

COALITION OF FAMILIES OF KOREAN & COLD WAR POW/MIAs



WINTER

2012

After six long years of being held in political bondage, U.S. remains recovery and inves-

tigation teams are scheduled to return to North Korea this spring. Their return was accomplished with key support from Congress, DPMO, and the families. Senators Lugar, Kerry, Ayotte, Representatives Rangel and Wilson, and many on their staffs, as well as staff members from other offices and committees, played important roles.

It is fair to acknowledge the DPRK's role, as well. North Korea has consistently supported the JFAs' return. With the recent change in leadership there, we hope this policy remains in place, and perhaps down the road broadens to include other facets of the search.

JPAC teams will focus on remains recovery in Unsan County and the Chosin Reservoir initially. Extensive work was being done in both locales when the U.S. suspended operations in 2005. The first steps will be to reestablish base camps, including the Chosin's east side where Army losses occurred. The plan will be to move over to Marine losses on the west side of the

The Door To North Korea Reopens



was ready to go before the 2005 pull out.

Once the operations are underway and relations with North Korea are fluid again, JPAC hopes to broaden its access to other areas (including POW camp sites), conduct interviews with North Korean eyewitnesses to servicemen's losses (especially the air losses), and investigate the DPRK's reports of servicemen's remains exposed to the elements during agricultural operations.

The ongoing challenge will be to see that there are no more lapses in the mission. Time is an issue itself. Family members and eyewitnesses to many missing men's fates are aging. Many accounts were surely lost during the

six year lapse.

In the end, the responsibility to keep the humanitarian nature of the mission forefront falls on the families. We are the humanitarian voice. Many officials in the political arena are in our corner. It is our job to keep them informed and engaged, ensuring that the mission continues moving forward.

reservoir in 2013. Work will also begin on an F86 crash site near the China border that

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President's Corner



Government briefings answer many of our questions. They often raise others. At last year's annual DC briefing in September, one question reached beyond the government's need to answer. It is a question family members should

ask ourselves.

The issue arose out of an announced crash site excavation in China. The government knows the lost crew members involved but had not told their families. The reasons focused on the potential for disappointment, including delays, perhaps a man's remains wouldn't be found. A discussion followed, in which it became clear that most of the family members attending would want to be informed, regardless of any potential disappointment.

Last year, a photograph of dog tags belonging to a missing U.S. soldier was sent to our government by North Korea. The serviceman's name was clear. The families of men

missing from the same unit, the same night, were not informed. The location where the dog tags were found could also be where their loved ones lay.

Should they have been informed? It is an ongoing issue we have with the government. The tone of the room at the briefing was in strong support of knowing whatever the government knows. A promise was made to review the policy.

Do we want to be told everything about our loved one's case? It may lead to disappointment. It may break our heart. As we answer this question for ourselves, we should let the government know. A phone call to our casualty office, another to our senator and representative or a quick email on their websites will make a difference.

When we speak up, change happens.

Rick Downes

(Lt. Hal Downes, Jr., Air Force, MIA 1952)

United States

* **Congress** - Our Senators and Representatives play key roles in the accounting mission. They are independent overseers of the administration's policies. Members from both houses, and their staffs, were strong factors in getting JFAs back to North Korea. The 2010 DAA mandate for 200 identifications annually by 2015 is having immediate impact. 28 identifications over a twenty year span were made from the K208 remains. That number has *doubled* in only *two* years since Congress passed the mandate.

Rep. Charles Rangel raised exposure to the issue by introducing House Resolution 376. It calls upon the U.S. government to continue probing for American POW/MIAs possibly still alive inside North Korea, and encourages North Korea to repatriate American and South Korean POWs. The resolution was passed in December.

* **DPMO** - We hold great respect for DASD Robert Newberry and his DPMO staff for their consistent efforts to return JFAs to North Korea, and then closing the deal by successfully resolving negotiations with DPRK representatives in Bangkok.

All the best to Rob Goeke, deployed to Afghanistan for the upcoming year. Mike Fowler has stepped in.

