



DPAA Family/VSO/MSO Quarterly Call and Update Notes
Wednesday, Nov. 6, 2019, 1:00 P.M.
‘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-Military Service Organization Participants:

- Disabled American Veterans
- Honor Release Return, Inc.
- Korea-Cold War Families of the Missing
- Korean War POW/MIA Network
- National League of POW/MIA Families
- Special Operations Association
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Vietnam Veterans of America

The agenda includes:

- Director’s Update (Mr. Kelly McKeague)
- Deputy Director of Operations Update (RDML Darius Banaji)
- Operational Update (Euro-Med COL Frank Tank/Indo-Pac Col Brian Peterson)
- Partnerships and Innovations (PI) Update (Dr. Tom Holland)
- Scientific Analysis Update (Dr. Debra Zinni)
- AFMES-AFDIL Update (presented by Dr. Zinni)
- Outreach and Communications Update (Mr. Todd Livick)
- Question & Answer

In addition to those listed above, Mr. John Hamilton and Ms. Jennifer Nasarenko from Policy & Plans also participated in the call.

Director’s Update

Congressional Hearing

On November 19, I am scheduled to testify before the House Oversight and Reform Committee’s National Security Subcommittee. Led by Chairman Lynch (D-MA) and Ranking Member Hice (R-GA), the committee has shown an increasing interest in the POW/MIA mission after a mission overview briefing to the staff in August and the Chairman’s visit with our Hawaii team in September.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Budget

Like the rest of the Federal Government, DPAA is operating under a Continuing Resolution (CR) pending enactment of the FY2020 Appropriation Bills. The current CR runs through November 21, with minimal impact to operations because our operational planning assumed a CR extending through at least the first quarter of the FY. Should there be a lapse in appropriations and a partial government shutdown, there will be impacts to our field operations that could include bringing teams home earlier than planned.

Visit to the Philippines and the Republic of Korea

While in the Philippines, I met with officials from their Departments of National Defense and Veterans Affairs as well as the National Museum. All pledged to assist our emerging World War II accounting efforts there. My U.S. engagements included meetings at our Embassy and speaking at the dedication of the Visitors' Center at the American Cemetery in Manila. In South Korea, I had productive meetings with our counterpart agency (MAKRI), with the Ministries of National Defense and Patriots and Veterans Affairs, and with the Korean Veterans Association. MAKRI's work in the DMZ has been successful, despite no participation from the North Koreans; they have recovered 195 remains, mostly South Korean and Chinese, with one believed to be French soldier (there's only one unaccounted-for American in this area). U.S. meetings included our Ambassador and United Nations Command leaders, all of whom value and support DPAA's work there. I also was able to brief the Ambassadors from the UN Sending States about our mission and work on the Korean peninsula.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

There's been no progress on remains recovery with the DPRK. Like the other stipulations from the Singapore Summit, it was discussed during the recent denuclearization working level meeting in Stockholm. No agreements were reached and it's unknown whether follow-on meetings will occur in the coming months. DPRK's army never did respond to the letter I sent on July 4 seeking to pass them our proposal for FY20 field operations. As always, we are open and ready to meet with them when they decide to do so.

VSO National Conventions

I was privileged to speak at the VFW's National Convention in July in Orlando and at the American Legion's National Convention in Indianapolis in August. In August, our Principal Deputy Director addressed the Disabled American Veterans at their National Convention in Orlando. We appreciate the strong support afforded us by these organizations' national, state, and local entities.

Veterans Day Speaking

I will be speaking at the American Battle Monuments Commission's Florence Cemetery's Veterans Day commemoration. This engagement allows us to strengthen our partnership with ABMC as well as tell our story in concert with theirs.

New Senior Enlisted Leader

Army Sergeant Major Joaquin Andujar is on-board as our Senior Enlisted Leader. Born in Puerto Rico, he is a career Mortuary Affairs Specialist who served this mission as a Staff Sergeant Recovery NCO from 1999 to 2003. He comes to us from U.S. Army Africa in Vicenza Italy where he served as a Supply and Service Sergeant Major. We are very privileged to have an alumnus and very senior NCO.

