

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



SPRING

“We will find our own loved one only by searching for them all.”

2019

## “The Issues & What To Do About Them”

### Annual Review

Once a year, it is good to step back and assess what’s been accomplished with the Korean and Cold War accounting missions, then focus on what still needs to be done. This is an overview of where things stand with the Korean War mission – from a family perspective. The next edition of the newsletter will assess the Cold War mission.

#### North Korea/DPRK

\* **U.S. Servicemen’s Remains** - This is a multifaceted issue that affects the most men and holds the most answers for the greatest number of families. There are two tough sub issues:

**Remains still in the ground** – Thousands of U.S. servicemen’s remains are buried along North Korea’s mountain ridges, beneath one-time battlefields and prisoner of war camps (now cornfields and rice paddies), inside United Nations cemeteries, and within the Demilitarized Zone.

What needs to be done: Resume joint U.S./DPRK recovery operations, free of sanctions and independent of fallout from other areas of political disagreement. A stand alone issue.

**Unearthed Remains** - The DPRK has accumulated what is believed to be 200 exhumed sets of U.S. remains.

What needs to be done: Both nations designate the issue as humanitarian, and do so at the same time!

\* **Air Losses** - Nine hundred U.S. airmen are missing in six hundred air loss incidents spread across the DPRK. The answers to many of these men’s fates are held by North Korean villagers who witnessed what happened when the planes went down.

What needs to be done: Small search teams need access to known loss sites. The issue should be negotiated independently. It is its own issue.



\* **Last Seen Alive** - American servicemen are known to have been alive in captivity during the war, or reported living years after inside North Korea, China, and the former Soviet Union.

What needs to be done: Negotiate high-level, substantive, blame-free, archival and investigative agreements with all three nations.

#### South Korea / ROK

\* **U.S. Servicemen’s Remains** - The fate of nearly 1000 missing GIs across South Korea and the demilitarized zone is still unknown.

What needs to be done: De-mine and access the DMZ. Continue development and support for MAKRI, the ROK agency that mirrors and cooperates with DPAA.

(Continued on the next page)

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**United States / Issues**

\* **U.S. Government Policy** - An overarching issue is the Administration's policy decision to link the Korean War missing men with the denuclearization of the DPRK. The men, in effect, are still fighting the war from their graves.

What needs to be done: Elevate the fate of the missing men to a stand-alone issue worthy of regular discourse at the highest levels of government. Exempt the mission from sanctions.

\* **Remains Interred on American Soil** - The remains of hundreds of Americans were returned unidentified following the Korean War. They have been buried as *unknowns* in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl), Hawaii.

What needs to be done: This is a success story in the making. A coordinated effort between members of DPAA and the Coalition led to a phased plan that will disinter hundreds of Korean War unknown servicemen's remains and submit them for identification. The challenge is to be sure the plan continues and the DNA lab has enough resources to process the samples without creating a backlog.

\* **Classified Documents** - The fate of untold numbers of missing U.S. servicemen lay in prisoner-of-war debriefings, intel reports, and other documents that remain classified in U.S. archives and government agencies.

What needs to be done: The Coalition has worked with several Senate offices to write the *Bring Our Heroes Home*

*Act mandating declassification of documents relating to POW/MIAs from WWII onward, including the Korean and Cold Wars. The BOHHA is currently with the offices of Senators Crapo and Shaheen for introduction to the current Congress.*

\* **Transfer of P.O.W.s / Soviet Union-Russia** - Reports of U.S. servicemen being transferred to the former Soviet Union during the Korean war are too many to credibly deny that it happened. There are equally troubling reports of encounters following the war. One of many challenges is that the reports are nearly all generic. The missing men's names did not travel well.

What needs to be done: In March 1992, the U.S. - Russia Joint Commission on POWs and MIAs (USRJC) was established to determine what happened to these men. The true challenge is getting past classification issues. A consensus willingness by the highest leaders from both countries to resolve these reports will help put the sightings to rest.



A final What needs to be done relates to all issues and involves all family members and supporters: Be involved. A single, important action anyone can take is to maintain relationships with their Congressional offices. These senators and representatives can get things done. They are waiting to hear from you! They don't bite. You are why they are in office.

