



The Torch

Keeping the Promise

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DPMO office in Moscow sees 20th year of work

In 1992, the first plenary session of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs agreed to establish an office of DPMO investigators and researchers at the U.S. Embassy Moscow. Today, the office employs two Americans and four Russians, headed by Army Lt. Col. Mike Yuschak.

Like the rest of DPMO, the Moscow office's main mission is to work to clarify the fates of missing U.S. servicemen, and whenever possible, bring their remains home. The Moscow office and the Joint Commission Support Directorate assist with bilateral cooperation between the U.S. and Russia by facilitating the interview of several thousand former Russian citizens, former Russian military personnel, government officials, and prisoners in the Russian penal system. These interviews provide information involving U.S. MIAs during and after World

War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the 39 U.S. planes shot down by the Soviets during the Cold War.

The Moscow office is also conducting research in the Central Archives of the Russian Ministry of Defense in Podolsk, Russia, to locate information from the 64th Fighter Aviation Corps (FAC) archival records on missing U.S. servicemen. These records include information such as shoot-down reports, maps, photographs, and descriptions of crash site locations. The 64th FAC was the parent unit of approximately 70,000 Soviet servicemen that fought against the U.S. and United Nations forces during the Korean War.

Information that is gathered by the Moscow office is shared with family members and the public, both directly through Service Casualty Officers, and through archiving at the Library of Congress and the National Archives.

Personnel Recovery Conference

Preserving the lives and well-being of DoD personnel participating in U.S. - sponsored activities or missions is one of the highest priorities of the Department of Defense. In addition to the mission of accounting for missing service members from all past conflicts, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs has policy oversight of the mission to recover captured, missing, or isolated men and women placed in harm's way while serving our nation in current conflicts.

In January, members of the Personnel Recovery Directorate from the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) participated in the 2012 Joint Personnel Recovery Conference at Quantico, Va. The five day conference shared information related to Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape (SERE) training, SERE psychology, intelligence support to personnel recovery, and non-conventional assisted recovery. Two days were devoted to discussions of personnel recovery policy and operational support for the rescue of missing or isolated personnel. DPMO led the personnel recovery policy session.

The conference was attended by more than 250 DoD personnel from every service and combatant command.

Conferees represented subject matter experts spanning the entire spectrum of the personnel recovery mission area. This year saw significant interagency participation from ten different organizations, as well as international representatives from Australia, Canada and New Zealand.



Service members train for a recovery mission.

Department of Defense photo

An overview of the U.S. personnel accounting community

Many government organizations contribute to the search for the more than 83,000 service members who are unaccounted for from past wars. The U.S. Government promises to recover and ensure the full accounting for missing Americans, which requires a worldwide effort.

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO)

DPMO is located near Washington, D.C., and was established in July 1993 after a Senate Select Committee called for the Department of Defense to form a single office to oversee and manage POW/MIA accounting issues. On behalf of the Secretary of Defense, DPMO employs more than 125 personnel who oversee Personnel Accounting and Personnel Recovery policies intended to limit the loss or capture of Americans who are serving abroad, and to bring home those who have been lost while serving our country.

Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC)

JPAC is located in Hawaii and was activated in 2003 when the Army's former Central Identification Laboratory and the Pacific Command's Task Force Full Accounting were merged into a single organization. JPAC employs more than 400 military and civilian personnel that conduct global search, recovery, and laboratory operations.

Service Casualty Offices (SCOs)

Each military department and the Department of State

maintains a SCO. The officials in these offices serve as primary liaisons for families concerning personnel recovery and accounting. SCO officials reach out to family members to explain the methods that are used to account for families' missing loved ones and to seek information and DNA for case analyses.

