



# The Torch

Keeping the Promise

Spring 2007

## North Korea returns remains of missing servicemen



**Above:** The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command performs an arrival ceremony at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, April 12, for servicemembers missing from the Korean War. An official U.S. delegation traveled to North Korea to accept the remains. **Inset:** A United Nations honor guard escorts a casket to a repatriation ceremony in South Korea before the remains were transferred to Hawaii.

A private bipartisan U.S. delegation traveled to North Korea April 8-11 to facilitate the return of the remains of missing servicemen.

Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico and former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi, along with a small staff providing support and technical expertise, oversaw the transfer of the remains from the North Korean Army to United Nations personnel. After a repatriation ceremony in Seoul, South Korea, to honor the fallen soldiers, the remains were flown to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) in Hawaii, where the forensic identification process has begun.

The U.S. conducted remains recovery operations in North Korea from 1996 until activities were temporarily suspended in May 2005. During that time, joint teams recovered more than 225 sets of remains believed to be those of American soldiers. Of those, 42 have been identified.

Specialists at JPAC have also disinterred nine Korean War "unknown" remains from the Punch Bowl Cemetery in Hawaii, of which three have been identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

## WWII veterans aid in search

### Japanese-U.S. discuss locating remains on Iwo Jima

Japanese visitors from the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare met with U.S. government officials in Washington, D.C., to discuss proposals to investigate Japanese sites where unaccounted-for American soldiers from WWII may be buried. The Japanese also requested information from the U.S. to aid in their efforts to search for and recover the remains of Japanese soldiers who were lost during the battle of Iwo Jima.

To help the delegation find more information about their missing soldiers, U.S. officials escorted them to the national archives and facilitated a meeting with U.S. Iwo Jima veterans.

During their weeklong stay in D.C., the Japanese delegation also visited the National Museum of the Marine Corps to learn more about the battle of Iwo Jima, and Arlington National Cemetery to learn about the U.S. system for administering national cemeteries.



Members from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare review battle documents with U.S. Iwo Jima veterans and U.S. government officials on March 13 in Washington, D.C.

In this edition:

Russian Generals support POW/MIA issue: 2

Supporting non-federal organizations: 2

History of the POW/MIA flag: 3

Schedule of events and contact information: 4

# Russian Generals visit D.C. in support of POW/MIA issue



**Russian Gen. Vladimir Shamanov (left) talks with Rich Sanders, President of ViêtNow, during a reception held with veterans and family members of U.S. servicemen still missing. General Shamanov said he was dedicated to working with the U.S. on the POW/MIA issue.**

Russian Gen. Vladimir Shamanov, co-chairman of the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, met with the commission's U.S. chairman, Gen. (USAF, Ret.) Robert Foglesong, and other U.S. government officials in Washington, D.C., to discuss the continuing efforts by both nations to determine the fates of missing servicemen.

In late March, Generals Shamanov and Foglesong discussed both nations' dedication to the POW/MIA mission and future plans in working together on the commission. They also met with veterans and family members of U.S. servicemen still missing. The co-chairmen hope to advance humanitarian goals of accounting for and recovering missing servicemen.

Visiting earlier in March, Russian Gen. Lt. (Ret.) Ruslan Sultanovich Aushev (pictured right in black suit) traveled to Washington, D.C., and thanked representatives of American veterans organizations for their support in donating DNA kits to assist in identifying remains of Russian MIAs.



Three veterans groups: Rolling Thunder, National Vietnam Veterans Foundation, and ViêtNow, purchased 500 DNA kits and donated them to General Aushev's Commonwealth of Independent States' Committee of Warrior Internationalists. This organization assists the U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs in gathering information which may help in accounting for Americans who are missing from all conflicts.

## *Working with groups to communicate the mission*

### Supporting non-federal organizations

Family groups, veterans service organizations (VSOs), and other non-federal entities (NFEs), frequently request DPMO support for events hosted by their organizations. For example, DPMO currently presents government briefings for the families of the missing from the Southeast Asia conflict at the annual National League of Families meeting in Washington, D.C. VSOs, such as The American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars, request that government officials appear at their national meetings. DPMO welcomes the opportunity to support local and national events like these, and to speak to the public about the U.S. government's worldwide efforts to recover its missing from past conflicts.