Get to know their local staff. Let them get to know you. Their contact info is easily found through the internet. This is a way family members can be involved in your loved one's case. His return may depend on it.

*(Next Edition - Cold War Issues and Agenda)*

**Be Involved!**

As the voice of our missing loved one, speaking up makes things happen. It is difficult for some people to do this; difficult to believe an individual can make a difference, difficult to work activism into our lives. One concern may be to assume things need to happen all at once. They actually begin small, as small as a phone call to a U.S. Senator's state office, contacting a local newspaper or television station. Share your story, let them know about an issue ... declassification maybe, remains recovery in North Korea, increased lab funding. There are a bagful. They are waiting to hear from us.



Step by step, whatever you're comfortable doing. The point is to *be involved* ... however we can. Our loved one's return depends on it; each of us, all of us ... working alone and together to bring him ... them all home. We are his voice. People who can make a difference will listen. Let them help.

The following websites provide contact info for the local and DC offices of your Senate and House representatives:

[www.senate.gov/senators/contact/](http://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/)

[www.house.gov/representatives/find/](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/)

(Find the Representative for your district at: [http://clerk.house.gov/member\\_info/mcapedir.aspx](http://clerk.house.gov/member_info/mcapedir.aspx))

## **President's Corner**

### ***The Sounds of Silence***

Last summer, we welcomed home 55 boxes of U.S. servicemen's remains. They were returned by North Korea following the U.S./North Korea Singapore summit. It was a special moment for Korean War MIAs, their families, and supporters, including the White House, DPAA and Lab folks in Hawaii. The hope was that more would be coming soon. When this past February's summit with North Korea in Hanoi was announced, the hope appeared to be a reality.



A lot of work goes into transforming hope into reality. As with the last year's summit, the Coalition worked behind the scenes in coordination with DPAA and supporting nongovernmental organizations to ensure that the missing men would be on the February summit's agenda. From the start, however, there were signs that it was not going well.

Right at the start, Stephen Biegun, the State Department's newly appointed Special Representative to North Korea, handed the MIA issue off for DPAA to handle. This decision removed a high-level policy voice from the negotiations. Despite the success that came from last year's summit, the missing men were not among the White House's talking points. Neither the President, Secretary of State, nor the Special Representative included the missing men when talking about the February summit.

What happened? How did such a significant success from the previous summit become a stepchild in the next one?

While DPAA ran with its responsibilities as best it could, North Korea is used to their voice. Talks between them are like having the neighbor in for morning coffee. Chairman Kim wanted the boss over for dinner. What he heard from President Trump on the MIA issue was a deafening silence. Not a peep.

North Korea has more unearthened remains ready to return ... if they are given a reason to do so. Right or wrong, Chairman Kim wants something in return ... a few sanctions lifted, a couple of bucks for his trouble, maybe a tweet now and then from the President acknowledging that the missing men have enough priority to be talked about at the highest levels of government.

After waiting 60+ years, the missing men and their families are tired of fighting the Korean War. We've earned the right to be talked about by the people who make the decisions, free of attachment to other issues.



Last year's Singapore summit brought fulfilled promise. This year's summit in Hanoi was promoted with all the expectations of a title rematch. Instead, the bout was called after the first round, without a punch being thrown for the missing men. The forgotten men from the Forgotten War were forgotten once again by the people who count. The silence said so. It's time for them to speak up. Let's get this started... and see it through to the end.

*Rick Downes, President  
(Lt. Hal Downes, father - MIA 1952)*

### **The Coalition's Board of Directors**

***Rick Downes, President/Executive Director  
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***John Zimmerlee, Vice President  
Joan Morris, Treasurer  
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Jean Waite, Director***

**United States**

**The White House**

\* U.S.-DPRK Hanoi Summit, Feb. 2019, Singapore follow-up:



Nothing happened.

(See *President's Corner*, page 3)

**DoD / DPAA**

\* DPAA's annual DC Korean / Cold War family member meeting will be held August 1-2 at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View hotel.