2011 Korean/Cold War DC Briefing - The gathering was informative, productive and again provided wonderful opportunities to meet with other family members. 490 attended, 215 for the first time. We hope family members attend whenever possible. It is an opportunity to move the effort forward simply by being there. The numbers matter.

Note: The 2012 DC briefing will be this spring, April 19-20. DPMO has offered a segment within the briefing for the families to share issues, information and perspectives among ourselves. The Coalition will be working with DPMO and the Korean/Cold War Families of the Missing on a format. Please send along your thoughts and suggestions. coalition-offamilies@gmail.com



* **Identifications** - 33 families found closure in 2011.

All were Army. (Sorted by recovery source)

JFAs - Sgt. 1st Class Benny D. Rogers, Cpl. Edward M. Pedregon, Cpl. Harold B. Moore, Sgt. Joseph A. Bowen;
K208 Remains- Cpl. Eugene M. Morelli, Pfc Henry L. Gustafson, Cpl. Freeman Lindsey, Cpl. A.V. Scott, Cpl. James S. Murray, Cpl. James N. Sund, Pfc. Peter Kubic, Pfc. Joseph A. Terrell, Capt. Melvin R. Stai, Cpl. Agustin Alvarez, Pfc. Peter Kubic, Cpl. James S. Murray; **Punch Bowl** - Pfc. Aaron Pearce, Sgt. Lee D. Henry, Jr., Pfc. John G. Lavelle, Pfc. Jimmie J. Gaitan, Cpl. Theodore A. Reynolds, Sgt. Lee D. Henry, Jr.; **Not Designated** - Cpl. Charles Arce, Pfc. George A. Porter, Sgt. 1st Class Charles A. Roy, Pfc. Maximo A. Troche, Pvt. Richard Erwin Clapp, Pfc. Casimir F. Walczak, Sgt. Ralph W. Carlson, Pfc. Floyd T. Coker, Pfc. Samuel K. Watkins, Sgt. Wyatt H. Belton, Sgt. Gerald F. Day.

Korea

DPRK (North Korea)

After six long years, JFAs are set to resume this spring in North Korea. Reestablishing base camps on the Chosin Reservoir's east side (Army losses) and Unsan battlefields are the first priorities. Broader access to the west side of the Chosin (Marine losses) and the investigation of air losses will rely on the success of this spring's efforts.

It will be interesting to watch Kim Jong-un's new leadership evolve. So much will depend on the U.S. response.

Republic of Korea (South Korea)

We are often asked why more progress isn't made locating the 950 American servicemen reported missing in South Korea. Apparently terrain and development are primary challenges. However, rather than increase funding for the return of operations to the DPRK, recovery teams set for deployment in the ROK will now be working in North Korea. The 950 men reported MIA in the ROK still wait.



China

China submitted its 2010 annual summary report on their archival search for information on missing U.S. serviceman from the Korean War. Their cooperation in this effort offers the possibility for major discoveries. Unfortunately, it is moving slower than an overwhelmed snail at dawn. Their current focus is on U.S. air losses. The sites of five shoot-down incidents within China were reported.

One of the losses involves a PBM5 aircraft that went down on Nov. 5, 1950. Knowing the type of aircraft and loss date makes it easy to figure the identities of the missing crew. The families, however, were not notified. We

were told at last year's annual briefing that the policy would be reevaluated.

As of publication, excavations had been completed. If your loved one's loss ties in with this crash, and you want to be informed as the identifications proceed, contact the Air Force casualty office. It may also be necessary to involve your local Representative/Senate offices. Please let us know, as well.



China's 2011 archival report was submitted to DPMO last September. Translation is underway. POW archives await in Beijing.

Russia

Last January, DPMO and the National Security Council invited members from POW/MIA family organizations and veterans' groups to a meeting in Washington. The discussion centered on whether to reenergize the USRJC or do away with it altogether. The commission was, in essence, shredded cobwebs blowing in the Siberian breeze, at the time. Consensus among attendees was to reenergize. Six months later, Russia reconstituted their side of USRJC. The collaborative process worked out well.

