



**DPAA Families/VSO/MSO Quarterly Call and Update Notes**  
**Thursday, January 31, 2019, 2:00 PM**  
**'Fulfilling Our Nation's Promise'**



**Summary:** Keeping the families of our missing as well as veterans informed is a primary objective of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's (DPAA) mission. This update is intended to provide an overview of efforts during the previous quarter to account for our missing.

**Families-Veteran Service Organization Participants:**

- National League of POW/MIA Families
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- American Legion
- Special Operations Assn/Special Forces Assn
- Coalition of Families
- Korea-Cold War Families of the Missing
- Korean War Veterans Association
- Vietnam Veterans of America
- Honor Release Return, Inc.
- Korean War POW/MIA Network

The agenda included:

- Director's Update (Mr. Kelly McKeague)
- Outreach and Communications Update (Director, Mr. Todd Livick)
- Policy and Plans Update (Director, Mr. John Hamilton)
- Operational Update (Deputy Director Indo-Pac, Mr. Stewart Holbrook/Deputy Director Euro-Med, Ms. Heather Harris)
- Partnerships and Innovations Update (Director, Dr. Tom Holland)
- Scientific Analysis Update (Lab Director, Dr. John Byrd)
- AFMES-AFDIL Update (Director DoD DNA Operations, Dr. Tim McMahon)
- Questions & Answers

**Director's Update (Director Kelly McKeague)**

**Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)**

Three of our personnel met with DPRK Army officials on December 14 for planning-level discussions, and we continue to communicate with DPRK through the United Nations Command. However, we have yet to reach an agreement on a venue and dates for negotiations to resume field operations this fiscal year. As it stands, the projected timeline will not allow the first joint field activity that had been planned for March. As denuclearization continues to be the focus of Administration efforts, the State Department continues to allow the Korean War remains issue to be on a separate track. As the Second Summit takes shape, we remain optimistic the DPRK Army will

agree to meet with us in the near term. In support of the summit, DPAA is providing the Administration with talking points about remains repatriation and recovery.

### **Budget**

Along with the rest of DoD, we were not affected by the government shutdown. As such, we were able to push out all second quarter field operations as planned. The submission of the fiscal year (FY) 2020 President's Budget to Congress was delayed to the early March, so we're not able to report on our budget request for FY 2020.

### **Director's Engagements in United Kingdom, Croatia, Hungary and Austria**

Leading up to my mid-November Europe engagements, I was able to meet with the Austrian, Croatian, and Hungarian Ambassadors to the United States. They and their staffs were helpful in advising us on our in-country meetings. During the trip, I had the honor of speaking at Cambridge American Cemetery's Veterans Day Commemoration. Our meetings with senior government officials from Croatia, Hungary, and Austria were productive as we were able to advance cooperation and collaboration with each for our WWII accounting efforts. In Croatia, we signed a memorandum of understanding with their government, which has been generous in its support, and this cooperation generated much interest among Croatian media. We also were able to advocate for emerging partnerships in Austria and Hungary.

### **Other Veterans Day Engagement**

Mrs. Fern Sumpter Winbush attended a NASDAQ-sponsored, veterans-focused event on Veterans Day. She participated in a panel with business and non-profit executives to discuss veterans initiatives. She provided an introduction to DPAA's mission, which enlightened most and reminded others of the sacrifices made by veterans from past conflicts as well as introduced this sector of the business community to the possibility for future collaboration with DPAA.

### **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sustained Field Operations in Vietnam**

During the second week of December, RDML Jon Kreitz led a contingent of DPAA personnel to Vietnam to commemorate the 30th anniversary of sustained field operations. The visit began with a repatriation ceremony in Da Nang, led by U.S. Ambassador Dan Krittenbrink. At the DPAA-hosted dinner in Hanoi, past and present members of both sides were recognized as well as the furthering of our Vietnam War accounting mission and the strengthening U.S.-Vietnam bilateral relationship.

### **DPAA Academy**

In early December, we launched the DPAA Academy, which will serve as the focal point for training organic staff and augmentees, and for orienting partners to DPAA's requirements and processes. This new initiative will play a key role in expanding our capabilities and capacity, enabling increased pace and scope of field operations, especially through partner operations.