\* Two telephone conference calls were held for veteran/military service and family member organizations January and May. Some notes from those calls:

\* The DPRK's Korean People's Army (KPA) stopped working level talks on resuming joint operations inside North Korea before the Hanoi Summit in February. The lack of communication and tactical timeframe needed to organize and return recovery teams prior to inclement weather has forced DPAA to rule out field operations in the DPRK this fiscal year (ends Sept 30, 2019). They will regroup and hope negotiations will resume in time to initiate operations in the spring of 2020.

\* DPAA is willing to include U.S. Korean War air losses in talks with the DPRK, even if North Korea shows initial reluctance.

\* Live Sightings - They reported no new *credible* information.

\* Informative Korean/Cold War fact sheet Links - <https://www.dpaa.mil/Resources/Fact-Sheets/>

**Laboratory / Hawaii**

\* *Punch Bowl Disinterments* - The Korean War *Unknowns* are coming up. They will be disinterred in seven phases, over the next 5-7 years. Phase one is completed. Seventy-three graves were excavated; two more unknown men have their names back. Phase two is planned to begin this June.

\* The remains of 489 U.S. Korean War servicemen have been identified between 1982 and February 2019.

\* Three identifications have been made from the 55 Boxes of remains returned last summer by North Korea (as of May 1st). They were quick IDs due to the presence of a dog tag or very good nuclear DNA results. Preliminary analyses indicate that the other remains are heavily commingled across multiple boxes, i.e. the remains of a single individual are present in other boxes. This is one reason why it is taking longer to make identifications. As the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System continues to process DNA samples from the 55 boxes, multiple identifications are expected to be announced in the coming months.

\* About 20 of the 55 boxes held remains from one mass grave near the Chosin Reservoir.



**Congress**

\* The U.S. Senate unanimously passed the National POW/MIA Flag Act, a bill requiring that the POW/MIA flag be displayed whenever the American flag is displayed on prominent federal properties. The bill was introduced by Senator Tom Cotton (Arkansas) and Senator Elizabeth Warren (Massachusetts). A companion bill has been introduced in the House by Rep. Chris Pappas (N.H.) and Rep. Jack Bergman (MI).



\* *The Bring Our Heroes Home Act* (declassification legislation) began as a collaboration between the *Coalition* and former Senator Ayotte's (NH) office, introduced to the Senate in 2016. It was reintroduced in the last Congress (2017) by former Sen. Heller (NV), and is currently with the offices of Senator Crapo (ID) and Senator Shaheen (NH), being readied for its introduction to this Congress!

**North Korea / South Korea**

\* *The Road to Hill 281*—In October, 2018, Army engineers from North and South Korea began clearing land mines inside the Demilitarized Zone to build a road toward Arrowhead Hill, also known as Hill 281. The two countries are operating independently of each other. Seven sets of remains have been recovered to date on South Korea's side (Korean civilians, ROK soldiers, or Chinese troops). It is not believed that U.S. troops fought on either sides of Hill 281 being cleared.

\* South Korea and U.S. investigative teams have researched U.S. loss sights on the Pusan Perimeter and around Seoul. The nongovernmental organization, History Flight, is working an air loss with South Korea's MAKRI.

## Our Collective Voice Coalition News

### 2018

Last year ended strong, with trips to Washington DC in November and December. We were represented at the U.S./Russia JC on POW/MIAs' plenum, the National Committee on North Korea (NCNK) annual meeting, and a very informative session with DPAA. There were also meetings with Senate and House offices. The Capitol Hill sessions focused on declassification legislation (the *Bring Our Heroes Home Act / BOHHA*).

### 2019

A trip to DC in February kicked off 2019. NCNK held a briefing on the Korean War. The setback in Hanoi took the wind out of a lot of sails; the *Coalition's* among them.

\* The *Coalition* will be represented at this summer's annual DPAA Korean / Cold War family member meeting in DC, August 1-2. DPAA will hold the event at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View Hotel. See you there!



**Congress** - Donna Knox, the *Coalition's* legislative liaison, is working with Senators Crapo's and Shaheen's offices to move the *BOHHA* (declassification legislation) forward in the 116th Congress. It is a complex

process that has spanned two and a half years, been supported by four Senate offices, and is getting close to reintroduction!