Deputy Director for Operations Change

Rear Admiral (RDML) Jon Krietz culminated a 37-year career in the U.S. Navy last month and settled in the Northern Virginia area with career plans still evolving. His relief, RDML Darius Banaji, is aboard. Hailing from Seattle, he is a career civil engineering officer and previously served as Commander of Naval Facilities Engineering Command Atlantic in Norfolk, VA. We are pleased to have RDML Banaji join the DPAA team.

Deputy Director for Operations Update

I am humbled and privileged to be part of this noble mission. I arrived to DPAA the end of September, and every day I am impressed by the will and skill of the outstanding personnel, both military and civilian, that we have at this agency. It is an honor to serve with them and serve you as the new Deputy Director for Operations.

Europe-Mediterranean (EM) Region Travel

The team got me off to a running start since I arrived in September. I just returned from an informative trip to our European-Mediterranean Theater of Operations. I visited the Embassies in Italy and France to brief the country teams on the status of our operations in those countries. Additionally, I met with senior officials from the American Battle Monument Commission (ABMC) Paris, one of our pivotal partners for WWII disinterments. In Germany, I made an office call with the US European Command Chief of Staff and visited our Detachment in Miesau. These visits are critically important in building and maintaining relationships to support for current and future investigation and recovery operations.

Indo-Pacific (IP) Region Engagements

In September, RDML Krietz and a delegation from DPAA went to Cambodia and Vietnam to participate in annual talks regarding FY20 operations in support of our Vietnam War efforts. The talks in Cambodia and Vietnam were very successful. In Cambodia, we continued to strengthen our relationship with the Kingdom of Cambodia (KOC) POW/MIA Committee. The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to the DPAA accounting mission and expressed their nation's continued support. They also agreed to allow a supervised partner team to conduct a Joint Field Activity (JFA) on Koh Tang in FY20. In Vietnam, our enduring relationship is as strong as ever. In another step toward increased operations, the Vietnamese agreed to increase the number of unilateral and joint excavations in FY20 and FY21. They agreed to increase the number of these missions from fielding four to doing six unilateral excavations in FY20, and further increase to eight in FY21.

At the end of September, we hosted a Lao delegation for our annual bilateral consultations at the DPAA facility in Hawaii. Our 34-year partnership with the Lao remains strong and continues to grow. The Consultations were cordial and resulted in Lao concurrence with the proposed FY20 operations for five JFAs in Laos. We continued to work with the Lao to increase the number of DPAA personnel supporting our JFAs from 65 to 85 and increase our operational flexibility through the use of additional base camps. The Lao announced they had acquired two additional personnel to support Stony Beach activities. We welcomed this development and reemphasized the need to support year-round Stony Beach missions outside the typical JFA windows. The Lao are continuing to work on gaining approval for our use of modernized satellite communications equipment, which

are essential for the safety of our teams in the field.

Later this month, I will make my first trip to Southeast Asia to visit and meet the DPAA Detachments in Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos as well as meet with the US country teams. I will also have the opportunity to introduce myself to our counterparts in Vietnam and Laos.

I will conclude by saying again I am humbled and grateful to serve in this Agency. I look forward to future engagements, especially with our Family and Veteran Groups.

Regional Director Hail/Farewell

Before I introduce our Regional Directorates, we'd like to bid farewell to COL Brian Pearl, US Army, our former Europe- Mediterranean Regional Directorate. He'll retire after over 35 years of service. Our thanks to COL Pearl for his hard work and dedication, both of which were pivotal to our continued mission success. His relief is COL Frank Tank, who is an experienced leader with a proven track-record. He comes to us from his previous post as Chief, Army Element and Director of Operations, Mission Integration Directorate, National Reconnaissance Office. We are glad to have COL Tank join the DPAA team.

