

# COALITION OF FAMILIES OF KOREAN & COLD WAR POW/MIAS



SUMMER

2012

The last issue of *Update and Review* celebrated the agreement to

return U.S. search and rescue teams (JFAs) to North Korea. How quickly hopes are dashed.

In February, the first JPAC ship, loaded with equipment and recovery personnel, sailed to and then waited in a Chinese port for visas and entry to North Korea. Then, like Peanut's Lucy, promising to hold the football for Charlie Brown's kick, the U.S. and North Korea imposed political priorities on this humanitarian mission and pulled the football aside at the last moment. Operations were suspended.

Like Charlie Brown, the accounting mission in North Korea, and the families' hopes for remains recovery, were flat on our back, looking up at the sky, wondering how we allowed ourselves to believe again.

Both sides were at fault:

- \* The U.S. and South Korea began annual military maneuvers at the same time JPAC teams waited for entry to North Korea;
- \* North Korea withheld the search and recovery teams' visas in protest;
- \* North Korea announced its satellite launch;
- \* The U.S. suspended the search and remains recovery operations in response.

## Recovery Operations in North Korea: *How They Fell Apart*

All too often the promise of highest priority is just that ... a promise. After

four weeks of waiting for political policy to work itself out, the still loaded humanitarian ship, and the hopes it represented, returned home the way it had left. It happened that quickly, that easily.

The U.S. decisions were made at the highest levels of the administration, DoD and State Department. As it stands, last October's renegotiated agreement, seven years in the waiting, will need to be *re-renegotiated*. There are currently no plans to do so. When/if the JFAs get underway, the ship will reload, return to China, and then we will keep our collective fingers crossed that both governments will behave maturely and visas into North Korea will be granted.

Still, ever the optimists, we wait, like Charlie Brown trusting that Lucy will finally keep the football down and follow through with her promise.



*(The Peanuts cartoon strip has neither approved nor disapproved of this article.)*

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## President's Corner



### *Patriotic Promises Need a Full Measure of Truth*

On patriotic holidays, like this past Memorial Day, there are speeches by government officials at all levels, probably the President himself, honoring the sacrifice of servicemen lost in the nation's wars. We know that these tributes mention the high priority placed on humanitarian missions to learn what happened to the men lost without answers. Then many of the speakers, including the President himself, will go back to work and continue policies that contradict the emotional words they shared in their speeches.

A lot is being done to learn the fate of American servicemen still missing from our wars. The U.S. stands alone in this effort. Still, there's a hollowness to tributes that don't stand completely true. When the search for 5,000 American servicemen missing in North Korea is treated as a political football year after year, it is difficult to listen to promises of humanitarian priority without some cynicism.

If the missing men are still serving their tour of duty, this time as political weapons, that should be said. The men, and their families, have earned that kind of honesty. Their sacrifice calls for this kind of truth.

*Rick Downes*  
(Lt. Hal Downes, Jr. - MIA)

### United States

\* In 2011, 62% of the attendance at government briefings were family members of Korean/Cold War missing. 10% of the government's recovery teams searched for Korean/Cold War missing.

\* Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) Bob Newberry has left the leadership position at DPMO. Mr. Newberry has been assigned as special advisor within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Policy. Bob has been a true advocate of the accounting mission.

\* Major General (Ret) W. Montague Winfield has been appointed the new DASD in charge. General Winfield served as the first Commanding General of JPAC and has participated in negotiations and operations that include North Korea.

\* The government will begin digitizing all of the missing men's case files. The new system will allow access by personnel anywhere in the world, including field search and recovery operations, as well as PNOKs of the missing men. It is projected to take 3 years.

\* Beginning this summer, a team of 4 government personnel will be stationed in South Korea on a full-time basis. They will follow up on leads involving the nearly 1000 American servicemen still missing there.

\* A new CIL lab annex is scheduled to open at Offutt AFB, Omaha, Nebraska.

\* April Briefing - This year's annual government briefing was done in its usual professional, respectful manner. 322 family members attended (296 - Korean War; 26 - Cold War). Questions were posed, answers were ventured. Some family members made discoveries. First timers certainly gained perspective. In the end, both family and government

members left with new insights and awareness of the challenges ahead.

There were new twists. One feature the government provided was a way for family members to connect with other families of men lost with their own loved one. A separate break-out session for Cold War families allowed for extensive coverage of the 14 air missions lost between 1950-1969.

No dates have been set for the next annual meeting, although the government would like to keep it on a one year cycle. Spring, 2013, will likely be a target

\* The government is gearing up to meet the Congressional mandate of identifying 200 missing men (from all conflicts) by 2015. The government currently identifies 75-80 annually. Meeting the mandate will require nearly tripling recovery and investigation personnel.

