

President Honors Former POWs

Each year, on April 9, cities, towns and veterans organizations commemorate the service to America by former POWs. This year, as in past years, the President issued a proclamation recognizing the patriotism and sacrifices by this group of American heroes.

April 8, 2003

National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day, 2003

Americas former Prisoners of War are national heroes whose service to our country will never be forgotten. These brave men and women who fought for America and endured cruelties and deprivation as prisoners of war helped to protect our Nation, liberated millions of people from the threats of tyranny and terror, and advanced the cause of freedom worldwide.

This year, our Nation commemorates the 50th anniversary of the signing of the armistice to end armed conflict in the Korean War. We remember Operation Little Switch, conducted April through May 1953, that freed 149 American POWs, and Operation Big Switch, conducted August through September 1953, which returned 3,597 Americans to our country. Finally, Operation Glory, conducted July through November 1954, was responsible for the return of the remains of 2,944 Americans from North Korea. During this observance, we also recognize and honor the more than 8,100 Americans still unaccounted for from the Korean War.

This year also marks the 30th anniversary of Operation Homecoming, in which 591 American POWs from Vietnam were returned. We also recognize and honor those Americans still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War.

All of these individuals are to be honored for their strength of character and for the difficulties they and their families endured. From World War II, the Korean War, and Vietnam, to the 1991 Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and other conflicts, our service men and women have sacrificed much to secure freedom, defend the ideals of our Nation, and free the oppressed. By answering the call of duty and risking their lives to protect others, these proud patriots continue to inspire us today as we work with our allies to extend peace, liberty, and opportunity to people around the world.

As we honor our former POWs, we are reminded of our current POWs, captured in Operation Iraqi Freedom. We will work to secure their freedom, and we pray for their speedy and safe return. These brave men and women in uniform follow in the footsteps of these former POWs who placed country above self to advance peace in a troubled world.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 9, 2003, as National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day. I call upon all the people of the United States to join me in remembering former American prisoners of war by honoring the memory of their sacrifices and in praying for the safe return of our POWs. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

GEORGE W. BUSH

A Message from Jerry D. Jennings, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs



On behalf of the members of the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, I take this opportunity to pay our heartfelt homage to the brave American men and women who fought so gallantly to bring freedom to the people of Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those special men and women who made the supreme sacrifice while serving our Nation and with those whose loved ones remain missing.

The recent hostilities touched each of us, but I want to assure you that we are still committed to our ongoing, worldwide accounting effort. We are working at 100% plus to maintain our activities in pursuit of the missing from the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Korean War, and World War II.

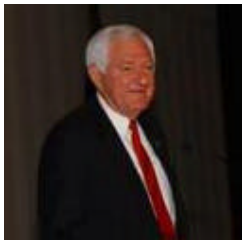
As Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz told us at our POW/MIA Accounting Conference in February, “The brave men and women who serve today—whether in Afghanistan—northern Iraq—or in other theaters of the war on terrorism—can do so with the full confidence that if they are captured, become missing, or fall in battle, this Nation will spare no effort to bring them home. That is our solemn pledge. However long it takes, whatever it takes, whatever the cost.”

There will be no pause in our mission. Seeking the fullest possible accounting for missing Americans is a sacred honor. **It is our duty.**

Former 'Hanoi Hilton' Resident Keynotes DoD POW/MIA Prayer Breakfast

By Rudi Williams
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6, 2003 -- Orson G. Swindle III, who spent six years and four months as a prisoner of war in North Vietnam, told the audience at DoD's 9th annual POW/MIA Prayer Breakfast about the horrors of prison camp and that the nation "must get it right" during such troubled times.



Orson G. Swindle III

This year's prayer breakfast was the largest ever. More than 230 people attended, including 13 former POWs and three Medal of Honor recipients.

"This morning we speak about the power of prayer in our lives," said

Swindle, a Federal Trade Commission commissioner and retired Marine Corps lieutenant colonel. He holds 20 decorations, including two Silver Stars and two Bronze Star Medals for valor in combat and two Purple Hearts.

He said he was sharing some of his personal experiences "reluctantly because it's difficult." Held in North Vietnam's "Hanoi Hilton," Swindle said prisoners in the north were treated harshly, but those held prisoner in South Vietnam suffered "even more gross deprivation, harshness and suffering."

"We don't consider ourselves heroes," he noted. "We're survivors and we survived through mutual support, wit, cunning, prayer and just a helluva lot of luck. Many didn't survive. I had a couple of cellmates who didn't make it home. It's to their memory that each of us, when asked to tell our stories, ask that we not forget.

