portion of funds collected through private donations going to a commercial firm hired for that purpose, as was the case with the Vietnam Memorial. During the past few months, the American Battle Monuments Commission has received 55 unsolicited donations for the erection of a Korean War Memorial, for a total of $1,455.00. If for any reason this Commission does not erect the memorial, then the money will be returned to the donors.

Regardless of whether the Korean War Memorial is built with privately donated funds, appropriated funds, or a combination of both, should you and your distinguished colleagues so determine, the American Battle Monuments Commission would be most honored and privileged to be designated the agency authorized to erect the memorial.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present the Commission's views.