\* 1300 Korean War remains are home, waiting to be identified.

\* As of April, 2012, 200 total identifications of missing men from the Korean War have been made, most of them from JFAs, despite the fact that they have been suspended for the past seven years.

\*\*



**Let's hope not.**  
(The Peanuts cartoon strip has neither approved nor disapproved of this commentary.)

## *surprised by the unexpected - Gary Boyle*

Well, I guess an old cynic can still be surprised by the unexpected. The DPMO, updates became boring and repetitive to me a long time ago. We had a window of opportunity to really address the "POW" side of the missing issue back in the nineties. DPMO took the reins and focused on remains which are used as political poker chips. We all blew it and all should share the blame. Due to the passing years, it's just about bones now. That's what I was going to say at the briefing in DC this past April, but we were muzzled at the eleventh hour.

I came close to bailing, even with coin assist. Rick Downes is a good friend and we both have fathers missing from B-26 missions. He asked me to come and put my old anger aside. It's funny how things work out when you let go of stubborn behavior.

I've always felt responsible for locating my dad's crew's families. I've wanted to share my findings regarding their last mission. Back in the mid-nineties, I found the brother of Sammy Cooper. Sammy was my dad's navigator. This was a volunteer mission, and my father's original navigator, Charles Ward, who served 71 missions with my dad, abstained. He was replaced with Sammy, who was only nineteen. This would be his first mission of the Korean War.

George Soto, my father's gunner on every mission, was a fellow Angelino from So. Cal. I have a photograph of him and my dad beneath their B-26. Their arms over each other's shoulder tell of a friendship and a loyalty. George's mother and my mother would exchange Christmas cards and notes through the years. By the time I tried to locate Soto's family the cards had stopped.

I tried the old address, ran an ad in the paper, and I made an appeal over the radio. No response. A couple decades passed and I gave up looking. I let DPMO and Air Force Casualty know my desires, but no luck. I felt so sad about George and how loyal and trusting he must have been to follow my dad's lead in volunteering for the fateful mission of July 1, 1951.

The first morning of the government briefing found me gulping coffee out in the foyer. DPMO had placed some bulletin boards up with progressive dates of the war on each. We were supposed to place a small note with details of our missing loved one, or desire to make contact with others, etc. I had no interest. What was in it for me? I've been working on my father's status since the mid-seventies. I was preparing myself for the same old DNA lecture, blah, blah, blah.

Whether it was an overdose of caffeine, or a mystical push, I put up a simple note with my dad's name, squadron number, date of the mission, and my table number. I returned to the coffee pot, filled my cup and headed to table #38.

If any of you were near that table you know what happened next. As I approached my seat I noticed a tall formidable man heading directly toward me.

I avoided eye contact until I reached my chair. He stood directly in front of me and said, "I've been looking for you." I now had to look at this guy.

It all happened very fast. His face was the spitting image of George Soto! My knees buckled and I grabbed his jacket for balance. We just knew each other. I couldn't let go. Tears welled up in both of us. Robert had seen the note. He saw my father in me as I saw his uncle in him. It made the entire trip worth it. This was the best thing to ever happen to me at any briefing or MIA event.

We now have the crew together. I can't explain it. Maybe other family members of missing airmen where crews are involved feel the same need. I'd like to know. When you get out of your own way, sometimes life can throw you a little treat.

*(Lt. Clarence Boyle and Airman George Soto - MIA)*



*Top: Clarence Boyle, Charles Ward,  
George Soto*

*Left: Gary Boyle*

## Korea

### ***DPRK (North Korea)***

- \* There is no reported effort to renegotiate the joint field activities agreement with the U.S.
- \* The change in the North Korean leadership hasn't brought noticeable external change.
- \* The DMZ remains a heavily mined, closely guarded buffer between the DPRK and ROK. It cuts a 2.5 miles wide swath through the middle of the Korean peninsula, 155 miles in length.



Over the years, layouts for the mine placements have reportedly been lost. Only the land around guard areas is considered safe. The DMZ crosses mountains, prairies, swamps, lakes and tidal marshes. Since it is uninhabited, it has become a haven for wildlife, and a sanctuary, of sorts, for the many loved ones still missing there.

- \*Live sightings – There are currently six classified reports of American POWs sighted in North Korea (2000-2004).

