

VFW Honors and Remembers Korean War Veterans

July marks 70 years since the end of the Korean War, and more than 7,500 veterans of that war remain unaccounted for

Jul 26, 2023

This July, VFW remembers those veterans who served and sacrificed in the Korean War.

VFW reminds Korean War veterans that they have never been forgotten by members of the organization. Here are updates about the so-called “Forgotten War” and the ongoing efforts in South Korea.

MARINES TRAIN IN SOUTH KOREA

Marines and sailors of the 1st Marine Division participated in an 11-day Freedom Shield exercise in March in South Korea.

Freedom Shield integrated elements of live exercises with simulations of battle, according to the 1st Marine Division. Participants include South Korean forces, the U.S. military, U.N. troops and other entities.

Marine Corps Col. William Pacatte, who is the leading 1st Marine Air Wing operations officer, said that the Marines of his unit were able to “overcome” many challenges of the exercise. He added that South Koreans were “well-trained” in performing alongside U.S. forces.

“Their impact was significant throughout the exercise,” Pacatte said. “Most importantly, the [South Korean marine aircraft group] brings a professional and finely-tuned warfighting spirit that only Marines can understand.”

The Marine Corps’ 1st Marine Division has a rich history on the peninsula during the Korean War. The division at the beginning of 1951 was a part of many operations. They first fought North Korean guerrillas and then advanced north through the mountains of central

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“From late April to early July, the division took part in the U.N. defense against a Chinese communist spring offensive, in which U.N. forces faced nearly 500,000 enemy soldiers,” according to official Marine Corps history. “The Chinese offensive ended in mid-May with heavy enemy losses.”

Marines of the division fought through the end of the war. The division did not concede any key terrain during the war, according to the Marine Corps.

More than 4,200 Marines died in the Korean War. Some 42 Marines were awarded the Medal of Honor, with 27 being posthumously awarded. Also, 221 Navy Crosses and more than 1,500 Silver Stars were awarded to the Marines of the war.

MISSPELLED NAMES ARE ON THE KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL

Thousands of errors have been identified on the newest feature of the Korean War Veterans Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

In a letter to Department of Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, a bipartisan group of lawmakers said there are many inaccuracies on the Korean War Veterans Memorial Remembrance Wall, which was dedicated on July 27, 2022. The note stated that the memorial “may contain more than 1,000 spelling errors” and “hundreds” of other inaccuracies.

“Errors of this magnitude should not have made it past the initial blueprints, much less carved into stone, and certainly not erected and unveiled to the public,” the letter to Austin stated. “We find these errors deeply concerning and write to seek accountability on how the Remembrance Wall’s glaring flaws went unnoticed until post-construction.”

Authors of the letter added that those inaccuracies also remain on DoD, Department of Interior and the Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation websites.

“We find it unfortunate that what should have been a touching tribute for bereaved family members and a grateful nation has turned into an embarrassing gaffe,” the letter stated. “We must take the necessary steps to correct the issue, find the communication and research flaws that caused the errors, and ensure such errors are never repeated.”

Officials from the DoD, along with the Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation, have said that the department will work to fix the errors of the memorial’s Remembrance Wall. The DoD also has enlisted help from brothers Hal and Ted Barker, according to the Dallas, Texas-based D Magazine. The brothers’ father served in the Korean War.

In an article with D Magazine — published on July 28, 2022 — Hal said that the wall is a “colossal embarrassment.” A D Magazine article published on Nov. 11, 2022, stated that the Barker brothers have “worked for decades” to memorialize troops who died in the Korean War.

For more information about Hal and Ted Barker’s Korean War Project, visit <http://koreanwar.org>.

WAR’S HISTORY IS NOW A PREREQUISITE

The history of the Korean War will once again become required courses at the Korea Military Academy, according to a February Stars and Stripes report.

The change came about after Korean lawmakers expressed concerns over not having the courses. Now that the classes will be back, academy cadets will learn about the Korean War and the strategies used on the Asian peninsula.

ARMY OPENS RENOVATED SOUTH KOREA MUSEUM

Members of the Army’s 2nd Infantry Division and Eighth Army helped administrators of the newly renovated Korean Theater Operations Museum conduct a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Oct. 19, 2022, at Camp Humphreys, about 40 miles south of Seoul, South Korea.