DPMO supports NFE events by providing speakers and, in a few cases, logistical support. There are federal laws and regulations, however, which contain limitations on supporting such events to ensure the government does not appear to give

preferential treatment or endorsement to any one particular organization. DPMO must be able to provide the same support to comparable events. Additionally, any support DPMO provides cannot interfere with the performance of official duties.

Unlike a separate event which is completely funded and run by DPMO, or a separate NFE event that is completely funded and run by the NFE, some events may be co-sponsored by DPMO and the NFE. In this "blended" event, DPMO develops substantive aspects of the program and can provide substantial support for the event. There are numerous steps in place, including a written agreement between DPMO and the NFE, to ensure DPMO doesn't appear to endorse the NFE.

DPMO understands the importance of supporting organizations that inform the public about the ongoing U.S. government efforts to account for missing servicemembers.

### Ambassador Ray speaks to Legionnaires



**Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs, Ambassador Charles A. Ray, speaks to The American Legion on March 5 about the future of the POW/MIA mission:**

*"We continue and we will continue to fight as hard as we can to preserve what we have for this mission, and to seek increases when needed."*





## History of the POW/MIA Flag

In 1971, Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife and member of the National League of Families, recognized the need for a symbol of our POWs and MIAs. She contacted the vice president of Annin & Company which made flags for all United Nations members' states. He was sympathetic to the POW/MIA issue, and he designed a flag to represent the nation's missing. Following The League's approval, the flags were manufactured for distribution.

In 1989, an official League flag, which flew over the White House during the 1988 National POW/MIA Recognition Day, was installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda as a result of legislation passed overwhelmingly during the 100th Congress. The leadership of both houses of Congress hosted the

installation ceremony.

In 1990, the 101st Congress passed U.S. Public Law 101-355, which recognized the POW/MIA flag and designated it *"the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia, thus ending the uncertainty for their families and the Nation."*

The POW/MIA flag's importance lies in its continued visibility, a constant reminder of the plight of America's POW/MIAs. Since 1982, other than *Old Glory*, the POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever to fly over the White House on National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

The POW/MIA flag will fly six days each year at the White House, U.S. Capitol, Departments of State, Defense and

Veterans Affairs, headquarters of the Selective Service System, major military installations as designated by the Secretary of Defense, all federal cemeteries and all offices of the U.S. Postal Service. The flag will fly year-round at the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial and the World War II Memorial. *Information courtesy of the National League of Families:*  
[www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org).

### The POW/MIA flag will fly on:

<i>Armed Forces Day</i>	<i>May 19, 2007</i>
<i>Memorial Day</i>	<i>May 28, 2007</i>
<i>Flag Day</i>	<i>June 14, 2007</i>
<i>Independence Day</i>	<i>July 4, 2007</i>
<i>POW/MIA Day*</i>	<i>Sept. 21, 2007</i>
<i>Veterans Day</i>	<i>Nov. 11, 2007</i>

\*Always the 3rd Friday in September

### Recent IDs:

Since January 2007, the Department of Defense has publicly released the following identifications:

#### WWII (All USAAF)

Tech. Sgt. Russell W. Abendschoen  
2nd Lt. George E. Archer  
1st Lt. Cecil W. Biggs  
2nd Lt. Raymond A. Cooley  
2nd Lt. Donald F. Grady  
Staff Sgt. George G. Herbst  
2nd Lt. Dudley R. Ives  
1st Lt. Archibald Kelly  
Staff Sgt. Joseph M. King  
Staff Sgt. Thomas G. Knight  
Staff Sgt. Norman L. Nell  
1st Lt. William L. Pearce  
Tech. Sgt. Richard R. Sargent  
Staff Sgt. Blair W. Smith  
2nd Lt. Thomas R. Yenner  
Tech. Sgt. Steve Zayac

#### Korean War (All USA)

Cpl. Clarence R. Becker  
Cpl. Rex E. Wagner

#### Vietnam War

Maj. Benjamin F. Danielson, USAF  
Col. Norman D. Eaton, USAF  
Lt. Michael T. Newell, USN  
Col. Donald E. Westbrook, USAF

## Army reaches families from past conflicts

Each branch in the military has a division which maintains contact with family members of those still missing from past wars. For the Army, this division is called the Past Conflict Repatriations Branch (PCRB), which is part of the Army Casualty Office. To support the personnel accounting mission, the PCRB seeks DNA samples from eligible family members in a program that started in 1992.