The U.S. side of the commission will focus on loss locations where little information is known, while read-

ressing Cold War cases, research related to Korean War MIAs (including Soviet fighter and anti-aircraft units responsible for U.S. shoot-downs) and reports that American servicemen were held by Russia as prisoners.



The two nations also formalized 2009 diplomatic notes authorizing access to each nation's national archives. This will include the Stalin Collection, containing letters and documents received from nations whose archives are not currently available to the U.S.

Acronyms Key

DoD - Department of Defense
DPMO - Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office
DPRK - Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
FOIA - Freedom of Information Act
JCSD - Joint Commission Support Directorate
JFAs - Joint Field Activities (Remains investigation and recovery)

JPAC - Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command
K208 Remains - Between 1990 and '94, 200 to 400 comingled sets of U.S. remains were returned by N. Korea.
MAKRI - South Korea's equivalent to JPAC
MIA - Missing-in-action
ROK - Republic of Korea (South Korea)
USRJC—The U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs

Our Collective Voice

We are convinced that the accounting effort is strongest when the families have significant input in developing government policy.

Advocacy

The Coalition's main goal for 2011 was to strengthen the families' relationships within Congress. Our elected officials, along with their legislative assistants and committee staff members, are key allies in the accounting effort.

The primary issue was returning search and recovery teams to North Korea. Another priority was resuming archival and investigative research in Russia. To whatever extent any organization's role can be measured in the end result, the families' voice was heard. Search and recovery teams will return to North Korea in the spring. The USRJC is rejuvenated under a new agreement.

Our most recent DC trip included a briefing on the issues for legislative assistants from both the Senate and House. Family members Vince Krepps, Ed Trotman, and Charlie Angle joined us. Following the briefing, we visited their representatives' offices. Family members are very welcome to join in future briefings.

Outreach

A large postcard mailing reestablished contact with family members who changed addresses, drifted away, or are without email. Please think of us when you change email addresses, in particular.

We were able to broaden the accounting issue through media interviews with CNN, NPR, the Washington Post and regional newspapers.

Please visit the Coalition's Facebook page, and become a *friend*. The numbers demonstrate support.

John Zimmerlee shared research findings with individual family members at the annual government briefing in DC and again at the Savannah regional update. Many people learned new evidence in their loved one's case.

We are happy to announce that Suzanne Schilling is the Coalition's new *Event Coordinator*. She has extensive background in the field. We are in good hands.

Research

As you will read in John's article, several research trips were made to NARA. Further research was done at Maxwell AFB. These are all-day, week-long endeavors. John may be the one person searching for information at large and then sharing what he learns with the families.

2012

The coming year presents new priorities along with familiar challenges. The accounting mission is always vulnerable to changing priorities in government policies. The families must maintain a consistent presence in Washington to be sure the humanitarian nature of the mission prevails. The new leadership in North Korea presents uncertainty, including the possibility for positive direction.

Advocacy

Long term lapses in the accounting effort must continually be guarded against. Live-sighting reports will always be a priority. Eyewitness interviews in both the DPRK and ROK must become an investigative priority. Funding must be maintained and the number of JFA teams deployed increased. The lack of recovery success in the ROK needs to be explored. Family notification of new developments, especially connecting evidence, in their loved one's case is an ongoing issue. The agreements with Russia and China will be monitored for stability and growth.



Outreach

We want to broaden our contacts with family members. An organized voice like the Coalition's is most effective when it is supported by the informed voices of the families at large. We hope to develop a relationship with the North Korean U.N. mission. One reason is to explore the possibility of organized family member trips to the DPRK.

Research

Transparency is always an issue. We will pursue broadening the archival agreements with China and Russia, along with John Zimmerlee's research.

Funding

The Coalition rarely makes a strong plea for annual member donations. As we broaden the agenda, however, the budget increases. The \$20 donation from each family is the heart of that. We are reaching out for foundation grants, but a strong commitment from the family members demonstrates support from within along with allowing projects to continue while grants are pursued. Those of you who renew this time of year (or any time of year), feel free to do so! (A renewal form is on page 5.)