\* **Loved Ones' Tributes** - We are excited to offer family member *Tributes*. These single page links are opportunities for family members to honor your missing loved one, broaden awareness of the mission, and provide funding opportunities for the *Coalition*. Taka a look:

[www.coalitionoffamilies.org/tributes.html](http://www.coalitionoffamilies.org/tributes.html).

If you would like a tribute link for your missing loved one, contact us the *Coalition* ([coalitionoffamilies@gmail.com](mailto:coalitionoffamilies@gmail.com)).

\* **Memberships** - June's annual membership/renewal drive is around the corner. The *Coalition* relies on family memberships and broader donations to pursue the issues that one day will lead to answers we all seek. We need your help!

An application and renewal form are on page 11 of this newsletter. Memberships can also go through the website:

[coalitionoffamilies.org](http://coalitionoffamilies.org).



\* Attending last November's U.S.-Russia Joint Commission plenum was a great opportunity to demystify the workings of the commission, interact with the Russian side, see their dedication, and learn how similar the obstacles on their side are to our own.

\* **Social Media** -

452 people have joined the *Coalition Facebook* page. Many of them are not missing anyone. They are just folks who also care.

[\(www.facebook.com/groups/2307893609/\)](http://www.facebook.com/groups/2307893609/)

254 people/organizations follow the *Coalition on Twitter @KoreanWarMIAs* (even though we don't tweet often).

*Please visit us on both these social media platforms for updates and the latest news.*

\* The *Coalition* gives a respectful and affectionate nod to *Rolling Thunder's* final DC "Ride to the Wall". This annual event has raised awareness of the POW/MIA mission for the past 31 years. The final ride will take place this Memorial Day weekend. Beginning in 2020, *Rolling Thunder's* local chapters will hold smaller events across the country. Thank you to all who have taken part ... and will continue in a new way!

### Cold War (1946-1991)

Information on 126 missing men from the Cold War continues to be elusive. The USRJC pursues individual cases, but the War's inherent nature of secrecy is difficult to pierce. Thirty-nine U.S. military and civilian aircraft were either shot down or otherwise lost on the periphery of communist countries while flying intelligence missions. DPAA fact sheet

link: <https://www.dpaa.mil/Resources/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/569612/personnel-accounting-progress-cold-war/>

**Guide to Getting Answers on the Korean War Missing**

by

**John Zimmerlee**

The Korean War has been over for 66 years, yet the families of the 7,667 still missing men have yet to get answers to their most obvious questions:

Did the MIAs actually die on the battlefield or were they captured and suffered in POW camps until they died of starvation? If they died on the battlefield, were their remains collected and buried nearby? If remains couldn't be identified, what happened to them?

What is really surprising is that most of our questions already have answers! Yes, the demise of most of the still missing men can be answered by reading through thousands of documents at the National Archives in College Park MD. The only problem is . . . no one is committed enough to spend that much time reading old documents.

From my 25 years of research . . . of the nearly 4,000 so-called MIAs, at least 156 are known to have died on the battlefield . . . and more than 910 are known to have been POWs . . . and the families were never told! Of the 1730 still unaccounted-for supposed KIAs, more than 238 were known to have been POWs . . . and their families were never told as well!

So, as a family member, what should you be doing to learn more about your missing loved-one??

First, gather up all the info you already have . . . pictures, dental records, details on any prior injuries like traffic accidents or sports injuries, finger prints if he was ever arrested, time period in Korean, names of fellow soldiers or crew members, estimated height, facial structural appearance (Caucasian, Negroid, Mongoloid), Age when missing.

If you have ever attended a DPAA meeting, study the summary report you were given. Note the field search case number or air loss case number at the end of the first paragraph. If he was MIA or KIA, note the area where he was last known to be in. If an airman, note the area where his plane went down. If known or suspected a POW, note the prison camp where he was taken. Note the map attached to the summary. Study it carefully and compare to a current google map.

Next, call your casualty office: Provide your loved-one's name and service number. Ask if any other family members have been in contact? Ask which one of you is the primary next-of-kin? Request your loved-one's IDPF file and all other info available. Request the full field search case or full air loss case report. Request his unit's daily records beginning two days before his loss date and ending two weeks later.

