



POW/MIA Update

by Marty O'Brien

IN ENEMY HANDS - TWICE

Of the universe of POW in Korea, a surprising number of them, both military and civilian, had endured imprisonment previously by our enemies during World War II.

As we recently learned, Korean War POW and Medal of Honor recipient Tibor Rubin of Garden Grove, California, had endured hardships as a civilian in an Austrian concentration camp during World War II. I asked Shorty Estabrook, a Tiger Survivor, if he knew of others who were in the Yalu prison camps with him, who also had been held POW during World War II. Shorty provided me with information about several very remarkable people - all now gone to glory.

Master Sergeant Jay Rye

Master Sergeant Rye enlisted in the Army in 1938. He was assigned to the 31st Infantry in the Philippines in 1941. Rye was captured during the fall of Bataan, endured the Bataan Death March, and was a prisoner of the Japanese for 42 months. In Korea, he was a member of Company K, 34th Infantry Regiment. He was captured on July 7, 1950, just two days after US troops were committed to battle.

A Tiger Survivor also, he was imprisoned by the Communists for 37 months. In January of this year, Master Sergeant Rye passed on. He was 85. Memorial services were held at Porterville, California.

Master Sergeant Frederick Stumpges

MSGT Stumpges, Sheboygan, Wisconsin, enlisted in the Marine Corps as a bugler prior to World War II. He was a member of the 4th Marines Band in China. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the band members were integrated into the 3d Platoon, 2d Battalion, Company E, 4th Marines in the Philippines. MSGT Stumpges was wounded in action and was a Bataan Death March Survivor and a POW of the Japanese for many months.

In Korea, he was WIA and held as a POW until his release in 1953.

Sergeant Martin Watson

The Ranger Hall of Fame at Fort Bragg, NC, is named after SGT Martin Watson, Brooklyn, NY. He fought with the 1st Ranger Battalion in World War II and survived 15 months as a POW. In Korea, he was a member of the 4th Ranger Infantry Company (Airborne). He and several others were captured while on a long-range mission some 65 miles behind enemy lines.

SGT Watson attempted to escape on three separate occasions. Already a holder of the Silver Star for valor, SGT Watson was awarded the Bronze Star for his heroic behavior while a POW. Interestingly, he was the last US POW to be repatriated.

DOD STATISTICS NEED FINE TUNING

Tom Chilcott, of Brighton, Michigan, wrote to say that he believes that the DOD statistics that were posted in an earlier

issue of *The Graybeards* still need fine tuning. I agree. Although a careful piece of work, the published DOD database contains only deaths incurred in the Korean Theater during the 1950-1953 war period.

I also agree with Tom's observation that the Korean Theater boundaries may have been too narrowly defined by Executive Order 10195, dated December 20, 1950 [15 FR 9177], and as a result men who died outside of those boundaries, who had actually fought in theater, were not included in the DOD database (see map).

Not included, for example, were 129 men killed in the June 18, 1953 C-124 Globemaster crash in Japan. The plane was ferrying troops back to combat in Korea from R & R in Japan. Instead of being counted as Korean War casualties, the out-of-boundary deaths were lumped in statistically with a total of some 17,000+ plus non-hostile deaths incurred worldwide - names yet to be published by DOD.

Also not included in the 1950-1953 totals, were an unknown number of post-Armistice hostile and non-hostile deaths on the peninsula incurred through midnight January 1, 1955. That was the date defined by Presidential Executive Order 10585, dated January 1, 1955 [20 FR 17], as the end of combatant activities in the Korean Theater and waters adjacent thereto.

KOREAN WAR MIA "FAMILY OUTREACH PROJECT"

In July 2004, I wrote about a small group of veterans—Ed Moynagh, Art Lajeunesse, Sylvia Bailey-Munoz, Lance Ayers and Ray Sestak—who are engaged in the important work of locating families of Korean War MIA that have no current next of kin or family contact information in their official DPMO records, and putting them in touch with the appropriate DPMO officials. (See <http://KoreanWarMIAs.com>)

Art reported that since then they have contacted approximately 541 families. Not all contacts were directly attributable to the group's efforts; however, between 25 and 30 percent had been "works in progress," with the balance of the contacts made directly by the families.

ROK POW STATISTICS

According to Dr. Thomas Y. Chung, chairman of the Korean POW Rescue Committee, some 500 Republic of Korea POW are still alive in North Korea out of a total of 69,047 captured. The committee is located at 5525 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036

Dr. Chung fought in the war with the allied forces, mostly with the U.S. Army in the Kumhwa area, where he was wounded. He was hospitalized for 13 months. He can be contacted at (323) 931-7311 or by email at thomasychung@hotmail.com

Martin J. O'Brien, 27 Meadow Road #202, Augusta, Maine 04330, (207) 623-1103, CavKVet50@aol.com. Please visit www.kwva.org/pow_mia/index.htm