"I was shot down on my very last mission -- that's pretty bad," Swindle said. "I was immediately captured, taken down into a hole and beaten all night. The next morning, on Nov. 12, it was raining. I was in a terrible state of shock. I was taken out to a hut for interrogation."

Swindle told the audience about the North Vietnamese cutting off the circulation in his arms by cinching them behind his back in a painful position. They pulled his arms so his forearms went up his spine and his elbows touched in back, he said.

"Then they started beating me," he said. "The pain creates almost an insanity. You strain to get loose, but you're not going to get loose. But the strains block out the pain and you're just hanging there. You come to the realization that you're not in control of your destiny."

"Being a POW was a life of not knowing how your family was," Swindle said. "I didn't get a letter for about four years," he said. "Some were fortunate enough to get a letter once in a while. Some never received letters. Some families never (realized) their husbands or sons were alive."

Swindle said the nation should pray for the men and women in harm's way, the American people and for political leaders.

U.S. Officials Seek Chinese Cooperation

Jerry D. Jennings, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW and Missing Personnel Affairs, led a team of specialists to China in late March 2003 to emphasize the U.S. Government's commitment to POW/MIA accounting.

He met in Beijing with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense Foreign Affairs Office and the Red Cross Society of China to discuss ways they could be of assistance to the U.S. effort.

"Chinese records may well hold the key to helping us resolve many of the cases of American POWs and MIAs from the Vietnam, Korean, and Cold wars," Jennings said.

"The Chinese have been very cooperative in our investigations of World War II and Vietnam losses, and have, on several occasions, notified us of their discovery of some crash sites. Both sides suggested ways to enhance cooperation on Korean War cases and acknowledged that we have limited time to achieve this goal. Toward this end, both sides agreed to increase the frequency of contacts," Jennings added.

Last year, China hosted teams of U.S. specialists to investigate two World War II aircraft crash sites and one Cold War site. Follow-on investigations will continue at these sites.

During the delegation's meetings with Chinese officials, the team explored options for gaining information from their archival materials at the national and provincial levels. These records may be helpful to analysts investigating American POWs and those lost during combat operations.

Jennings requested the assistance of Chinese civilian researchers who could conduct archival research on behalf of the U.S. Government. Additionally, the U.S. visitors sought information from the Dandong Museum relating to two American F-86 pilots who are missing in action from the Korean War.

U.S. officials also want to resume contact with Peoples' Liberation Army veterans from the Korean War to build upon information related to the Chinese operation of POW camps during the war.

Representative Sam Johnson Meets With Russia Commission Members

Early this year, Texas Congressman Sam Johnson, a member of the U.S. – Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs (USRJC), met with his counterparts in Moscow and encouraged them to make archival records available to American researchers. Accompanied by members of DPMO's Joint Commission Support Directorate, Johnson sought Russian assistance in speeding declassification of Korean and Vietnam War era military records and other documents that might help clarify the fates of missing American servicemen.

During his 6-day visit to Eastern Europe, Johnson made stops in Prague and Budapest to meet with officials of those governments to reaffirm the value of resuming previously initiated research in their records and interviewing veterans and others who may have knowledge of missing Americans. At each stop, he also met with senior officials from agencies believed most likely to have helpful information.

Johnson is one of the original members of the USRJC. He is co-chairman of the Commission's Korean War Working Group.

What it Takes to Find the Truth

-- *The painstaking search for Americans who disappeared in the Communist Whirlwind* --

By Major Tim Falkowski

Morris Hershman is just one of dozens American citizens who were detained in Stalin's forced labor camp system—the Gulag. Many of these American prisoners went willingly to the Soviet Union in the 1930's to help build communism; others simply worked in the U.S. Embassy or for Soviet enterprises. Still other Americans were kidnapped or arrested by Soviet agents in Eastern Europe—they were all whisked off the street and into a whirlwind of confinement and persecution. Of the numerous Americans in the Gulag, Morris met three in a remote camp in Vorkuta, Russia. Morris' life experience imparts a picture of Stalin's forced labor camps that books and scholars could never provide.



Major Falkowski with Mr. Hershman though a young man, he was considered a spy. Morris' extensive personal knowledge of the Soviet Gulag has answered key questions about the inner workings of the mysterious and often lethal Gulag.