### **Director's Engagements in Poland and France**

Through my recent engagements in Poland and France, we continued to advance accounting efforts in Europe. In Poland, I met with the director of the Polish DPAA-like organization. This organization is both competent and passionate about finding and identifying Polish missing, and we will establish a formal partnership with them. Their willingness to collaborate will facilitate execution of the nine cases that are ready to excavate. In France, I met with the French Deputy Chief of Naval Operations to thank the French Navy for its key support of last year's underwater mission

and to shape future cooperation, to which he was amenable. I then addressed the senior leaders and cemetery superintendents of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) at their biennial symposium. ABMC is a key partner with DPAA in our disinterment line of effort.

### **Deputy Director of Operations Engagements**

RDML Kreitz is currently on travel with government engagements in Indonesia, Myanmar, India, and Malaysia. He also has a stop in Cambodia to visit the DPAA teams who are deployed there after that government's lifting of the more than one-year suspension.

### **Outreach and Communications**

#### **Pearl Harbor Day**

In early December, DPAA hosted several visits to our Hawaii facility during Pearl Harbor week. Visitors included the national leadership teams of both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion. On December 7, 2018, RDML Kreitz had the honor of serving as the keynote speaker at the 11th Commemorative Ceremony for the USS Oklahoma Memorial on Ford Island. As of the date of the ceremony, DPAA's "Oklahoma Project" had identified 189 of the 394 unaccounted-for Sailors and Marines who died onboard the ship on December 7, 1941.

#### **Family Member Updates (FMU)**

DPAA hosted an FMU in Greensboro, NC, on November 17, 2018, with 193 family members attending. Local representatives from congressional offices and Veterans Service Organizations attended as observers. The FMU in Birmingham, AL, was on January 26, 2019, with 225 family members attending. Local representatives from congressional offices attended as observers.

The next two FMUs will be San Jose, CA, on February 23, 2019, and San Antonio, TX, on March 23, 2019. The entire FMU and Annual Meetings schedule can be found at:

<http://www.dpaa.mil/Families/Family-Events/>

Mr. Todd Livick asked Mr. John Zimmerlee (who attended the Birmingham FMU) for his thoughts on the FMU. Mr. Zimmerlee responded that it was well attended, although he was still seeking answers to some questions.

#### **Chosin Few Board Meeting**

On January 22, 2019, Korean War analyst, Mr. Bill Woodier, updated the board of the Chosin Few on current DPAA accounting efforts for the Korea War.

#### **Media Engagements:**

November 7, 2018 – Premiere of "Last B-24" documentary on a national broadcast of PBS's NOVA program. Show garnered wide viewing audiences and good reviews. Many new viewers are still hearing about it and watching the program on-line.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/last-b-24-pequsf/>

Ceremony marking 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Battle of Tarawa and a repatriation ceremony of remains from Betio on November 23, 2018.

<http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2018/11/20/special-ceremony-commemorates-th-anniversary-battle-tarawa/>

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/300848/marine-corps-repatriation-ceremony-held-during-75th-battle-tarawa-anniversary>

Tuskegee Airman Capt. Lawrence E. Dickson accounted-for.

DPAA News Release issued on November 29, 2018, announcing that Capt. Dickson, the first of 27 missing Tuskegee Airmen, was officially accounted for. The release prompted several high-profile media stories on the case, including a feature story on the CBS Evening News broadcast of January 16, 2019, that included an interview with his daughter, Marla Andrews.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/daughter-of-tuskegee-airman-gets-answers-about-his-death-70-years-later/>

NPR reporter Mr. Jay Price produced a 7-minute radio story about the Korean War Disinterment Plan that aired nationally on December 13, 2018. In addition to the radio story, Mr. Price also posted a print story on the NPR webpage that features several excellent photos, including many provided by DPAA. Both stories capture interviews with key DPAA officials and family members.

<https://www.npr.org/2018/12/13/675672396/major-project-to-identify-long-nameless-korean-war-dead-begins>

Cover story on January 2019 issue of Leatherneck magazine.

