

COALITION OF FAMILIES OF KOREAN & COLD WAR POW/MIAS



SEPTEMBER “We will find our own missing loved one by searching for them all.” 2020

September Report

Like everything of late, the POW/MIA mission has been working from home. There is news though. Things are moving forward. Each day has its to do list. Sharing the news is on that list.



Rick Downes,
President.
K-55 Return
Ceremony
Hawaii 2018

Families don't get to pal around together.

In addition to the updates, DPAA hosts periodic phone briefings with representatives of family and veteran related organizations, who then share news with others. The most recent conference call came at the end of July. So that news is fresh. The Coalition's news is fresh too. So, everything you'll read here is pretty fresh.

As usual, the news focuses on separate issues that together comprise the accounting mission. Much of this news may seem small in scope compared to the larger answers we are all seeking. It is these small steps, however, that take us to big places.

Questions once raised at an annual meeting, then pursued over time, led to the current Punch Bowl disinterment of Korean War Unknowns. Families are bringing loved ones home. Conversations between nongovernmental organizations in 2016 lead to direct negotiations on U.S. remains with North Korea's foreign ministry. Two years later, 55 boxes were returned. (Yes, the Singapore meeting between the U.S. President and North Korea's Chairman likely helped.) It is a cumulative effort, however. One action leads to another action, all of which build to a larger result. The many steps it takes to get there, the people coming together along the way, are often lost in time.

So, the news you'll read in this report may lead to breakthroughs down the line. What was done yesterday is in the rear-view mirror ... our eyes are always on the road ahead ... and other cliches. The work we do now will determine the direction we take to get there. We are glad to have you along for the ride.



Congress

Allies in the Search

* **Cold War Service Medal** – Legislation is before Congress to issue a medal for veterans who served during the Cold War. The hope is to have it passed by the end of this year. There are 15 cosponsors to date.



Check the link below to see if your representative is among them. H.R.4807 - Cold War Service Medal Act. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4807?r=53&s=1>

* **AFDIL Funds** - The *Coalition* has been the go-between in guiding added funding for AFDIL through Congress. The government’s DNA laboratory is under a separate DOD subagency than DPAA. Even Congressional offices didn’t realize that funding came via a separate pathway.



The current budget for the lab’s past conflict work hadn’t allowed for increased Korean War submissions coming from Punch Bowl disinterment of Unknowns.

Government agencies aren’t allowed to request funding directly from Congress. As a nongovernmental organization, the *Coalition* can. We did. Rep. Pappas’ office responded by submitting

an amendment to this year’s House Defense Appropriations bill to add \$10m to AFDIL’s budget for past conflicts analysis. Last month, the bill was successfully passed in the House. The Senate is scheduled to vote on their version (submitted by Sen. Shaheen’s office) following the November election.

BOHHA / Declassification legislation - The *Bring Our Heroes Home Act* will mandate declassification of documents related to missing U.S. service personnel dating back to WWII. Congressional offices in the Senate and House hoped to have the legislation attached to the recent National Defense Authorization Act. This didn’t happen in either chamber. The BOHHA will now continue as stand-alone bills. The Senate version’s path to a floor vote by the end of the year is fairly open.. *Please ask your Senate offices to support the bill - S. 2794!*

The House version got underway later and hasn’t received the same attention. There is work to be done there. Family members of all missing men are urged to ask their Representative to support H.R. 5646!

The Coalition

* **Last Known Alive (LKA) Series** - We are in the early stages of a series revisiting last-known-alive reports from the Korean and Cold Wars. Articles will cover prisoners taken to the former Soviet Union, named and unnamed sightings inside North Korea, China’s role, and reports of testing on U.S. prisoners by eastern bloc nations. The focus will be on sources of the reports, their credibility, follow-up done, the fate of men known by name, and ways to learn the names of those in unnamed sightings.

* **Media** - Interaction has been limited of late, despite this being the 70th anniversary of the Korean War. The most significant recent event was an interview with Fox Nation’s Lara Logan. <https://www.foxnews.com/media/missing-korean-war-airman-fox-nation>



* **Family Members** - The *Coalition* supports family members with their cases wherever we can.

* A recent effort involves a family who thought they had buried their brother following the Korean War, only to be told that he was seen as a P.O.W. The government stayed with the identification, but doubt has lingered on for the family. The *Coalition* is working with them in hopes that independent DNA analysis using the latest NGS technology will bring an answer. If there is a match, the family will have closure. If there is no match, DPAA will reopen the case, presenting the possibility that two identifications may be made.

* The *Coalition* is connected with a family organization of Australia’s Korean War MIAs.



* The first great grandchild of a Korean War MIA has reached out. The mission continues through the generations.