Provide your case officer with the info you gathered: previous injuries, photos with a smile, dental records, etc.

Request a report with all of the men who went missing from his unit from the day before until the day after his supposed loss date. Loss dates are often the day after the incident, because he didn't show up for role-call. If the battle was three days long, he may have been actually lost earlier.

Once you get the report, note those who were captured and which of those men returned alive after the war. Then request their debriefing reports which identify other men also captured but often also men who died on the battlefield. Sometimes, they mention someone like "Jones" from Montana . . . which often goes unnoticed . . . but would be very useful to that family!



I know you're thinking that all of this has already been done . . . over and over again . . . and you probably won't get any further with all of this effort.

Recently, I've been working the case of Cal Charles William Cook, who DPAA claims was "KIA" on 8/8/1950. In studying his case, I noted that he was among 9 men killed that day from 9<sup>th</sup> regiment. All were buried together locally and later exhumed and sent home to their families, yet Cook was the only remains that did not get sent home.

Other units were also fighting in that area and a number of them were captured, marched north to Seoul, and wound up in Moo Hak Girl's school, where their names were written on chalkboards before they were moved on Pyongyang in September 1950.

Ironically, the name "Cook" showed up on this chalkboard. Yes, this is a common name, but this was early in the war . . . and only one "Cook" went missing early enough to show up on this board.

Most cases are this simple to enlighten. So. I urge you to get involved. Ask your casualty officer to help you get in touch with other family members whose loved-ones were lost at the same time from the same unit. You will be flabbergasted at what you learn.

By all means, call me at 770-565-4420 or email [john.zimmerlee@gmail.com](mailto:john.zimmerlee@gmail.com). I have details to share on more than 4,035 individual cases (maybe yours) and can help you get started on your mission.

Together we can . . . and will get answers!

*(Capt. John Zimmerlee, Jr. - MIA)*

## The Coalition: Twenty-One Years and Counting...A Look Back

By Donna D. Knox

Twenty-one years ago, I founded the *Coalition* along with two other family members, Irene Mandra and Gerry Montgomery. The three of us had a vision of how best to advocate on behalf of our missing men and their families; how best to bring about the fullest possible accounting. It was a daunting task back then: to get up and running; to pave our way into leadership on the issue. We felt small and overwhelmed.



It's been a busy two decades. Irene and Gerry are no longer with the *Coalition*. We now have our third President/Executive Director in Rick Downes. The Board of Directors has taken on new names and faces over the years. We have an advisory Board of interested professionals who, though not family members, bring valuable perspective and experience to our efforts.

I thought it would be inspiring to pull together a summary of the projects we have undertaken together, the hurdles we have mounted as an organization of families. We have had but one goal in mind: to find out what happened to the men who gave themselves in service to this country and never came back...all too often without explanation. I write this to remind us all that, though at times it might seem we are mere families—too insignificant to tilt at windmills that power the federal government—as organized advocates we can and have made a difference. We have breathed life into what was once empty space. And, whatever we learn, we will know in our hearts that we never gave up trying to find our guys. We did not move on from their sacrifices as though they were leaves in the wind.

With all of this in mind, here are some highlights of the difference an organized and determined effort can make. Though this summary is not comprehensive and lacks many details (none of it happened easily—too much to recount), it will at least remind us that the collective voice does matter, and we should never let it fade into the margins of unattended history. So...

**~Diplomatic Missions:** Three of our Directors have been to North Korea on missions to promote relations between the two countries. One trip involved direct negotiations with Pyongyang on the recovery and return of U.S. remains and investigating air loss sites.



**~Remains Recovery Operations:** In 2011, the Coalition worked in concert with the Defense POW/MIA accounting office and others to move negotiations toward resumption of JROs (joint recovery operations with DPRK) in an effort to locate and recover remains of

American servicemen still buried in North Korea. The operations were approved and ready to launch but were pulled back when relations between the U.S. and North Korea erupted anew.