Operational Update

Europe-Mediterranean (EM) Region

August-October Operations

During this time period, we conducted six investigations and two recovery missions. Activities occurred in Austria, Hungary, Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Additionally investigation and recovery work conducted by partners occurred in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Poland,

August-October Disinterment Operations

39 disinterments occurred during this time period at ABMC cemeteries in France, Belgium, and Netherlands. For the entire FY19, Europe-Mediterranean disinterred 33% more unknowns than were disinterred during the previous FY for a total of 77.

Planned November Operations

Falling temperatures throughout the E-M area of operations during this time period hamper our ability to break ground; therefore there are no planned recoveries, investigations, or disinterments scheduled for the month of November.

Indo-Pacific (IP) Region

August-October Operations

During this period, the IP Regional Directorate conducted missions across Laos, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tarawa. Vietnam War missions consisted of JFAs in Laos and Vietnam. Laos comprised of three recovery teams (RTs) and one investigative team (IT), the one JFA in Vietnam consisted of five RTs and two ITs. On October 18, the JFA began in Laos consisting of

three recovery operations and a survey team. The Vietnam mission will consist of two RTs, a field ITs, and an Underwater Site Survey.

The WWII, Korean War, and Cold War IP missions included a JFA to Papua New Guinea, consisting of three ITs and one RT that returned what's believed to be at least seven sets of remains, while overseeing new field operations with the University of Papua New Guinea and the University of Queensland. We initiated one mission to the Solomon Islands consisting of one IT and two RTs that completed investigations of ten cases and surveyed 5 sites - returning possible osseous material and material evidence from two aircraft sites. We conducted an Underwater RT on the Kwajalein Atoll through our partner, East Carolina University, and yielded significant quantities of material evidence and life support evidence for further analysis. Our History Flight, Inc. partner continued work on Tarawa in Row D of Cemetery 33, resulting in a Repatriation Ceremony on September 27 in which 14 sets of remains were returned to the U.S. We were unable to conduct a field IT and a research mission to China due to ongoing political dynamics; a future mission is reprogrammed for next FY pending access to the People's Liberation Army archives.

August-October Disinterment Operations

There were 48 Unknowns exhumed from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii over the past three months. Phase Two of the Korean War Disinterment Project will continue through March of 2020. Exhumations in the Manila American Cemetery & Monument (Philippines) were on hold throughout the 4th Quarter due to the Philippines monsoon season. Our upcoming Manila disinterment mission will be underway on November 1 and consist of at least 40 Unknowns, mainly originating from the Cabanatuan Prison Camp

Planned November Operations

We currently have operations in India from November 1 – December 16, consisting of a recovery mission conducted by contract organization, SEARCH, who will be focused on a high-altitude aircraft crash site. Our partner, History Flight, continues their work in Tarawa, focusing on new areas of Cemetery 33; closing Cemetery 26; and expanding investigations into the St. John Bosco School and Bird's Beak areas.

Research and Analysis

U.S. combat veterans have played a pivotal role in uncovering new information on our missing servicemen lost during the Korean and Vietnam wars. This last FY, we interviewed 142 veterans at seven different reunions. Most recently, our research team was in Las Vegas on October 22-25 visiting the Special Operations Association Reunion (SOAR) to gather information on our missing Special Forces servicemen lost during the Vietnam War. We expect another robust Oral History Program this FY with visits to the American Defenders of Bataan Corregidor Survivors' reunion; Chosin Few, Inc; Army Chapter of the Chosin Few; 1st Cavalry Division; Korean War Vets Association; 1st Marine Division Association; and 2nd Infantry Division.

Partnerships & Innovation (PI) Update

Field Missions

PI helped coordinate 11 field missions that partners commenced in fourth quarter FY19. These missions included terrestrial and underwater sites in countries such as Malta, Lithuania, Papua New Guinea, and the Marshall Islands. The PI team also actively engaged in planning and coordination efforts for 36 partner missions anticipated in FY20. We are attempting to expand the partnership footprint by sending partner teams to new countries, and by increasing the numbers and types of projects that we conduct with partners.

