

Coalition of Families of Korean and Cold War POW/MIAs

U.S. /NK Summit Follow Up
U.S. Remains Return – North Korea/U.S. Summit Agreement
June 21, 2018

Is your head swimming?

The past week will be one to remember. On Tuesday, June 12th, the Korean War POW/MIA accounting community was as thrilled as anyone upon the government's release of the U.S./North Korea summit's signed agreement:

The United States and the DPRK commit to recovering POW/MIA remains, including the immediate repatriation of those already identified.

It came right after denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Pretty cool.

A dedicated collaboration of large and small nongovernmental organizations, agencies of the government, the media, supportive individuals, and families of the missing men poured their collective resources into getting the Korean War's missing men's fate on the summit's agenda. Letters had been written, emails and faxes sent, telephone calls were made and meetings held. There were behind the scenes discussions and outright calls for action. And the administration listened. The ultimate decision, by the President himself, was made.

We had done it ... all of us! A moment to be proud.

Media interest soared. I was responding to 2-3 interviews daily. How do you feel about the agreement to recover the remains? Will the two governments act swiftly to bring the men home?

The excitement was there but so was caution. We had a promise, words had been put down in writing. The missing men's remains were still in North Korea, though. The fate of our loved ones - still unknown. Agreements like this had been made and broken before.

The end of the week came. No action had been taken on the promise; no word on what was to come. Then the President spoke, "they are already starting to produce the remains of these great young soldiers who were left in North Korea." Strong, hopeful words. However, when asked, no one beyond the President seemed to know about these plans for the remains being returned.

By Monday and Tuesday, news reports were springing up citing unnamed administration sources that plans were indeed in place. Again, however, no one in charge of receiving the remains knew about any of these plans. However, no one at the agency in charge of receiving the remains reported being told.

It is Wednesday night, June 20, 2018. The President is speaking at a political rally, "We got back our great fallen heroes, the remains sent back today, already 200 got sent back." I will be turning in soon.

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By Thursday morning, when folks read this, U.S. remains may be home, in the hands of a government agency that didn't know they were coming just a day before. Or maybe plans will still be in the works for the remains' return. Or there will be no mention of the remains.

Just know that if your heads is spinning, you will not be alone.