**~List of the Missing:** In what seemed like a process that would never yield results, we pressed, argued and all but stomped our feet for the creation and release of a list of all men missing from the Korean War. For some reason the government was reluctant. But persistence paid off and, in February of 1999, DPMO (Defense POW/MIA Office...predecessor to the current accounting office, DPAA) released *PMKOR*—Personnel Missing Korea. *PMKOR* is the grandfather of the current day government list of who went missing, and when, from which state and which branch of the military. The list is now available on the DPAA website as a central resource in the accounting effort. Let's not forget that, without determined advocacy, the list would not have been forthcoming.

**~Legislation:** The *Coalition* has spearheaded and drafted three pieces of legislation, two of which were enacted; the other is making its way through Congress now. The first, years ago, was to amend the McCain Act such that family members could have access to documents that mentioned a missing man other than their own relative, even when that man's PNOK (primary next of kin) could not be located to give permission.

**CLASSIFIED**

The second legislation dealt with the so-called *generic list*, a list of documents that contained information about POWs. DPMO would not release these documents to family members because the documents did not name individual men. We pressed for, and got, a Congressional mandate for DoD to release the files if they were declassified, and to summarize their content if they were not.

The current Bill is the *Bring Our Heroes Home Act*, which will mandate comprehensive declassification of records related to POW/MIAs from WWII forward. We have seen enough to know many more records exist that remain classified, especially when it comes to the myriad reports that American POWs were held back and taken to the Soviet Union.

**~The Transfer Issue:** An important side note about that. In 1994 I testified at a congressional hearing on the effort to account for missing servicemen. At that hearing, I met and talked with Lt. Col. Phillip Corso. He then testified that, as President Eisenhower's advisor on matters of National Security after the Korean War ended, his report to the President had been that to press for the

*(Continued next page)*

*(Twenty-One Years and Counting...Continued)*

release of POWs who had been held back would be to risk going to war with the Soviets, a risk that Corso advised should not be undertaken. Eisenhower agreed and effectively abandoned the men. Once that decision was made, a systemic decision to hide the truth from the families and the public took root and never gave up its turf. To do otherwise would have been to incur catastrophic political consequences.

The *Coalition* has worked over the decades to make sure this travesty, this knife to the gut for families of missing men, is never laid to rest...not until we know what really happened.

**~Informing the Families:** Over the years, we successfully pressed the Powers That Be (affectionately referred to herein as the "PTB") to inform families when artifacts associated with an individual MIA were found with remains, even though those remains had not yet been identified. Similarly, with assistance from the Army Casualty Office, we convinced the PTB to release the so-called X-Files which contain all sorts of information associated with unidentified remains buried at the Punchbowl in Hawaii. This information, when coupled with information from families and other sources, can be instrumental in making identifications.

**~ Punchbowl Remains:** Another longstanding issue was disinterment of ALL remains of unknown servicemen interred at the Punchbowl in Hawaii since the Korean War ended so they could be put through the rigors of current identification technology. We families could see that this needed to be done, but politics, bureaucratic inertia...maybe budgetary concerns...*something* gave rise to an infuriating refusal to do so. The previous policy was that a man's identity had to be pretty much established (by more limited technologies which missed a lot) before his remains could be brought up for analysis. Forgive the crassness, but we believed that policy to be ass-backwards. I am happy to note that DPAA has finally adopted a seven-stage plan to disinter all Punchbowl



remains for identification review. Kudos!!!

### Quiet, Ongoing Advocacy

Many of the *Coalition's* efforts have been tucked away behind the front lines; not flashy but still important to the crafting of progress on the many levels it must be made. Here are quick references to some of the things we've undertaken over the years:

- Cooperative efforts with members of Congress and NGOs (non-government entities) to bring about progress and, when necessary, change. One significant example is the collective effort that culminated in a Congressional hearing, the dissolution of DPMO and creation of DoD's current accounting agency, DPAA.

- Behind-the-scenes meetings, letters and dialogue with Executive Branch officials (NSC, State Department, White House, etc.) about policy, both domestic and foreign.

- Outreach to media for coverage of issues and response to media requests for information and interviews.

- Creation of a website and a newsletter to keep families and others informed about Korean and Cold War POW/MIA issues.

