

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



SPRING

2011

## President's Corner



We have all been at this for awhile, juggling hope and frustration with disappointment in our quest for answers about missing loved ones. Somewhere along the way, my own search broadened beyond looking for my father. The accounting effort as a whole became my focus. I don't know why. It's happened with others. Advocating for 8000 men can be easier than searching for just one, I suppose. More can be done. There are times, however, when I need to remind myself to spend time on my father's case.

Then I realize that searching for all the men *is* spending time on my father's case. In fact, the best way to find one of the missing men is by searching for them all. As a matter of efficiency, the government has to operate this way. They haven't created multiple agencies and spent hundreds of millions of dollars to look for just my father. Then there are the politics involved. Very broad issues are dealt with at international levels. Conflicting policies compete for priorities within our own government. These actions are done for all the men, not just one.

Within this atmosphere, individual family member's voices fall like scattered raindrops in a summer shower. When only a few of us urge the White House to resume search and recovery operations in North Korea, we are those scattered raindrops. When thousands of us speak up, pelting the White House and Congress in a torrent of emails and letters, we will become a driving storm impossible to ignore.

The search for the missing men is geared to this larger picture. The families should be doing the same. This appeal will be a recurring theme throughout the newsletter and why an organization like the *Coalition* exists. Keep an eye out for ways to become part of the storm!

*Rick Downes*

## United States

### *The News At Home*



\* Senator Richard Lugar (Indiana) is a dedicated advocate of the Korean War's missing men. Senator Lugar recently brought the issue center stage in a Foreign Relations Committee hearing focusing on U.S./North Korea relations. The Senator and his staff have a long-standing, active commitment to investigating the issue, especially live sighting reports. We are seeking more champions like them.

\* House Resolution 111, establishing a Select Committee on POW /MIA affairs, is back on track and needs Congressional sponsors. This is an important opportunity to raise the issue with your representative.

[\(www.contactingthecongress.org/\)](http://www.contactingthecongress.org/)

\* DPMO is digitalizing records of all the missing men.

\* The 2010 National Defense Authorization Act requires the Department of Defense (DOD) to *increase its efforts to locate and identify missing persons from all conflicts beginning with World War II*. The DOD in turn has stated, *The priority for new identifications will come from battle-field recoveries and remote, unknown grave sites*. This has become a *Catch 22* scenario: North Korea is the largest known source of those recoveries. Unfortunately, the White House bans our recovery teams from going there.

\* The families of thirteen missing Korean War servicemen found closure in 2010:

*Air Force* - 1st Lt. Robert F. Dees,

*Army* - Cpl. Primo C. Carnabuci, Master Sgt. Clifford L. Ryan, Sgt. Brunko R. Miljus, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jack J. Saunders, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Melvin R. Musgray, Cpl. Frank H. Smith, Pfc. Junichi Fujimoto, Cpl. Nehemiah E. Butler, Sgt. Carl B. George, Sgt. 1st Class Wallace L. Slight, Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class James C. Caldwell, Cpl. Patrick R. Glennon

Their tour is done. The Defense Prisoner of War/ Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) website has details.

[\(www.dtic.mil/dpmo/\)](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/);Topics: News; News Releases)

## Russia

\* DPMO planned to submit the cases of ten missing Americans from the Korean War to the Russian Defense Ministry for research in their Central Archives. The *Coalition* will try to learn why these ten men were targeted and what sort of information the government believes might be there. DPMO is waiting until Russia responds before informing the men's families.



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\* Our government has a history of keeping these actions from the families until substantive information is learned. Referring to the ten cases submitted to the Russians, DPMO responded, *Our experiences from other cases where we have informed the families ahead of time of information we are submitting to another country has caused false expectations and frustrations for the families when the country does not respond in a timely manner and/or reports finding no information.*

The *Coalition* has contested this policy. As family members ourselves, we expect to be informed when there are developments concerning our missing loved ones. We don't need to be protected. Handling disappointment is easier than thinking nothing is going on.