Story consists of an 8-page spread with a lengthy story and several good photos that use the case of Army PFC. Herman Mulligan to illustrate DPAA's mission.

## **Policy and Plans**

Korean War Disinterment Update – Mr. John Hamilton briefed that the Korean War Disinterment Project was proceeding as planned. As of 31 January 2019, DPAA has disinterred 45 of the 73 graves in Phase I of the project. Phase I is expected to be completed in mid-Spring 2019. Phase II, which involves the disinterment of 117 graves, is expected to begin in late Spring/early Summer.

<https://dpaa.secure.force.com/dpaaFamWebKoreanWarDisinternments>

## **FY 2019 Field Operations Overview**

### **Europe-Mediterranean Region:**

- Operations in 1Qtr: **(Oct-Dec)**
  - A DPAA team conducted one investigation of potential underwater sites in Italy.
  - Partner teams initiated or completed three activities originally planned for FY18:
    - Surveyed an aircraft crash site (a single seat fighter with a missing pilot) in Sicily that the team will recover next summer (Partner: Cranfield University)
    - Investigated (mapping/survey/remote sensing) underwater sites off Grosseto, Italy (Partner: Project Recover)

- Investigated the underwater crash site of a B-17 with three missing crew members in a lake in Germany
- **Operations: (Jan-Feb)**
  - Due to winter weather, Europe Mediterranean does not have field activities planned for January and February. Instead, we are using this period to conduct engagements to set conditions for upcoming operations in Austria, Croatia, England, Hungary, and Poland. Planning to conduct an underwater operation with the University of Delaware in Kuwait for a Desert Storm loss.
- **Disinterment Operations:**
  - Exhumed 1 Unknown in 1Qtr (November) from the Florence American Cemetery in Italy.
  - We'll resume full scale disinterment efforts in April, and are planning to conduct 75 disinterments during the current FY.
- **Aircraft Wreckage Identification Seminar**
  - Mr. Hans-Guenther Ploes and Mr. Frank Millert, two German nationals who have assisted DPAA in the search for aircraft crash sites for more than a decade, conducted a WWII aircraft wreckage identification seminar for the Europe-Mediterranean Regional Directorate January 29-30, 2019, in Arlington. The course focused on locating and identifying data plates and aircraft parts for a number of WWII-era fighter and bomber aircraft, and included specific instruction on aircraft types for which EM will be searching during 2019.
- **U.S. – Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) Update**
  - Highlights of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Plenum of the USRJC, which was conducted November 27, 2019, in Washington, D.C. include:
    - Increased participation by families and VSOs, including observers from the National League of Families, Coalition of Families of Korean/Cold War POW/MIAs, VFW, and American Legion.
    - Agreed to execute a joint exhumation of a cemetery burial in Vladivostok, Russia, later in 2019 (possibly associated with November 6, 1951, Cold War incident). This is a follow-on activity to an investigation conducted in 2018.
    - Pledged to uphold the humanitarian nature of the Commission's work and strengthen cooperation regardless of the current difficulties in U.S.-Russia bilateral relations.
  - U.S. Side Chairman (Ret) Gen. Foglesong continues to work to have U.S. Side vacancies filled, with the recent appointment of Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D – CA) to the Commission. The appointments of new Republican Commissioners from the Senate and House are expected within the next several weeks.
  - We're making steady progress on posting minutes from all previous USRJC Plenums and technical talks which are not currently posted on the DPAA public

- website.
- Next round of technical talks for WWII and Cold War Working Groups scheduled to take place late April in DC.
- DPAA-contracted researchers continue their work in Russian archives on a monthly basis.