AMERICANS HE MET IN THE CAMPS

Mr. Myron Auckland—American

Chemist who accepted a job in the Soviet Union in 1931 and was arrested in 1948-- sent to the Marfinskaya Sharashka; fate unknown.

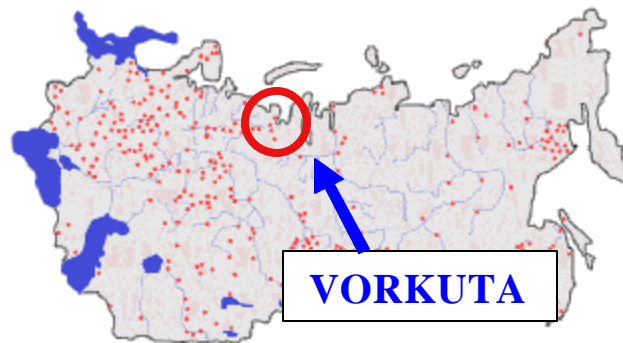
William T. Marchuk—U.S. Army soldier abducted from East Berlin-- Repatriated in 1955.

John Noble—Detained in the Gulag for nine years. He was repatriated in 1955 following the personal intervention of President Eisenhower. Noble has helped us since the founding of the Joint Commission by providing interviews. He published a book in 1958, and is the source of one entry in the Gulag Study.

Born in Brooklyn, Morris had no choice but to go with his father to Moscow in 1931 at age of six to build a better life in the so-called

“Workers’ Paradise.” After his father was killed on the frontlines fighting the Nazi war machine, Morris found himself in either prisons or labor camps across the Soviet Union. He was an American, after all, and

In a recent interview he provided us with critical pieces of the Gulag puzzle. Though we have no conclusive evidence, the sheer volume of eyewitness reporting of U.S. POWs in the Gulag compels us to investigate every source and turn over every stone. Were U.S. POWs purposefully transported to the Soviet Union after World War II, and during the Korean, Cold and Vietnam Wars? Eyewitness reports contained in DPMO's June 2002



Gulag study suggests that this did occur.

After almost 60 years in the Soviet Union, Morris returned to Brooklyn, New York, in the early part of the last decade where he has since reunited with his family. He is 76 years old.

Numerous eyewitness sightings of American servicemen in the Gulag similar to Mr. Hershman's deserve future investigation.

The Gulag Study Team continues to compile eyewitness sightings of Americans lost in the Gulag.

For more information, visit www.dtic.mil/dpmo/jcsd/gulag_study.htm

Worldwide Ceremonies Mark POW/MIA Day



(L to R) Jim Russell, Lieutenant Colonel James Hedgepath, and Barney Frampton, officials from the Air Force Casualty Office in Texas, mark National POW/MIA Recognition Day on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

Observances across the Nation and at U.S. facilities throughout the world marked National POW/MIA Recognition Day on September 20, 2002. Hosting ceremonies at the Pentagon in Washington, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld told a large gathering of former POWs, families of the missing, and current members of the uniformed services that those serving today in foreign lands, “do so knowing that should they fall in the field of battle, should they be captured or lost, we will do everything in our power to find them and bring them home.”

Citing President Bush’s commitment to the fullest possible accounting of our prisoners of war and missing in action, Secretary Rumsfeld quoted him as saying that, “our nation’s wars will not be over until this is achieved.”

In closing, Secretary Rumsfeld added, “We remember and we rededicate ourselves to an accounting as full as is humanly possible, for America can never move forward as long as even one missing son or daughter is left behind.”

Focusing on specific accounting issues in his remarks, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers, USAF, called upon Vietnam to do more to help account for U.S. missing throughout Indochina.

U.S. Representative Sam Johnson, a POW for seven years during the Vietnam War, was the keynote speaker at the Pentagon ceremony. His moving and inspirational remarks captured the full attention of the large crowd.

In Hanoi, National POW/MIA Recognition Day was observed in a ceremony at the JTF-FA detachment where former U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Mr. Pete Peterson, also a former POW, was the guest speaker. Members of Vietnam’s Office for Seeking Missing Persons also participated with the Americans in the commemorative event. The U.S. Ambassador to Thailand, the Honorable Darryl Johnson, spoke at remembrance ceremonies organized in Bangkok.

A day of events at Pearl Harbor’s *USS Arizona* Memorial commemorated POW/MIA Day in Hawaii where members of the JTF-FA and the CILHI participated.