- Built a presence on social media to broaden awareness of the accounting issue.

- Attendance at government briefings, asking hard questions, sometimes having to press for reluctant answers.

- Speaking at various public events.

- Working behind the scenes with interested individuals to develop artistic projects as a means of making headway, both in terms of awareness and actual breakthroughs in policy or doctrine. One example is the documentary video *Forgotten Men of the Forgotten War*.

- Pressed for more comprehensive access to Chinese and Russian archives.

- Assisted family members with investigation of their individual cases.

- Conducted extensive research at the National Archives and other repositories. The *Coalition* was also happy and proud to have facilitated funding for

- a period of time that supported the incredible work *Coalition* Vice President John Zimmerlee has conducted over the years through his separate research entity, the *Korean War POW/MIA Network*. John has

- singlehandedly led countless families to information they did not have about their missing loved one. His data base is unrivaled.



### In Conclusion

I will mention the *Coalition's* participation with other individuals and entities in efforts to bring about more diplomatic interaction with North Korea. There are remains to unearth and bring home. There are missing flyers whose crash sites are known but whose whereabouts are not. Last seen alive reports need to be resolved. Much work needs to be done before the window of opportunity closes. Sometimes it will be creative thinking and inventive projects by unlikely outsiders that will gain traction and make a difference.

Other times, it will be the two governments finding their way to the same place, as when President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un held their first summit last year and arranged for 55 caskets of American MIAs to be returned to their homeland. We worked to make sure the remains issue was included on the Summit agenda. *Coalition* President, Rick Downes, flew onboard Air Force Two with Vice President Pence and attended the repatriation ceremony in Hawaii. It was a somber yet inspiring moment in the reach of time that has now spanned more than six decades.

There it is. All of this, and much more, is what it has taken...what it will continue to take...to get answers; honor the men who served; and bring closure to those who have been tormented by the uncertainty of not knowing. And so, we carry on.

*(Lt. Hal Downes, father, MIA)*

## "Honoring Those Who Served"

*Speech by*

*Dorothy Antonelli*

**Veterans Memorial Park, Ocala, FL / April 6, 2019**

Good morning! It's an honor to be here to welcome home all our veterans, and to thank you for your service.

Today I want to share with you a matter that is close to my heart. For many years Americans referred to the Korean War as the "Forgotten War". I believe NO VETERAN SHOULD EVER BE FORGOTTEN. The men and women who served in the Korean War answered their nation's call to defend a country they did not know, and a people they had never met. Young men traveled several weeks on a ship having no idea what they would face in a land so far away, but they believed in God and they loved their country.



One of those young men was my uncle, Sgt. Peter Patete, an enlisted member of the 38<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Second Infantry Division. He fought in the battle at Kunu-Ri in November 1950 when the Communist Chinese crossed the border into North Korea to join forces with their ally. On the night of November 25, the Second Infantry Division was cut off at Kunu-Ri and was virtually annihilated while they struggled south. The Chinese outnumbered them 10 to 1 and encircled them with no way out. My uncle's remains are among those still missing. I wish I could welcome him home today, and tell him how proud I am of his service.

It has been my mission for many years to search for answers about the circumstances surrounding his MIA status. Sometimes this resulted in more questions than answers. But the journey took me to places where I met interesting Korean War veterans who shared their experiences, and together we built lasting relationships.

During the first winter of the Korean War in 1950, our veterans fought in temperatures as low as 40 degrees below

zero, causing frozen rations, jammed weapons, icy roads and frostbite casualties, some requiring amputation. It was the coldest winter on record, and they did not have the proper winter clothing. Sometimes the Americans found the bitter cold to be just as deadly as the enemy. Yet, they continued to fight to stop Communist aggression. The Korean War was relatively short, but exceptionally bloody. Nearly 37,000 American heroes died in combat or POW camps. Over 7,000 are still unaccounted for.

Officially the Korean War never ended. Although the Korean Armistice Agreement brought an end to the hostilities, that cease fire never gave way to a peace treaty.

We must keep the memory of our brave fallen heroes alive. Generations have long awaited the return of their loved one's remains for an honorable military burial on U.S. soil.