### **Indo-Pacific (IP) Region:**

- Operations in 1Qtr: **(Oct-Dec)**
  - Conducted one organic mission to Papua New Guinea – underwater investigation of multiple sites and underwater recovery of two sites.
  - Conducted Recovery and Investigation Missions: Laos and Vietnam
- Operations: **(Jan-Feb)**
  - Planned organic efforts include continued underwater recovery in Papua New Guinea, and a field recovery and investigation in Burma.
  - Planned three Missions: Laos (26 Jan-28 Feb), plus seven site investigations; Vietnam (16 Feb-02 Apr), plus 20 site investigations; Cambodia (20 Jan-28 Feb), plus six site investigations.
- Disinterment Operations:
  - National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific ‘Punchbowl’ (Hawaii): Korean War Disinterment Plan: Exhumed 29 Unknowns in 1Qtr (From MM/YY to MM/YY); 36 additional exhumations planned for Jan-Feb.
  - Manila American Cemetery & Monument (Philippines): Excavated 25 Unknowns in 1Qtr and 26 more this past week.

### **Partnerships & Innovation (PI) Update**

Partnerships and Innovations helped coordinate five field missions that partners completed in Q1FY19. These missions included terrestrial and underwater sites in Germany, Kuwait, and Italy. The PI team also continued to plan and coordinate missions for the remainder of an ambitious year’s worth of activity, which at this time includes an additional 35 missions.

Other than partner field missions, PI has continued to refine and improve internal processes. For instance, in the first quarter, working with other staff sections, PI hosted six partner personnel (representing five partner institutions) at our first session of the DPAA Academy. Finally, PI has spent the last quarter further expanding the bench of partners by negotiating partnership arrangements and engaging in partnership development activities. The list of partners conducting collaborative projects for this FY represents a mixture of repeat performers, such as East Carolina University and the University of Illinois at Chicago, as well as new relationships like Kiel University.

DPAA worked with the Defense Forensic Enterprise to obtain a \$3 million, multi-year research grant to develop improved methods of conducting underwater remote sensing. The grant was awarded to the University of Delaware and Scripps Institution of Oceanography. These partners

just completed field trials in Palau of sites of interest to DPAA. Among the technology tested was hand-held sonar sensors that offer resolution of targets within 3-4 inches. The results will be shared with all of DoD, but DPAA particularly benefits from having its sites used as the test cases.

Also tested were a fleet of Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUV) equipped with a variety of sensor packages. The vehicles are capable of running a preprogrammed 16 square kilometer survey pattern for 24 hours and returning with 25% battery life remaining. This is remarkable for UUVs of this size. These UUVs are capable of acquiring data with dual frequency sonar arrays; multi-beam sonar, sub-bottom (seismic) sonar, and Magnetometers; as well as capturing video and still photographic images that exceed industry standards.

The team also is experimenting with "swarm intelligence," chemical detection, Alternate Light Source (ASL) mapping, anomaly databases, and NiCad and Alkaline batteries for the UUVs in order to eliminate hazardous material shipping requirements.

All in all, the test was very positive and promises tremendous benefits.

### **Scientific Analysis Update**

In December, we completed renovations of Building 220, the old JPAC facility that some of you visited. We moved remains back into the 12,000 square foot space this week to begin lab operations there. This is about a 30% increase in analytical space for us and will significantly add to our capability and capacity to make identifications. Work on Cabanatuan, USS West Virginia, and USS California will begin this week in the new space.

Statistics (As of January 31, 2019):

FY 2019 Identifications:

Total = 34 (Identifications of unaccounted-for personnel)

WWII = 25

Korean War = 7

Cold War = 0

Vietnam War = 2

### **AFMES-AFDIL Update**

Based on DPAA requirements, submitted a request to the Defense Health Agency leadership to increase capability and capacity to support increased DPAA identification efforts. AFMES has submitted an Unfunded Request (outside current spend plan allotment) for \$5.3 million to initiate hiring of new personnel while entering into DHA's new FY 21-25 funding cycle. DHA leadership is supportive of increasing capability. However, within existing budget, we have initiated hiring of 12 new scientists.

Next Generation Sequencing of chemically treated samples: To increase capability and capacity, AFMES has optimized the current method to double the number of samples per run to 12; this has allowed us to report out 50 samples per month, up from 18. To increase capability further, AFMES has purchased three (3) new NextSeq sequencers, which have been delivered and installed.

Currently, having to optimize the instrument for our needs and preliminary results indicate we will be able to run 20 to 45 samples per run.