What are your thoughts? If one of these ten cases involves your loved one, will you want to be told? Let us know: [coalitionoffamilies@gmail.com](mailto:coalitionoffamilies@gmail.com), or drop a line.

\* The U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA Affairs (USRJC) is an independent presidential commission established, in large part, to learn what happened to Korean and Cold War MIAs reported to be in the former Soviet Union gulags. The USRJC accomplished quite a bit initially but has been a shell of itself for years.

This past January, staff from DPMO and the National Security Council invited representatives from POW/MIA family organizations and veterans' groups to Washington. The agenda focused on ways to reenergize the commission or do away with it altogether. One factor is the role President Obama's U.S.-Russia Bilateral Commission plays as the current way of doing business with Russia. The missing men are not currently represented on that commission.

In the end, the *Coalition* endorsed the general call of support for revitalizing the USRJC, while exploring ways a sub-working group on POW/MIA affairs within the Bilateral Commission can support the USRJC mission.

As of March, DPMO reported that, *There have been no new developments.*

## China

\* In 2008, an agreement was made with China to research the People's Liberation Army (PLA) archives from the Korean War. This partnership is benefitting both parties.



The PLA archives are scattered throughout the nation. The U.S. is subsidizing the centralization effort. In the initial phase, an entire program needed to be established, from setting up offices to determining where all the records were stored. Things are underway now. U.S. representatives submit missing men's cases. PLA archivists do the actual research.

In September of last year, DPMO and PLA representatives met to measure progress, exchange results, and initiate new cases. The PLA archivists provided information on six air losses involving American MIAs. Five of these losses were in China, one was in North Korea. Following up with DPMO added some details: *In two cases, the (PLA) archivists went to loss areas and interviewed witnesses, and in one case they visited a reported burial site.* Locations of possible remains were given. The *Coalition* will follow up on the number of men involved, type of aircraft, loss dates, and what steps will be taken next. Unfortunately, history indicates that access to sites in China can take a long time to negotiate.

To date, 105 reports have been found by the archivists with information on losses of U.S. MIAs. Only summaries are given to our representatives, not actual files. This is an ongoing point of contention between the two parties. In the same manner, the *Coalition* will pursue details with our government to learn if: a) men's names are known, b) have their families been informed, c) were the losses in China or Korea. We will report what we learn in the next newsletter.

\* As mentioned in DPMO's *The Torch*, 20% of the PLA's war records have been reviewed.

\* In a JPAC release, a U.S. archeological team traveled to China's Guangdong province in February. They began a search for twelve Americans believed lost in a U.S. Navy PBM-5 seaplane listed missing on November 5, 1950. Negotiations for this search date back to 2009, when it was reported in a Chinese release as a B-29 loss. Again, we will pursue more details.

## North Korea (DPRK)

\* Nineteen former South Korean soldiers, classified as killed in action during the Korean War, are alive in North Korea. They're not being hidden. Seventeen have shown up for reunions with relatives from the South.

There are differing views on why the North Koreans would keep American POWs all these years. If they have, this news certainly gives hope that some may still be alive.

\* Unfortunately, the U.S. abruptly withdrew JPAC search and recovery teams from North Korea six years ago. We could have learned so much about the missing men since then. The North Koreans get blamed, but the White House wears the black hat in this issue. It has mixed a humanitarian mission with politics. Repeated invitations from North Korea to resume operations have been declined by U.S.

officials. The consistent response is that North Korea must first return to the Six Party Talks, which is political.



Meanwhile, North Korean fishermen, villagers and other witnesses to the fate of missing men are aging, taking their knowledge with them. Remains are reportedly being exposed to the elements during farming activities. Our government refuses to follow up. After decades of not looking for its missing men in North Korea, our government is not looking for them once again.