Expanding Partnerships

In the fourth quarter, working with other staff sections, PI hosted 22 partner personnel, representing 17 partner institutions, at our fourth and fifth sessions of the DPAA Academy (one each for field-directed and research-directed organizations). PI has spent the last quarter further expanding the bench of partners by negotiating five new signed partnership arrangements, with many more in progress. PI staff also engaged in extensive partnership development activities including exploratory discussions with potential partners, in-person collaboration meetings, and project oversight and assistance visits.

PI, along with other stakeholders, spent much of the last quarter focused on re-instituting the promising Hub & Spokes research program that will involve the efforts of nine U.S. academic institutions in collaborative research efforts. We anticipate a rolling startup effort in the first half of FY20, and look forward to expand research and analysis capabilities as well as capacity.

Scientific Analysis (SA) Update

Final FY 2019 Accounted for

Total = 218
WWII = 140
Korean War = 73
Vietnam War = 5

FY 2020 Accounted for as of November 6, 2019:

Total = 9
WWII = 8
Korean War = 1
Vietnam War = 0

In ending the fiscal year, DPAA accounted for 218 Americans out of 220 identifications and completed 61 Additional Portions Reports. FY19 was another record year for the Agency in both accounting and identifications, demonstrating our continued increase in capability and capacity across the Agency.

Other Highlights

The installation of isotope lab analytical systems is on-going and quality assurance testing began this quarter, with the expectation that the isotope function will be fully accredited by the end of Calendar Year 2019. The instrumentation and methods will allow us to analyze thousands of

samples per year, and offer a fast, low cost method for separating U.S. remains from foreign nationals prior to DNA testing; thereby reducing cost and time, and support identifications directly by providing information as to where the individuals lived during their lifetime.

AFMES-AFDIL Update

FY2019 End of the Year

Our goal was to report 3,500 analysis to DPAA; we reported 3,765 analysis. Success rates for short tandem repeat testing was 63%; up from approximately 57% the year before. Success rates for non-chemically treated mtDNA samples was 94% up from 92% the year before. Next Generation Sequencing of chemically treated or highly damaged DNA was 60% up from 55% the year before.

AFMES-AFDIL wrote 650 DNA Comparison Reports for the DPAA, 207 were first-time named DNA reports. These are reports that lead or support new identifications. The remaining were addendum reports that represent additional skeletal elements associated to the service member.

Next Generation Sequencing (NGS)

Current work load with existing instruments is 45 samples per month. AFMES-AFDIL has finished its assessment of the new higher throughput samples from instruments that were purchased and installed in Spring 2019. Optimization experiments demonstrated ability to move from grouping six samples together to being able to run 48 samples together. We have initiated the validation of these instruments and are looking to bring them on line by May 2020.

NGS has been on line for 3-1/2 years and we have issued 309 DNA Comparison Reports, of which 136 are first-time named reports. These are samples that previously were not able to be identified using DNA technology.

Outreach and Communications Update

Annual Government Briefings/Family Member Updates

DPAA hosted the Korean/Cold War Annual Government Briefings August 1-2 in Arlington, VA. The meeting included formal presentations to the families; a media panel; individual one-on-one briefings with the families; attendance at the Twilight Tattoo performance; and a Republic of Korea Ministry of Patriots and Veterans Affairs-hosted dinner for the families. There were 533 family members in attendance at the Annual Briefings, of which, 219 were first time attendees. The families represented 243 losses of missing Americans. Formal briefings were provided by ten government speakers and a non-government media panel discussion comprised of representatives from four different media outlets. Of note, two non-DoD officials also briefed the families -- former Governor Bill Richardson and the new MAKRI Director, Army BG (Ret) Heo. The Cold War families were briefed by a National Security Agency historian. A total of 202 individual briefings by 20 DPAA analysts were held with family members and their respective service casualty officer. As of November 6, 2019, the Facebook Live Archive has reached nearly 27,000.