## **FY 19: as of 31 December**

272 cases reported

830 Analyses reported

143 Total Believe to be (BTB) reports issues; 43 of those are first time BTB reports (support new identifications)

## **Success Rates**

Non-chemically treated Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) 91%

Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) 53%

Autosomal Short Tandem Repeat (auSTR) 58%

Y Chromosomal Short Tandem Repeat (Y-STR) 65%

## **Questions and Answers**

1. Mr. Harder of KWVA asked about status of talks with the Korean People's Army (KPA) regarding resuming operations in North Korea.

Director McKeague replied that DPAA last met with KPA representatives on December 14, 2018. At that time, there was no commitment to a date and venue for follow-on talks to discuss resumption of field operations. DPAA has sent letters to the KPA through the United Nations Command in Korea and the North Korean mission to the United Nations in New York asking for a commitment to a date and venue for follow-on talks to discuss resumption of operations. The KPA has not responded. DPAA is providing the administration with talking points about remains recovery in support of the recently announced summit between President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un.

2. Mr. Ishimoto from the SOA/SFA asks about backfilling vacancies at DPAA's Life Sciences Equipment Laboratory (LSEL) at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton OH.

Dr. Byrd responded that filling the vacancies are on hold while DPAA determines next steps to move those billets to Omaha. Intent is to expand these positions to become a full spectrum service provider for all three major conflicts which DPAA covers

Mr. Ishimoto asked for confirmation/clarification on what had been 35 Vietnam War analyst vacancies.

Mr. Holbrook: IP has 26 civilian and military analyst billets (this includes 3 Casualty Resolution Specialists (CRS) in the Detachments) supporting Vietnam War recoveries. Of these 26, only one is currently vacant. Also, IP has one recently retired CRS working under contract doing Vietnam War research. The Joint Commission Support Directorate has two individuals supporting Vietnam War accounting.

3. John Towles, from the VFW, expressed his gratitude at being included in the phone call and Mr. Livick took the opportunity to thank him for the VFW funding the refreshments for families during the recent Birmingham FMU.
4. Ms. Knox, of the Coalition of Families of Korea/Cold War POW/MIAs, asked if the talking



points that DPAA was providing to the administration in support of the upcoming U.S.-DPRK summit would mention that once U.S.-DPRK joint operations occur, that U.S. investigators be allowed to interview DPRK citizens for information on air craft crash sites.

Director McKeague responded that this request was too detailed for a Presidential-level engagement; however, it would be included when DPAA meets with the KPA to discuss resumption of field activities.

5. Ms. Basham, Korea-Cold War Families of the Missing, asked if the President will bring up the issue of our missing during his upcoming summit with Chairman Kim Jong Un.

Director McKeague stated we will include this in the talking points that we are providing the Administration about the Korean War remains issue to be raised during the recently announced summit.

6. Mr. Zimmerlee, Korean War POW/MIA Network, asked if we resume joint operations in the DPRK, would DPAA ask the KPA if we can excavate the UN cemeteries in North Korea that date from the Korean War.

Director McKeague stated that we would request access to these cemeteries. We have brought up cemeteries with DPRK in the past and they have chosen not to allow us access.

Additional Information Compiled: During Operation Glory in 1954, the Chinese and North Koreans largely evacuated the cemeteries and returned the remains to us. The exceptions being Koto-Ri #2, Hamhung #2, and potentially a small row of the Pyongyang Cemetery, though the Pyongyang Cemetery information is unconfirmed since their side mismatched the containers of remains and transfer documents, thus giving us bad data on the Pyongyang evacuations and evacuations from other sites.

To account for UN Cemetery losses, in 2018 we began exhuming remains from the NMCP whose X-files were traceable back to unresolved Pyongyang (13 exhumations) and Yudam-ni (14 exhumations) Cemetery burials. Analysis is underway on these remains. To date, four of the burials corresponding to the Pyongyang Cemetery have been identified.

For a specific example of DPAA's requests to the DPRK to investigate cemeteries, in the March 2001 Technical Talks in Pyongyang, DPAA proposed surveying the Koto-Ri # 2 Cemetery. DPRK did not commit to it, but also did not authorize us access during any of the Chosin-area missions from 2001-2005.