### ***Republic of Korea (South Korea)***

- \* After sixty years of access, nearly 1,000 American servicemen are still missing in South Korea. They were lost in the 1950's retreat from China's counterattack. Between 1951-1955, the remains of 25,000 Americans were recovered. The still missing were pronounced KIA, and life moved on. South Korea recovered in spectacular economical fashion. Development enveloped the battlefields, and the missing men were lost, metaphorically, in plain sight.



When the accounting mission resurfaced in the 1990's, the sheer numbers of men missing in North Korea, plus live sighting reports, placed all the focus there. The missing in South Korea remained an afterthought.

In an effort to increase recovery operations in South Korea, the U.S. has partnered with MAKRI for leads. Additionally, the old battlefields will be resurveyed. This summer, the U.S. will establish a permanent 4 person team (KFE) in South Korea, which will follow up on leads, along with increased research analysis and community outreach.

## China

- \*In a May meeting, Chinese military archivists and DPMO staff signed a technical arrangement renewing research in China's archives relating to missing American servicemen for another three years.

\*The 2010 archival report focused on the location and investigation of crash sites of American aircraft, and the possibility of remains, within China's borders.

- \*The 2011 archival report has been submitted to the U.S. The translation is still being done. Check the DPMO website for its release.



## Russia

- \* In June, a representative of DoD Policy and DPMO's new DASD, W. Montague Winfield, met in Moscow with the new Russian Co-chairman of the USRJC, along with the Executive Secretary for the Russian Side. The meeting was ... *"a productive step forward in laying the groundwork for the future of the commission"*.



- \*DPMO Moscow Office - Researchers are reviewing materials at three Russian Archives related to the Soviet involvement in the Korean War. *(From the DPMO website)*

## Acronyms Key

**CIL** - Central Identification Laboratory  
**DASD** - Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
**DoD** - Department of Defense  
**DMZ** - Demilitarized Zone  
**DPMO** - Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office  
**DPRK** - Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)  
**JCSJ** - Joint Commission Support Directorate

**JFAs** - Joint Field Activities (Remains recovery)  
**JPAC** - Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command  
**KFE** - Korea Forward Element  
**KIA** - Killed-in-action  
**MAKRI** - South Korea's equivalent to JPAC  
**MIA** - Missing-in-action  
**NARA** - National Archives and Records Administration  
**ROK** - Republic of Korea (South Korea)  
**USRJC** - U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs

**Our Collective Voice - Coalition News**

\*The *Coalition* is proud to announce the addition of Ms. Karin Lee as an advisory board member. Karin is the *Executive Director of the National Committee on North Korea*, a non-governmental organization working, among many goals, to reduce tensions and promote peace on the Korean Peninsula. Karin has an established presence in Washington, DC, and is a dedicated advocate for the Korean War POW/MIA issue. Our mission is much stronger with her at our side.

\*Congressional Briefing – The *Coalition* is planning another briefing of military personnel, foreign policy, and veterans affairs legislative assistants from House and Senate offices. These briefings are informative presentations on background to the Korean/Cold war POW/MIA mission and discussion of important issues.

\*Thank you to Suzanne Schilling, the *Coalition's Event Coordinator*, for organizing the family member gathering at this year's annual government briefing. Her expertise in handling these events is invaluable.

\*Petition – In our continuous effort to move the accounting mission forward, the *Coalition* is implementing projects that reach beyond the government's often conflicted leadership. We are beginning with a petition, designed to increase awareness of the issue within the general public and become an instrument to balance the government's tendency to politicize the mission. The message calls upon all governments involved to honor their pledge to maintain the mission's humanitarian priority, even in the face of political pressures.



**PETITION**

*Our nation's humanitarian mission to account for 8000 American servicemen missing in action from the Korean and Cold Wars has an uneven history and tentative future. Complex domestic and foreign government policies come in to play, causing lengthy periods of inaction. The humanitarian nature of the mission gets lost. Family members and eyewitnesses to many of the missing men's fate are aging. Time has become an issue. If the nation is to honor its promise to account for those who served and were left behind, and do so while the people who care most can find the closure they have sought for so long, the humanitarian nature of the mission needs to become consistent, comprehensive policy.*

*We call upon the governments of the United States, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Korea, Russia, and China to honor and maintain the humanitarian nature of this important mission to account for the missing servicemen - husbands, fathers, brothers, and uncles - and to do so consistently, in the face of all political climates.*

*The promise to bring home these missing soldiers is the same one made to today's servicemen and women and their families. If this promise is to hold credibility for the nation's present day armed forces, it must be honored to completion for those who have gone before; and done so in the present frame of time, in the face of all political climates, as a consistent matter of national policy.*

Garnering signatures is a way for family members to be active in the effort to learn answers to the fate of our missing loved ones. Response, to date, has been wonderful. Signatures sheets have been filled at yoga classes, American Legion posts, and writers' groups. They can be taken to church groups, clubs, associations, work. People are drawn to the issue, want to know about and support it. Governments need to know this.