On September 7, the Agency hosted a Family Member Update (FMU) in Dayton, OH for 313

family members of missing Department of Defense personnel. This FMU had a high attendance rate for first-time families; of the 313 family members, 194 were first-time attendees. A staffer from Representative Turner's office attended the FMU as did a staffer from Senator Brown's office who highlighted the Senator's support for the mission and the families. Ms. Pamela Whitelock provided a well-received family member perspective on her journey to account for her uncle, U.S. Army Air Forces 1Lt Ewart Sconiers. Prior to the FMU, a DPAA/Armed Forces Media Examiner System (AFMES) outreach team met with the National Veterans Memorial Museum in Columbus, the 88th Air Wing Vice Commander, Wright Patterson AFB, and met with a staffer from the office of Representative Wenstrup. The outreach team briefed The Ohio State University Army ROTC cadre and several cadets and veterans. Afterward, the team met with staffers from the office of Representative Turner. As of November 6, 2019, the Facebook Live archive has reached nearly 13,000.

On November 2, the Agency hosted a FMU in San Juan, Puerto Rico for 34 family members. Of note, all of the briefings were given in Spanish. The VFW sponsored the refreshments for the families. The VFW had three local representatives attend - Chapter 1206 Vice Commander Carlos Reyes and the Quartermaster General stayed the whole day. A staffer from Congresswoman Gonzalez-Colon's office attended the afternoon breakout session. And Edwin Ramos from the Survivor Outreach Service, G1, Puerto Rico National Guard also attended the morning briefings. Prior to the FMU, a DPAA/AFMES outreach team along with the DPAA Senior Enlisted Leader travelled to Fort Buchanan and briefed 30 Soldiers from the 246th QM Co, 311th QM Co, 77th CSSB Command Teams, and Soldiers in school at Fort Buchanan who are transitioning to become 92Ms (Mortuary Affairs Specialist). The outreach team also briefed G1 personnel for the Puerto Rico National Guard. As of November 6, 2019, the Facebook Live Archive has reached nearly 10,000.

As a reminder, all DPAA FMU and Annual Government Briefings are archived and can be found at <https://vimeo.com/dpaa>.

FMU Schedule:

The next FMU is on January 25, 2020 in Las Vegas, NV. For an updated list of DPAA's FY 2020 FMU schedule, please visit <https://www.dpaa.mil/Families/Family-Events/>

Special Operations Annual Reunion

Johnie Webb, Jack Kull, Steve Thompson, and Matt Kristoff participated in the convention held in October in Las Vegas. Johnie and Jack briefed the POW/MIA Committee and Matt and Steve conducted numerous Veteran interviews throughout the week.

Media Coverage of Note

August 8, 2019 Airline pilot flies dad's remains home from Vietnam (Via USA Today)

When Air Force Maj. Roy Knight, Jr., left Dallas for Vietnam 52 years ago, his 5-year-old son, Bryan, came to Dallas Love Field to see him off. On Thursday, Bryan, now a captain for Southwest Airlines, brought back his father's remains aboard a flight to the same Dallas airport.

Knight, born in Garner, Texas, was 36 when he was shot down while attacking a target on the Ho Chi Minh trail in Laos on May 19, 1967

For the full story, follow the link below.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2019/08/08/vietnam-vet-airline-pilot-flies-mia-dads-remains-home-texas/1956770001/>

October 25, 2019 - West Virginia soldier killed in the Korean War identified

Army Cpl. Charles H. Grubb, 21, of War Eagle, West Virginia, has been accounted for. He was a member of Company M, 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Infantry Division and was reported missing in action December 1, 1950, after the enemy attacked his unit near the Chosin Reservoir, North Korea. Following the June 2018 summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un, North Korea turned over 55 boxes, purported to contain the remains of American service members killed during the Korean War July 27, 2018.

For the full story, follow the link below.