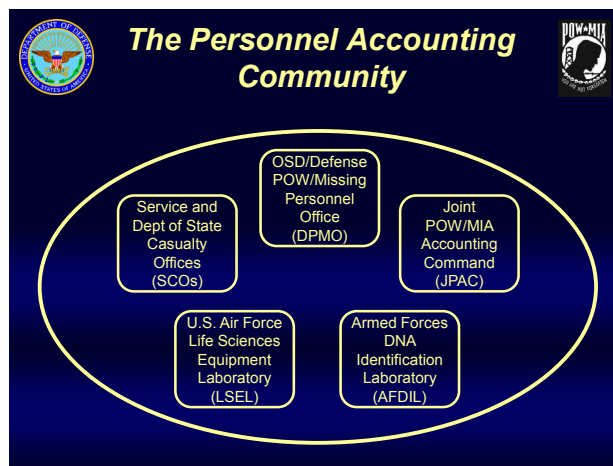
Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL)

AFDIL is located in Maryland and provides DNA reference collection, accession, and storage, which helps to identify remains that are recovered from around the world. AFDIL also provides scientific consultation, research and education services in the field of forensic DNA analysis for the Department of Defense and other agencies.

Air Force Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL)

LSEL is located in Ohio at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Its mission is to analyze both equipment and service member-specific equipment and uniforms for determining evidence from aircraft crash sites. LSEL is singularly qualified to scientifically study recovered military equipment artifacts and determine critical forensic aspects of an incident. Frequently, the LSEL is able to provide crucial case determination evidence when other critical evidence is not recovered or available.

For more information on the accounting community, go to our webpage at: www.dtic.mil/dpmo.



Family Updates

The following family updates will be conducted for families of those missing in action:

- April 19-20** — Korea/Cold War Update, Tyson's Corner, Va.
- May 19** — Indianapolis, Ind.
- June 14-16** — Southeast Asia Annual Briefing, Crystal City, Va.
- August 18** — Providence, R.I.

To register or get more information, go to:
www.dtic.mil/dpmo

DPMO conducts periodic updates and annual government briefings for families of American service members who are missing in action. These events are designed to keep family members informed of the U.S. government's worldwide mission to account for those still missing and to discuss in detail the latest information available about their specific cases.

At these briefings, family members have the opportunity to meet with numerous civilian and military specialists of the government whose expertise includes: foreign government negotiation, formulation of national policy, remains recovery and identification, DNA science, archival research and intelligence analysis.

DPMO acquires French records

In February, DPMO historians and a JPAC analyst collected and analyzed thousands of historical records from the French Ministry of Defense archives in Vincennes, France. The team obtained three major collections of dossiers, photos, and maps recording details of American, Allied, and German aircraft crash sites throughout France, with additional material for Belgium, the Netherlands, Northern Africa, and Italy.

Working from DPMO's case tracker and databases of World War II losses, the team determined that these documents directly inform more than 50 active cases for missing American aviators in France. The team returned with over 10,000 images and is analyzing them in order to present cases for investigation, build new data sets and assessment tools, and augment the Geographic Information System that is used for creating maps.

U.S. - Laos technical talks

On Feb. 20, a representative from DPMO participated in semi-annual consultative talks sponsored by U.S. Pacific Command's Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) with representatives of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in Vientiane, Laos. The Lao agreed to JPAC's proposal to change the number of joint field activities (JFAs) executed per fiscal year in Laos from five to four beginning in Fiscal Year 2013, but to extend the number of days allowed for several of the JFAs.

JPAC believes this revision will provide greater flexibility and efficiency to its work in the country. However, for alleged security and safety reasons, the Lao did not agree to JPAC's requests to allow teams to drive to excavation sites where possible, or to have base camps for recovery teams near recovery sites.

Final soldier accounted for in Iraq

On Feb. 25, the remains of Staff Sgt. Ahmed K. Altaie, of Ann Arbor, Mich., were identified.

Altaie was assigned to the Provincial Reconstruction Team, Divisional Training Center, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. On Dec. 11, 2006, he was declared "missing – captured" after he disappeared in Baghdad, Iraq, on Oct. 23, 2006. Altaie was the final missing soldier and casualty to be recovered from the Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn mission.