To mark the occasion in Laos, the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane held a flag ceremony in which the POW/MIA flag was flown along with the American flag over the embassy compound. This observance day is one of six each year that Congress has mandated the POW/MIA flag to be flown at U.S. Government sites, to include the White House, the Capitol, military installations, national cemeteries, post offices, VA medical facilities, the Korean and Vietnam War Veterans Memorials, and the Departments of State and Defense. The POW/MIA flag is also flown on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day.



The NYSE invited the Air Force casualty affairs officials to see the POW/MIA flag fly over the trading floor. Hoping to merely photograph the flag, the Air Force visitors were surprised when they were invited to ring the closing bell.

Progress on WWII MIAs in Burma

A DoD delegation visited Rangoon, Burma, in March to review ongoing operations to recover the remains of American servicemen whose aircrafts crashed there while flying missions against the Japanese during World War II.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Jennings met with senior Burmese officials in Rangoon to review U.S. plans at several crash sites. He also visited CILHI excavation and recovery teams working at four sites in northern Burma. The teams are expected to finish their work by the end of April.

U.S. analysts have identified six potential recovery sites for aircraft that crashed in 1944 and 1945 in the northern part of Burma.

The effort in Burma is part of a worldwide mission to account for the over 78,000 members of the U.S. armed services whose remains were either not recovered or not identified from WWII. Approximately 24,000 Americans are missing from the war with Germany, and another 54,000 were lost fighting the Japanese.

Many of the missing were lost at sea and their remains are unrecoverable. Many other Americans were lost in remote areas or recovered remains were unidentifiable at the time of their recovery.

In January 2003, DPMO established a multi-organizational WWII working group to develop a comprehensive process for the accounting effort. The group identified accounting, research, investigative, and excavation priorities based on the best use of limited resources and availability of countries, regions, or remains. The group also determined the resources required to effectively research, investigate, and recover WWII missing.

CILHI is charged with the worldwide mission to recover and identify remains from all conflicts. They have conducted recovery missions in: Norway; The Netherlands; Brazil; Papua New Guinea; Sumatra; Borneo; Guam; Russia; China; Tibet; Indonesia; Samoa; Brazil; Kiribati (Makin Atoll); Panama; France; Belgium; Czech Republic; Slovak Republic; Philippines; Kwajalein Atoll; Tunisia; England; Germany; and Bulgaria.

Administration Committed to Accounting

(Continued from page 1)

tered such methods in dealing with the Vietnamese in the past," Wolfowitz said. "As we learned from that experience, with toughness and determination, with a strong sense of purpose, with integrity and resolve, we can ultimately make progress. But, we have also learned that progress requires patience. And, as hard as it can be, especially after so many years, we will be patient, when necessary," he added.

Citing his own lengthy personal history of involvement in the POW/MIA issue, Wolfowitz told the families, "Throughout the stresses and strains of these negotiations, we have found that to keep moving forward, our overall strength will reside in our resolve to do this right. We must not allow any government to debase the principles and values that your loved ones fought and sacrificed to defend. What I want to assure you today is this:

while our primary worry is dealing with the governments involved, you don't have to worry about the involvement, the determination, or the commitment of your government. We are committed. Committed to doing this right. Committed to accounting as fully as possible for your missing loved ones."

Administration Efforts in Southeast Asia

Speaking at the annual meeting of the National League of POW/MIA Families last year, Wolfowitz told them, "The unfinished business of the 20th century must be our business in the 21st." He also reiterated President Bush's personal commitment that, "achieving the fullest possible accounting of our prisoners of war and missing in action remains one of the most important priorities in our relations with Vietnam. The goal of this Administration is nothing less than to write the final chapter in this painful history."

Wolfowitz cited the President's report to Congress in which he called on Vietnam to provide POW/MIA related documents and records, particularly those that focused on archival data pertaining to Americans captured, missing, or killed in areas of Laos and Cambodia that were under wartime Vietnamese control.

The President's report further stated that "Vietnam should also focus greater attention on locating and providing information on discrepancy cases with priority on those last known alive in captivity or in immediate proximity to capture, and to locating and repatriating the remains of those who died while in Vietnamese control that have not yet been returned."