We are our loved one's voice. Let's remind the White House of its humanitarian promise to bring the men home. Let politics have its own mission. ([www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact))

## National Archives Research

*John Zimmerlee*

John Zimmerlee, Director of Research, traveled to the National Archives in January. Sixty hours of research was conducted. A total of 886 documents were considered valuable and were scanned electronically. After another 96 hours of follow-up review, it was determined that 426 of those documents contained new information on 345 cases of missing American servicemen. Sufficient information was found in 203 of those cases to support a change in status:

- 160 MIA cases should be reclassified Prisoner-of-War
- 8 MIA cases should be reclassified Died-in-Enemy-Hands
- 8 MIA cases should be reclassified Killed-In-Action
- 15 KIA cases should be reclassified as Prisoner-of-War
- 12 KIA cases should be reclassified as Died-in-Enemy-Hands

The remaining *Prisoner-of-War* cases were enhanced with witness accounts of sightings and/or deaths.

A typical example is the case of Air Force Sgt. Louis Henry Bergmann, AF17124468 (official status *MIA-1951*).

The government report on the B-29 loss incident states:

"Aircraft attacked by 15-20 MIGs, #2 engine and en-

tire wing caught fire, exploded, crashed into mountain; tail gunner of another B-29 observed crash and no parachutes observed."

The government's *Korean War Air Loss Database* (created in 2004) continues to list Sgt. Bergmann as *MIA* . . . no further information available. However, a statement (in government hands since 1953) of six repatriated *POWs* clearly indicates that Sgt. Bergmann was held in captivity, taken to China for interrogation, and reportedly died at Pak's Palace (North Korean POW camp named for the officer in charge).



The families of missing servicemen deserve to have this kind of knowledge about their missing loved ones and copies of the relevant documents. Locating and informing the families continues to be a vital facet of the *Coalition's* mission!

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**We are learning something new about our missing men all the time. Please update your contact information. Email addresses are particularly helpful. Thank you.**

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**Board of Directors**  
**John Zimmerlee**  
**Donna D. Knox**  
**Gail Embery**  
**Richard Downes, President**

What's New With Us

- \* Robin Piacine has withdrawn from the *Coalition's* board of directors. Robin served the POW/MIA issue well, including an important term as president, and will be missed.
- \* As with one door closing, another opened. We are excited to add Gail Embery as a new director. Please visit the *Coalition's* website for contact info on Robin and to learn more about Gail.
- \* The *Coalition's* mailing address has moved to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. For those of you renewing membership this time of year, please do so at the New Hampshire address. (It's on the membership renewal form.)
- \* John Zimmerlee spent a long week at the national archives in January. A summary article on John's findings is in the newsletter and well worth reading.
- \* With the support of family members and veterans organizations, the *Coalition* matched a generous challenge grant. The funds will help support research and general operations.
- \* There have been informative interviews with *CNN* and the producers of a Korean War documentary "Finnigan's War". (We will be announcing the official release date.)
- \* We would like to acknowledge DPMO's overall cooperation when pursuing answers to our questions.
- \* *About The Newsletter* - As you have noticed, publication has been intermittent. The time and fiscal commitments can be daunting. We are making adjustments, from format to distribution. Let us know how the changes are for you.

To Do List

- \* The contact pages on elected officials' websites have convenient fill in email message boxes. They make it easy to let our views be known. ([www.contactingthecongress.org/](http://www.contactingthecongress.org/))
- \* Let Senator Richard Lugar know that his work for MIAs is truly appreciated. ([lugar.senate.gov/contact/](http://lugar.senate.gov/contact/))
- \* Remind your representative to cosponsor H.RES.111-forming a standing committee on POW/MIA affairs. ([www.contactingthecongress.org/](http://www.contactingthecongress.org/))
- \* On your loved one's birthday, loss date, Veterans/Memorial/POW/MIA Recognition Days, post a message on the White House and your representative's websites, reminding them he still needs to be found.
- \* Remind the White House that search and recovery operations in North Korea are humanitarian missions that should be resumed immediately. ([www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact))
- \* Join the *Coalition's* Facebook page, and share developments in your personal searches.  
We are all in this together!



*Coalition of Families of Korean and Cold War POW/MIA's*  
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**