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National Archives Reluctantly Relinquishes Documents

John Zimmerlee

Over the last 19 years, I have been searching through old boxes looking for clues on the demise of the servicemen who did not return from the Korean War. Most of the interesting boxes have been withheld for national security or similar ridiculous reasons. In the boxes that I have been able to see, there are many withdrawal slips dating back to the 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's. These slips represent documents too sensitive for us to see and the documents have been, therefore, removed over the years and often lost.

After hundreds of Mandatory Declassification Review requests and similar FOIAs, the National Archives finally released about 72 boxes for my review recently. Some of these have very interesting subject lines indicating aircraft losses and American servicemen taken north into China and USSR.

Upon opening the very first box, something became very obvious and apparent. There were fresh withdrawal slips abundant in every folder. These were NOT dated back in the 60's. There were literally hundreds of them in these 72 boxes and they were all dated Aug 9, 2011 . . . just 3 weeks before my arrival.

The Archives' argument is that all of these documents have been classified for years and there just wasn't enough time to review each one before my arrival. My argument is that I requested access to these boxes in November 2009.

There are some mysteries about all of this. After the war, our returning ex-POWs were interviewed and asked about others they had seen while in captivity. These comments were transcribed into debriefs. One airmen ex-POW provided so much detail on others that it took eleven large cardboard boxes to contain his one debrief. His and debriefs from 200 other airmen

were recently consolidated from over forty boxes down to just six new (half sized) boxes, and no one questioned it. Curiously, there is no information in their reduced debriefs about others they saw while in captivity.

We have all heard about the U.S. accidental strafings of camps containing American POWs. Some of our men actually signed protests and confessions about our actions. Some of these were published in communist newspapers with signatures visible. A report on one of these was found on this trip by our new researcher, Gail Embery. Interestingly, two of the signatures on the protest belong to MIAs. The families were never notified.



Though disappointing by my normal standard, this trip did surface about 400 pages of documents. Most were about already known prison camps, but there were about 20 reports that shed light on about 15 cases. Only 9 family members were known and each one was contacted.

My current collection of worthy documents is about 9,000 pages. My total number is nearly 10 times that. Even so, there are tens of thousands of much more valuable documents still classified on the sixth floor of the National Archives, held in secrecy, that would give closure to thousands of families who have been waiting for 60 years.

To date, I have found compelling evidence on 646 MIA cases and 137 KIA cases that were clearly POWs, and another 95 MIA cases who were actually Killed-in-Action. At this rate, it will only take another two hundred years to find closure for most of them. If DPMO would demand access and do the research, most of us would have answers in just a month!

John.Zimmerlee@gmail.com; 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

Sgt. 1st Class Benny Don Rogers

(March 17, 1930 – November 2, 1950)

It was a bone-chilling night for a massacre. In a wild, bloody killing spree, ill-equipped soldiers of the unprepared 8th U.S. Cavalry Regiment, cut off and greatly overpowered in an ambush of two Chinese divisions, were left to die deep in enemy territory. Blaring Chinese bugles, screams of panic, exploding grenades, mortars, and gunfire flashes coming from all directions, a night of living hell on earth soon revealed this would not be the quick victory they envisioned. Of the 800 men in the ill-fated Third Battalion, only 200 made it out. Sgt. 1st Class Benny Don Rogers, a young man just 20 years old, his wisdom teeth not yet emerged from an adolescent jawbone, was not among them.

On a crisp autumn morning in East Texas, the dreaded news arrived by telegram. “The Secretary of the Army has asked me to express his deep regret that your son has been reported missing in action since 2 Nov. 1950...” The words leapt off the page. The small frame farmhouse that he had helped his Dad build soon swelled with friends, neighbors and relatives who heard the bad news. In the days that followed, a mother, devastated by loss, reached out for respite by continuing to write letters to her son - - letters that returned a few weeks later stamped, “Return to Sender” “Verified MIA”.