Wolfowitz lauded Deputy Assistant Secretary Jennings as the President's "point man" on the issue with an important global mission. "So this night I would encourage you in your task. Now is the time to double and redouble your efforts. You have friends in the right places, but we need

Family Travel Assistance to Government Briefings "COIN ASSIST"

In 1970, the Department of Defense, using military training flights, started a program to transport the next-of-kin of Americans listed as prisoners of war and missing in action to Washington, DC, to attend annual meetings of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. The term "COIN" in "*COIN ASSIST*" was derived from the flights being coincidental with other training flights, and the term "ASSIST" referred to the term travel assistance. Hence the name "*COIN ASSIST*." In recent years, the use of commercial air transportation has become more economical and is now used to transport family members to these annual briefings. For the first time, in 2002, *COIN ASSIST* was extended to the next-of-kin of Americans unaccounted-for from the Korean conflict, the Cold War, and the Persian Gulf War.

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office is responsible for structuring and implementing the plan, through the Casualty Offices. The plan authorizes round-trip commercial air transportation for up to **two family members** of each unaccounted-for person. The travel assistance is for air travel, at the government rate, from the airport nearest a person's home directly to and from Washington, DC. Vietnam War families attend their briefing in June. This year Korean and Cold War families will receive their briefing in July.

To apply for *COIN ASSIST* travel, family members should **contact their respective Casualty Office** to determine just who qualifies as an authorized family member. Each Casualty Office will designate a deadline for making travel arrangements and a



travel agency for family members to use when making their flight reservations. Families are required to use the travel agency designated by their Casualty Office. Here are some other things to consider:

- By law, family members traveling under the *COIN ASSIST* program **must attend the scheduled Government briefings**.
- *COIN ASSIST* covers the **costs for travel to and from Washington, DC only; *no*** other costs incurred by a family member are covered. Family members should arrange for

ground transportation and lodging at their own expense.

- To qualify for *COIN ASSIST*, a family member must reside within the continental United States, and live more than 350 miles from Washington, DC.
- Travel must occur during the dates of the travel window designated by the Casualty Office.
- Family members may arrange for additional airline tickets, **at their own expense**.
- *COIN ASSIST* tickets are **NON-EXCHANGEABLE**.
- The Casualty Office will provide

an Invitational Travel Order for each family member using *COIN ASSIST*. Travel Orders and a photo ID are needed when checking in at the airport.

The *COIN ASSIST* program makes it possible for family members to meet with U.S. Government representatives and receive information on the latest POW/MIA accounting efforts. Hopefully, family members will take full advantage of this tremendous opportunity.

Casualty Offices

Department of the Army (800) 892-2490
 Total Army Personnel Command (TAPC-PER)
 2161 Eisenhower Avenue
 Alexandria, VA 22331-0482

Headquarters, US Marine Corps (800) 847-1597
 Manpower and Reserve Affairs (MRC)
 Personal and Family Readiness Division
 3280 Russell Road
 Quantico, VA 22134-5103

Department of State (202) 647-6769
 Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management
 CA/OCS/ACS/EAP
 2201 C Street, Northwest, Room 4811
 Washington, DC 20520

Department of the Navy (800) 443-9298
 Navy Personnel Command
 POW/MIA Section (PERS-621P)
 5720 Integrity Drive
 Millington, TN 38055-6210
<http://www.persnet.navy.mil/pers62/POW-MIA/62P.htm>

USAF Missing Persons Branch (800) 531-5501
 HQ AFPC/DPWCM
 550 C Street West, Suite 15
 Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4716

Family Update Program

2003 Family Update Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Jan 18.....	San Francisco, CA
Feb 22.....	Birmingham, AL
Mar 22.....	Houston, TX
Apr 26.....	Detroit, MI
Jun 25-28.....	Washington, DC *
Jul 25-26.....	Washington, DC *
Aug 23.....	Seattle, WA
Sep 20.....	St. Louis, MO
Oct 18.....	Jacksonville, FL
Nov 22.....	Phoenix, AZ

*Annual Government Briefings

Since 1995, over 4,600 family members have participated in our Family Update Program. Each year the Family Support Team organizes ten Family Updates at different sites nationwide. The Updates offer families personal attention and direct access to a



team of specialists as well as contact with other POW/MIA families. Separate and concurrent briefing sessions for Southeast Asia and Korean/Cold War families are offered. Topics include policy information, recovery and identification of remains, and archival research. The highlight of the day for the families is the time they have to review their own cases with the experts. As always, the government officials appreciate the supportive comments from family members who consider the program extremely worthwhile.

The Columbus Ohio Family Update was the largest ever, with 214 family members participating

Defense POW/Missing
Personnel Office Web Site:
www.dtic.mil/dpmo



DPMO
2400 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-2400