The process of finding eligible family members to donate DNA includes research done by accredited or certified genealogists contracted by the Army. These family members aren't always easy to locate. During two recent cases, Army genealogists located family members by researching the missing men's ancestors from the early and mid-1800s. Some cases require extensive searches, and others are more straightforward. As with each servicemember, every case is different.

Not all family members are eligible DNA donors, and some genealogical research determines that there are no eligible donors. There may also be cases where family members are identified, but they decline to give a DNA sample. These may be significant roadblocks to the forensic analysis and



**U.S. Army Cpl. Jimmie L. Dorser, recently accounted for from the Korean War, is laid to rest in Lake Forest, Calif. on Feb. 16.**

may impact the identifications of soldiers and Army airmen.

When eligible family members agree to provide DNA samples, oral swabs are mailed to them with instructions and a toll-free number to call if they have questions. Also included are pre-addressed, pre-paid shipping materials for the family members to use in forwarding their samples to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory, where they will be analyzed only for remains identification. This non-invasive process is much more convenient for family members than the earlier collection process. Before 2006, DNA was collected primarily through blood samples, requiring

many family members to visit health facilities. With the use of oral swabs, family members can donate their DNA quickly and easily in the privacy of their homes.

While one DNA sample may not always aid in identifying a specific serviceman's remains, building a comprehensive DNA database is critical because it may aid in other identifications of servicemembers through comparisons and exclusions. For more information on the Army's DNA collection process and the PCRB, call 1-800-892-2490. Non-Army families may contact their Casualty Offices. The contact information is on page four.

-President George W. Bush at The American Legion midwinter's conference

“My administration also shares your determination to keep faith with our prisoners of war and those missing in action. We cannot rest, and must not rest, until we have accounted for every member of our Armed Forces — from every war and every corner of the globe.”

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**DPMO**  
**Attn: Public Affairs**  
**2900 Defense Pentagon**  
**Washington, D.C.**  
**20301-2900**  
**(703) 699-1420**

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office  
2900 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-2900



## 2007 updates and briefings

Family members of service personnel still missing from past wars are invited to attend informational events held nearly every month in major metropolitan areas across the country. Additionally, two annual briefings are held in the Washington, D.C., area for Vietnam War, and Korean and Cold War family members. These events provide information to family members about their loved one's cases.

The dates and locations for the remaining 2007 family updates and annual briefings are:

- May 19**—Cheyenne, Wyo.
- June 21-23**—Vietnam War Annual Government Briefing
- July 21**—Cincinnati, Ohio
- Aug. 18**—Kansas City, Mo.
- Oct. 18-20**—Korean and Cold War Annual Government Briefing
- Nov. 17**—Phoenix, Ariz.

**For information on family updates and annual briefings, or if you have questions regarding a missing loved one, call your Casualty Office:**

U.S. Air Force  
1-800-531-5501

U.S. Army  
1-800-892-2490

U.S. Marine Corps  
1-800-847-1597

U.S. Navy  
1-800-443-9298

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

**CONTACT US**

## Did you know?

During an excavation in Vietnam in the mid-1990s, a reporter asked a soldier why he thought it was important to search for the remains of those who went missing so long ago. The soldier answered, “We’re just keeping the promise, sir.”

“Keeping the promise,” a motto widely recognized by the POW/MIA community, reflects the government’s ongoing efforts to search for missing Americans from past wars. This is also a vow to today’s servicemembers that if they should become isolated, captured or missing, the government will continue to search for them to bring them home with honor.

This issue of *The Torch* honors Gen. Robert C. Kingston (USA, Ret.), who passed away in Alexandria, Va. on Feb. 28. In 1973, General Kingston helped create and then commanded the Joint Casualty Resolution Center. The center, based in Vietnam and then Thailand, was established to look for prisoners of war and MIAs in Southeast Asia.