<https://www.wowktv.com/news/local/west-virginia-soldier-killed-in-the-korea-war-identified/>

October 27, 2019 - Jimmy Crotty, one of Coast Guard's greatest heroes, is coming home

Jimmy Crotty is one of the most revered figures in Coast Guard history. An ordnance specialist, he is remembered for acts of stunning courage in World War II during the siege of Corregidor, and as the first member of the Coast Guard taken prisoner in wartime since the War of 1812. His remains were positively identified over the summer. According to accounts of fellow prisoners in 1942, Crotty died of diphtheria while being held in the Cabanataun prisoner of war camp, one of 2,500 Americans lost behind those walls in the Philippines. He was buried there, in a mass grave known as No. 312.

For the full story, follow the link below.

<https://buffalonews.com/2019/10/27/jimmy-crotty-one-of-coast-guards-greatest-heroes-is-finally-coming-home/>

Questions and Answers

Korea-Cold War Families of the Missing: Can someone speak to progress or lack thereof in Russia? **Answer:** The US-Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) is still active and Korean War and Cold War Technical Talks are scheduled for December. Gen Foglesong, US Side Chairman, is scheduled to visit Moscow in January 2020 to meet with his counterpart. The USRJC Plenum had to slip to next May in Moscow because the Russian Side is down to two Commissioners and are in the process of appointing new ones. The USRJC is unfortunately affected by the currently strained bilateral relationship, and we have seen a lessening of cooperation. One example was the Russians cancelling our planned excavation in Vladivostok this past summer.

Disabled American Veterans: Is there any work being done on live sighting reports? **Answer:** Live sighting reports are not very common anymore; however, they are treated very seriously and investigated. DIA's Stony Beach is key in investigating these reports. Since the fall of Saigon in

1975, the U.S. Government has acquired 23,575 reports possibly pertaining to Americans in Southeast Asia:

FIRSTHAND LIVE SIGHTINGS	1,996
HEARSAY SIGHTINGS REPORTS	5,614
CRASH/GRAVE SITES	5,947
DOGTAGS	10,018
TOTAL	23,575

Of the 1,996 firsthand reports received since 1975, 1,941 (97.24%) reports are resolved.

- 1,340 (67.13%) reports were equated to Americans who are accounted for (i.e. Prisoners of War returnees, missionaries, civilians jailed at various times for violation of Vietnamese laws).
- 45 (2.25%) reports were correlated to wartime sightings of military personnel or pre-1975 sighting of civilians who remain unaccounted-for.
- 556 (27.86%) reports were determined to be fabrications.

The remaining 55 (2.76%) unresolved firsthand reports represent a high priority of the U.S. Government analytical and collection efforts:

- 48 (2.40%) pertain to Americans reported in a captive environment.
- 7 (0.35%) reported sightings of Americans in a non-captive environment (i.e. working as truck drivers, married with Vietnamese families).

Special Operations Association: Next year they are planning a ceremony to honor all of the Special Operations Forces who did not return from the Vietnam War, and have asked Director McKeague to speak at the breakfast ceremony. **Answer:** Mr. McKeague noted he had already received the formal invitation and has already blocked the dates on his calendar and would be honored to speak.

Honor Release Return: What can we do to get the remains recovery operations moving in North Korea? **Answer:** Mr. McKeague outlined the fact that we have received strong support from Secretary Pompeo, Special Representative Biegun, and the President during the various talks with Chairman Kim and other North Korean officials. There is no progress because the North Korean side is linking the issue with a reduction in sanctions and denuclearization. Since March 2019, we have had no communication from the Korean People's Army. We have our proposal for FY2020 field operations complete and stand ready to present it as the opportunity presents itself. Mr. McKeague suggested the families and veterans may wish to contact the DPRK Mission in New York to articulate how important the resumption of remains recovery is. The address is: DPRK UN Mission, 820 2nd Avenue, 13th Floor, New York, NY 10017.

There is a bright spot from the Singapore Summit commitment on remains in that the K-55 remains have proven to represent 250 individuals: 80 are of Asian descent and of the 170 Americans, only 20

are additional remains of service members who were previously accounted for. To date, we have identified and accounted for 41.