* **Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)** - The *National Committee on North Korea (NCNK)* and the *American Friends Service Committee* remain staunch allies in their advisory roles. They and other organizations/individuals are invaluable resources for referrals within Congress, the State Dept, and as we are ready, the DPRK’s UN mission. They bring added strength to what we do.

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State Dept

The State Department's upper level policy officials working on North Korea issues has been in flux. The Korea Desk personnel that support these offices, however, has gained stability of late. Foreign service staffers (who move on every two years) have given way to more permanent civil servants. This should provide needed consistency.



DOD / DPAA

* **Family Briefings** - The government's September 12th update in Colorado Springs has been cancelled due to Covid-19 virus concerns and restrictions. The next briefing is scheduled for November in Little Rock, AR. Keep track of that meeting and view the 2021 schedule of updates at <https://dpaa.secure.force.com/dpaaFamWeb>.



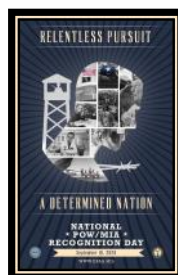
* **Punchbowl Cemetery Disinterment Project / Korean War Unknowns** - Phase 3 will begin once DPAA and AFDIL labs determine they have the capability and capacity to renew working. The cemetery also needs to catch-up on burials that were delayed due to COVID restrictions.



* **Research** - DPAA has signed an arrangement with Ancestry.com that will link their vast genealogical database to DPAA's list of the missing. This will alert family members doing their genealogy when they have a relative that DPAA is attempting to locate. The hope is that this will provide a vehicle for families just learning about a missing member to submit historical information, as well as possible DNA submissions.

* **Identifications/K-55** - 69 U.S. soldiers have been identified from the 55 boxes of remains returned by North Korea in 2018. South Korea has made 13 more identifications from remains believed to be Asians sent to them from DPAA.

* The **2020 POW/MIA Recognitions Day poster** is available at no cost through DPAA. Ordering can be done through the link at <https://www.dpaa.mil/Families/Posters.aspx>.



* **U.S.–Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) Update** - The USRJC was established in 1992 to serve both nations' missions to learn the fate of their missing servicemen. An annual meeting/plenum rotates between Moscow and Washington. Due to ongoing pandemic limitations, this year's May plenum in Moscow was postponed until May 2021. Smaller Technical Talks take place throughout the year. The next one of these meetings is scheduled for November, in Moscow, contingent upon the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions.



* A recovery mission at a cemetery near Vladivostok, Russia, which may correlate to the loss of a U.S. Navy PB4Y2 Privateer during an April 1950 Cold War incident, is also scheduled for when travel opens.

* **South Korea/Remains Recovery** - When Covid-19 circumstances allow, DPAA will send an investigative team to search an area west of Busan (Pusan), South Korea. Five investigative areas associated with 25th and 2nd Infantry Division losses cover roughly a 65-kilometer section of the battle to hold the Pusan perimeter in August-September 1950. The specific cases to be investigated involve 46 missing individuals.

* **Arrowhead Ridge Battlefield** - South Korea /MAKRI operations are continuing in the DMZ battlefield. DPAA would like to add a U.S. team to the recovery work when COVID-19 travel and entry restrictions improve. North Korea was initially going to participate on the north side of the Ridge but haven't done anything since the fall of 2018.

* **Asian American MIA Families** – DPAA recently shared Korean War U.S. loss data with South Korea's remains recovery agency, MAKRI. This will allow MAKRI to pursue investigative and recovery work on DPAA's behalf.



MAKRI has a database of missing Korean servicemen and their families. They are hoping that the Asian-American families of Korean War missing men will submit DNA samples directly to them. This will help MAKRI determine if remains of Asian descent found are American. Contact your casualty office to see what to do.

Membership!

The *Coalition of Families of Korean & Cold War POW/MIAs* is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, dedicated to accounting for the thousands of American servicemen who are still missing from the Korean and Cold Wars. Their stories should be told, their remains brought home, identified, and closure found for their families.

The *Coalition* relies on memberships and broader donations to pursue the issues that one day will lead to answers to what happened to these missing fathers, husbands, brothers, uncles ... and now grandfathers.



We need your support!

Together, we can learn what happened to these missing American servicemen, who not only sacrificed their lives in service to their country but left behind loved ones still hoping to learn their fate.

Coalition of Families of Korean and Cold War POW/MIAs
National Membership Application

New

Renewal

Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip Code _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
(Associate Membership / Non family member – please check here: _____)
Relationship to missing service member: _____
Service member's full name: _____ Service # _____
Branch of Service/Unit or Group: _____
Date & Area of Loss: _____

Annual Membership Donation - \$25. Please make checks payable to: Coalition of Families.

Send to:

Coalition of Families (Attn: Treasurer) P.O. Box 22242, Portsmouth, NH 03802

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