DPMO continues to work with the U.S. Embassy-Baghdad, and the Government of Iraq to pursue information related to three contractors who are unaccounted for from Operation Iraqi Freedom, and will make every prudent effort to recover complete remains of Maj. Troy Gilbert, an Air Force F-16 pilot, after a request from the Secretary of the Air Force.

Recently accounted for

The following servicemen have been accounted for since October 2011:

World War II

Staff Sgt. John J. Bono, USAAF
1st Lt. Harry W. Eck, USAAF
Staff Sgt. John E. Hogan, USAAF
2nd Lt. Hilding R. Johnson, USAAF
2nd Lt. Charles R. Moritz, USAAF
2nd Lt. Emil T. Wasilewski, USAAF

Korea

Cpl. Agustin Alvarez, USA
Sgt. Joseph A. Bowen, USA
Sgt. William E. Brashear, USA
Pvt. Richard E. Clapp, USA
Pfc. Jimmie J. Gaitan, USA
Master Sgt. Elwood Green, USA

Sgt. 1st Class Richard L. Harris, USA
Sgt. Willie D. Hill, USA
Pfc. Frank P. Jennings, USA
Cpl. Henry F. Johnson, USA
Cpl. James N. Larkin, USA
Pfc. Arthur W. Leiviska, USA
Cpl. Dick E. Osborne, USA
Pfc. George A. Porter, USA
Cpl. Chester J. Roper, USA
Sgt. 1st Class Charles A. Roy, USA
Cpl. William R. Sluss, USA
Pfc. Maximo A. Troche, USA
Sgt. 1st Class Edris A. Viers, USA
Pfc. Casimir F. Walczak, USA
Cpl. Robert I. Wax, USA

Vietnam

Capt. Charles R. Barnes, USAR
1st Lt. Robert E. Bennett III, USAF
Lt. Col. Charles M. Walling, USAF

All X-Files to be digitized this year

Following World War II, the American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) recovered numerous sets of remains of American service members, some of which AGRS was not able to identify. Files created for the unidentified remains were named by cemetery and a number designator beginning with "X" to signify "unknown." After 1952, there were approximately 8,475 of these files from WWII. The same process was followed for unknown remains after the Korean War, which resulted in 846 X-files.

DPMO has initiated a scanning project to digitize all the X-files to preserve the information, make the files more readily available, and to share the information within the accounting community. Each original paper document, many faded, brittle, and more than 50 years old, must be scanned by hand. Thus far, 87 out of 124 boxes of files have been scanned. The project is expected to be completed in 2012.

Remains recovery in Burma

On Feb. 23, DASD Robert Newberry traveled to Burma to meet with the Burmese Minister of Defense to discuss options for resuming investigations and remains recovery Operations. More than 700 Americans are missing in Burma from World War II.

The Burmese were supportive of the request and officials from DPMO and JPAC will next meet with Burmese officials at a technical level to discuss details of an investigation to examine probable loss sites in Burma. The last recovery operations carried out by the U.S. in Burma were in 2004 and resulted in the identification of seven service members.

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office
2600 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-2600



For your information

Family members seeking more information about missing loved ones may call their respective Service Casualty Office:

U.S. Air Force
(800) 531-5501

U.S. Marine Corps
(800) 847-1597

U.S. Army
(800) 892-2490

U.S. Navy
(800) 443-9298

U.S. Department of State
(202) 647-5470

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www.dtic.mil/dpmo.

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Photo courtesy of Benjamin Norman

A 2003 New York City law requires that all city parks display the POW/MIA flag in addition to the American flag.

*Where have you seen the POW/MIA flag? Email us your pictures of the POW/MIA flag for the chance to be featured in the next issue of **The Torch**.*
Email: outreach.DPMO@osd.mil