The long-awaited phone call came Sept. 26, 2011. A seemingly routine records update conversation changed dramatically when the question was asked, “Are you sitting down?” In an emotional mixture of shock, joy and relief, the surprising news that Sgt. 1st Class Rogers’ remains had been identified was confirmed. In 61 years of fearing the worst, hearing the horror stories of trained Chinese killer attack dogs or American soldiers tied to posts and burned alive or POW’s marched for miles over frozen ground to face an execution squad, at least a bullet to his head was swift. Sadly, by only three years, his mother did not live quite long enough see her boy come home, her “good kid” as she called him. At age 97, after 58 years of grieving, her prayers for a son’s funeral unanswered, his mother barely missed his homecoming.



Could anyone have foreseen that learning of a loved one’s death by probable execution was “good news”? How does a family describe the barrage of emotions? Overwhelming joy? Yes, that a lost soldier can be laid to rest next to his brother and sister and a father and mother who grieved for the remainder of their lives. Tremendous sadness? Yes, for a young life tragically extinguished by a bullet to the back of the brain. Extreme shock? Yes, for an event every family member prayed and desperately hoped for, but never really believed would happen. Disappointment? You bet, in the knowledge that remains retrieved in 2000 would not be identified until 2011, even though the lab obtained DNA samples from his mother & brother in 1999.

I wrote to President Obama and received a response. Is a single person able to make a difference? Probably not, but united, we can, hopefully, have a voice at the national level. One family’s prayers were answered. Will others be as fortunate?

The *Coalition of Families of Korean & Cold War POW/MIAs* strives to bring closure to thousands of families still waiting, but we need help. I would encourage others still searching for answers to keep attending the briefings, ask the tough questions and keep writing letters to your congressmen and political leaders. Yes, go to Washington DC, stand up and ask for explanations. When we do nothing, nothing happens.

The relatives of these men are aging, we need to expedite the identifications of other remains waiting on shelves in Hawaii or still buried in fields in North Korea. These brave men were abandoned once. They gave their lives for their country, please, choose not to desert them again.

Expectantly requested by,
The niece of a fallen soldier,
Ruth Davis

Still Waiting After Sixty Years

It will be sixty-one long years ago, after the nights of 30 November -1 December 1950, that three devastated women began a correspondence with each other based upon an event that occurred in North Korea and united them from that time forward until their deaths many years later. They wrote about their Missing in Action (MIA) sons and shared their sorrow and worry with each other. They asked: "Are our boys still alive? Did they crash into a mountain? Are they being held prisoners somewhere?"

Today, the daughter of one mother, a granddaughter and a grand nephew of the other two, are once again in contact and correspondence, having met for the very first time in Washington, DC at the meeting of the DPMO's annual Government Briefing held 1-2 September 2011.

The three women, Mrs. Alma Batty, Mrs. Ethel Coulter and Mrs. Nele Kepley, wrote each other frequently, consoling and questioning the loss of their pilot, co-pilot and navigator sons, who flew a Douglas B26C Night Invader that crashed somewhere below the Yalu river in North Korea searching for "targets of opportunity." They wrote their congressmen and they wrote their military representatives, they even wrote then President Dwight Eisenhower. They shared news articles and maps, some even campaigned as "Freedom Sentries," picketing the United Nations building as well as the White House while wearing a



blue sash with gold lettering denoting the organization of "the kin of America's forgotten men." One of the First Freedom Sentries chosen to stand at the UN building was Mrs. Ethel Coulter, mother of Lieutenant John R. Coulter, co-pilot of the downed aircraft.

The loss of the aircraft took place early in the conflict, during the middle of winter, deadly cold at 30 degrees below zero. Yet only now do we know, quite probably, that they were defending our troops withdrawing from Kunu-ri in one of the more serious and deadly retreats of the Korean War/Conflict. Only now do we know that a "Help" sign had been located by another air force unit unable to recognize any sign of life below; but perhaps it is ironic that we know little else even sixty years after the downing, nor where the remains of any of the men may be.

Vincent Shaw, Dona Reeves-Marquardt, and Juanita Pelligrino, pictured, have met and agreed to share what data and materials they have since collected, and regret it has taken them so long to continue what was once so necessary for their mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. Living miles apart and not knowing about efforts being made by others, they now continue the vigil sponsored by the DPMO, "until they all return."

Dona and Lew Marquardt