Their families need and deserve closure. It's getting harder for us to accept that we are still waiting after all these years. Time is against us, but we will never give up hope.

Today millions of South Koreans live in freedom, peace and prosperity. Since the war, they advanced as a nation in 60 years what should have taken 200 years. Their traditions of hard work, pride and refusal to give up helped move them past the war. They rose from being a shattered nation to become the 7<sup>th</sup> most productive economic country in the world, and a major aid donor to countries in need. They were a country and people worth fighting for. The sacrifice our veterans made was not in vain, and I'm sure if you ask any one of them today, "would you do it again?" most would say "yes, if I could".

Thirty-six years after the men and women of the Korean War came home, Congress recognized their sacrifice and authorized the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. It is a reminder of the hardships our men and women endured. It is also a tribute to their service, dedication, and sacrifice for the sake of freedom. And as we all know, freedom is not free!

Today we welcome home all our veterans, and acknowledge you with gratitude and respect!

God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you.



*Sgt. Peter Patete, Uncle, MIA*

**Letter to Chairman Kim Jong Un**

Summits like the ones between President Trump and North Korea’s Chairman Kim Jong Un involve a lot of work behind the scenes. Government agencies of both the U.S. and DPRK discuss issues ahead of time. Nongovernmental organizations reach out to other ngos and connections within the White House, State Department, and DOD to be sure issues like U.S. servicemen’s remains will be on the agenda.

The *Coalition* is one of these organizations. Among our efforts prior to the recent Hanoi Summit was to write a letter directly to the DPRK’s Chairman Kim. Our hope was to encourage him to embrace another unilateral return of

U.S. remains (like last summer’s 55 boxes) and resume joint recovery operations inside his country.

Organizations working in support of the accounting mission, having connections to the DPRK, offered to guide the letter on its path to the Chairman. Reports from these organizations assure us that the letter actually made its way successfully. There is a chance that he may listen. The *Coalition’s* President travelled with the *Richardson Center* delegation to Pyongyang to speak about remains and air losses with the *DPRK’s* vice foreign minister in 2016. Every voice matters.



Here is the *Coalition’s* letter to Chairman Kim.

\* \* \* \* \*

February 18, 2019

Chairman Kim Jong Un  
Pyongyang, DPRK

Dear Chairman Kim;

First, thank you for sending home the 55 boxes of American servicemen’s remains last summer. The world was energized by the gesture. We hope you will again find your way to be a driving force on this issue during the upcoming second summit with President Trump. Sending more remains home, along with resuming joint North Korea / U.S. recovery operations, is the kind of positive display that can generate lasting good will between the people of the DPRK and U.S., attracting the attention of people and governments around the world, as well.

In 2016, I traveled to Pyongyang with the Richardson Center for Global Engagement’s team to discuss U.S. remains return with the Vice-foreign Minister. During our plane’s approach to the Pyongyang International Airport, we flew over the area we believe is where my father went missing in 1952. Growing up knowing that such an important person in my life is connected to your country has created a life-time bond. Visiting there was very special.

It was also a time to learn of the DPRK’s history through the museums and monuments we toured. Even more meaningful was sharing time with our guides and the folks looking after us at the Kobangsan Guest House. The view of the Taedong River will always be with me. I have been able to share my experiences with family, friends, colleagues, and media from around the world. I am looking forward to visiting the DPRK again at some point, to discuss the fate of missing American servicemen but to also meet new Korean people and talk of shared values.

Please consider the upcoming summit as an opportunity to build on last year’s agreement with the President. The heartbreak of not knowing what happened to a loved one is a human quality that transcends all nationalities. So many fathers, sons, husbands, brothers, and uncles are missing from the many nations involved on both sides of the Korean peninsula conflict. The goodwill taken to turn those losses into positive relations is immeasurable. We hope you will be taking those steps in your second meeting with President Trump, as you did the first.

Thank you!

*Rich*

Richard Downes, President  
Coalition of Families of Korean & Cold War POW/MIAs

**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 help!**

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.

**Thank you!**

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

New

Renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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(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 4194, Portsmouth, NH 03802

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