



POW/MIA Update

by Marty O'Brien

BILL HONORS POWs

Rick and Brenda Tavares reported that as of January 24, 2006, a total of 29 veteran organizations, so far, are endorsers and/or supporters of H.R. 2369, "Honor our Fallen Prisoners of War Act." The list of organizations can be viewed at http://kwva.org/pow_mia/p_060125_fallen_pow_act.htm. Updates will be posted on that site as received. They also reported that a companion Bill, S. 2157, was introduced in the Senate on December 21, 2005, by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA)

DPMO DOINGS

On December 2, 2005, Jerry D. Jennings, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for POW/MIA affairs, resigned for health and other reasons. He had been away from work since April 2005. Various reports have it that the lack of an active DASD to represent the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Office on a daily basis at the Pentagon has taken its toll on the morale and efficiency of the DPMO staff.

The Pentagon's POW/MIA accounting effort takes US search teams to remote parts of China, Russia and many other places around the globe to excavate battlefields, burial grounds, and aircraft crash sites to recover remains of servicemen missing from World War II, Korean War, Cold War and Vietnam. More than 8,100 are still listed as missing, or recovered but not yet identified, from the 1950-1953 Korean War.

The most recent identification was made in the fall of 2004. US Marine PFC John Ward, of Utica, New York, was killed during the fighting withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir in 1950. His unidentified remains were repatriated some four years later and interred in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii. His family plans to re-inter his remains at Arlington National Cemetery.

MISSING, PRESUMED DEAD

Since the end of the Korean War, the families of our missing Korean War veterans have been frustrated by the US government's seeming lack of progress in getting information from Russian and Chinese archives with respect to our missing warriors taken, or believed to have been taken, to various locations in Russia and China during and after the 1950-1953 war, e.g., men like Corporal Roger A. Dumas, a member of Company C, 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division, who was captured by the Chinese near Anju on November 4, 1950, and imprisoned in Camp 5 at Pyoktong.

According to returned POW Ciro J. Santo, Corporal Dumas was last seen on August 24, 1950. Santo said that Dumas was to be repatriated with him the next day. "He was taken in the last moment, just before they brought him to the Freedom Village Bridge, at Panmunjom...There was no reason Dumas was kept."

For the past 50 plus years, Corporal Dumas' brother Robert, a Korean War veteran, has searched high and low for answers. But he hasn't given up!

Last November, Choices Inc., a specialty film and documentary distribution company based in Los Angeles, released "Missing,

Presumed Dead: The Search for American POWs," a film focusing on Bob Dumas' search. Although Dumas officially is listed as MIA, the film documents, through eyewitness accounts, why many people believe that Dumas and other POW may still be alive. The film has since been shown/distributed to members of Congress. The price of the video to the public is \$49.95. Tel: (323)-936-0885 or by visiting <www.choicesvideo.net>

On February 17, 2005, Representative Peter King of New York introduced H.R. 123, a bill to "Establish a Select Committee on POW and MIA Affairs," to investigate all unresolved matters relating to US personnel unaccounted for since World War II.

In late December, the Pentagon announced that China has agreed to consider a US request to search China's military archives and also to organize local support to assist US investigators. Will China keep its word? Time will tell!

RECOVERY OPERATIONS IN NORTH KOREA STILL IN LIMBO

The shutdown of the recovery operation in North Korea by the administration last year continues with no end in sight. Resumption of operations presumably is tied to the progress of the "Six Party Talks" among the two Koreas, Russia, United States, China and Japan. Meanwhile the families wait!

Another concern is that future funding of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Hawaii, may be slashed by US Pacific Command. One organization that has been a leader in urging the White House and the Pentagon to fulfill our government's promise to our missing to "bring them home!" is the Korea-Cold War Families of the Missing, Inc., P.O. Box 454, Farmingdale, NY 11735. Irene Mandra is the National Chair. E-mail: <info@korea-coldwar.org> Web site: <<http://www.koreacoldwar.org>>

Irene's brother, Sgt. Philip V. Mandra, was a member of Company D, 5th Marines. He received a Purple Heart with cluster and the Silver Star for his action on Bronco Hill (later called Vegas). He disappeared on August 7, 1952, along with four others who went looking for him. He may have been taken to Russia.

SO NEAR, YET SO FAR

Hwan Chyun Kim was a KATUSA soldier (Korean Augmentation to the United States Army) who fought with Company K, 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, until he was reported missing in January 1951. In 2003, his family received a letter purportedly written by him in which he explained that he was wounded prior to his capture by the Chinese, and that he currently is being held as a POW near Pyongyang, North Korea.

We recently received a request for help from a family member and ran it by DPMO. We have been advised by their General Counsel that the DPMO only has authority to pursue American losses from the Korean War, as all Korean combatants were at that time under the official jurisdiction of the South Korean government.

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