Our hope is that each family member will gather as many signatures as possible. A copy of the signature page is included in this newsletter. Return them to the *Coalition*. (The address is on the page.) This will be an ongoing project; a way for families to spread awareness of the issue, and a means to influence policymakers at all levels of government. We are the voices of the missing men. We want to continually speak up on their behalf.

\* \* \*

\*We want to acknowledge Elinor Hull for her ongoing contributions.

\*Please remember us when you change addresses, email in particular, and do visit the *Coalition's Facebook* page. Become a *friend*. The numbers demonstrate support for the issue.

\* Those of you who renew membership this time of year (or any time of year), feel free to do so! (A renewal form is on page 6.)

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John Zimmerlee  
Donna D. Knox  
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**Secrets, Lies, and Cover-ups**

Each time I visit the National Archives, I'm hopeful that some of the requested thousands of classified documents will be released. My visit last month was no exception . . . I'm hopeful; documents not released! Yet, in just 3 ½ days, I was able to scan more than 1,000 documents in the public domain. Since these documents have been "cleansed for public viewing", their content was not the "really secret stuff", but did contain a few "worthy details" that the "Cleaners" missed. This trip was very special in another way. I had help from a fellow family member, Sharyn Warner, who came all the way from Oregon. A special "Thanks" to Sharyn!

As usual, my research trip was combined with attendance to the DPMO Annual Family Update. Though DPMO and the Casualty Offices refused to announce my usual sharing of research, family members did find me in the lobby and I was able to share detailed and revealing documents on more than 50 cases. If I haven't met with you yet, please email me at [john.zimmerlee@gmail.com](mailto:john.zimmerlee@gmail.com). I have details on 2,134 cases . . . and, in most cases, do not know a family member with whom to share. Rest assured, my services are free.

Some may have noticed that I got emotional during the Q&A session. When one has been doing research for 17 years, the frustration becomes overwhelming. In this case, I wanted an explanation of how 41 boxes of ex-POW debriefing reports could be reduced down to a mere 6 boxes . . . and why none of the live sightings reports that were known to be among them are anywhere to be found?

During the 13 days following the meeting, I spent most of my waking hours looking up every man mentioned in the documents I scanned at NARA. Most of these are known POWs who actually returned alive in "Little & Big Switch", but a few are actu-

ally MIAs and mislabeled KIAs. That's right! So far, I have identified 190 supposed KIAs that our government knew full well that they were POWs and never told the families. Even worse, 128 of those have no evidence of death in a North Korean camp, which means that some of them could have been shipped to Siberia.



My primary focus has always been on the MIAs. Missing-in-Action is a military term for those soldiers who were never proven to be killed, captured, or safely returned. Yet, my research has uncovered compelling evidence that 832 MIA cases were known to be POWs, and the families were never told! Like the mislabeled KIA cases, 698 of these MIA cases have no evidence of death in a North Korean camp, so some of these may have also been sent to Siberia to be worked to death in gulags.

Occasionally, I run across names of those who are not still missing, not returned alive in Big & Little Switch, and whose bodies were not returned in Operation Glory. Usually, these men died in battle and their bodies returned to their families during the war. Whenever possible, I enter these men into the database along with their circumstance of death.

Imagine my tears, as I reviewed a ten page document listing almost a hundred known and confirmed POWs that were not in my database. As I looked up each one in our government's [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov) website, almost all of them are described as KIA . . . remains returned to family. Really? If they were known to be POWs, whose bodies were found on the battlefield and sent back home for the family to bury? Where are these POWs now?

Together, we can . . . and will get answers!

*John Zimmerlee (Capt. John Zimmerlee, Jr. - MIA)*  
[John.Zimmerlee@gmail.com](mailto:John.Zimmerlee@gmail.com); [koreanwarpowmia.net](http://koreanwarpowmia.net)

*Coalition of Families of Korean and Cold War POW/MIAs*

**National Membership Application**

**New**

**Renewal**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relationship to missing service member:**

**Service member's full name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Service #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Branch of Service/Unit or Group:**

**Date & Area of Loss:**

**Annual Membership Donation - \$20.00 \* Please make checks payable to: Coalition of Families.**

**Send to:**

**Coalition of Families (Attn: Treasurer) P.O. Box 4194, Portsmouth, NH 03802**

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