Director and curator of the Korean Theater Operations Museum, William Alexander, said the museum tells the story of 2nd Infantry Division soldiers who have served in Korea and around the world since 1917, as well as those who served in the Eighth Army since 1944.

“This is a culmination of many years of hard work,” Alexander said. Lt. Col. Timothy Williams, chief of staff of the 2nd Infantry Division, attended the ceremony and said that it was a “nice emergence” from the COVID-19 lockdown. “My favorite part is the World War I and World War II sections, which shows the beginning of the 2nd Infantry Division,” Williams said.

Learn more about the Korean Theater Operations Museum at <https://history.army.mil/museums/fieldmuseums/2id> or mail to: 2nd Infantry Division Museum, Unit #15041 Box #533, APO AP 96258.

DPAA ANNOUNCES FIVE KOREAN MIA ACCOUNTED FOR

In recent months, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) has announced that five soldiers of the Korean War have been accounted for so far this year. This comes after more than seven decades when the troops were declared MIA.

In 1973, DPAA began its mission to find the then-8,157 U.S. troops who were unaccounted for. As of April, the remains of 650 of those troops have been identified.

The following are the soldiers of the Korean War that DPAA has announced it identified this year.

CPL. CARMEN CARRILLO

Age: 20

Home of Record: Lompoc, Calif.

Unit: Headquarters Co., 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt., 2nd Inf. Div.

Reported Missing: May 17, 1951

Accounted for: Feb. 3, 2023

DPAA reported on March 28 that Army Cpl. Carmen Carrillo is accounted for. The soldier was considered MIA after a fight against Chinese volunteer forces in Gangwon Hongchun, South Korea, according to DPAA. The Army issued a presumptive finding of death on Dec. 31, 1953, and his remains were determined to be “nonrecoverable” in January 1956.

CPL. DONALD L. DUPONT

Age: 22

Home of Record: Wisconsin

Unit: B Co., 1st Bn., 32nd Inf. Regt., 7th Inf. Div.

Reported Missing: Dec. 2, 1950

Accounted for: Jan. 24, 2023

Editor’s note: There is no known photo of Dupont available.

Remains of Army Cpl. Donald Dupont were found near the eastern shore of North Korea’s Chosin Reservoir, according to a DPAA report. Dupont was declared MIA during the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir, known as one of the most brutal battles of the Korean War. American and U.N. forces were unable to recover Dupont’s remains during or after the battle, DPAA said.

PFC. HARRY J. HARTMANN JR.

Age: 19

Home of Record: Mays Landing, N.J.

Unit: E Co., 2nd Bn., 8th Cav Regt., 1st Cav Div.

Reported Missing: Nov. 2, 1950

Accounted for: July 13, 2022

DPAA reported on March 13 that it had identified the remains of Army Pfc. Harry Hartmann Jr. Hartmann was reported MIA while fighting near Unsan, North Korea, about 30 miles northeast of Pyongyang. DPAA reported that Hartmann was captured by enemy forces and died around March 31, 1951, as a POW. Hartmann was held at North Korea’s Camp No. 5, located in Pyoktang on the border of North Korea and China.

SGT. LAWRENCE J. ROBIDOUX

Age: 22

Home of Record: Cumberland, R.I.

Unit: B Co., 1st Bn., 35th Inf. Regt., 25th Inf. Div.

Reported Missing: Nov. 27, 1950

Accounted for: Jan. 24, 2023

DPAA reported on March 21 that the remains of Army Sgt. Lawrence J. Robidoux had been identified. Robidoux was reported MIA on Nov. 27, 1950, after his unit withdrew from Ipsok, North Korea. In 1953, POWs returned home after Operation Big Switch. The POWs reported that Robidoux was a POW and died in May 1951 at the North Korean Camp No. 5, located on the North Korea-China border.

PFC. ITHIEL E. WHATLEY

Age: 19

Home of Record: Pensacola, Fla.

Unit: M Co., 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., 24th Inf. Div.

Reported Missing: July 12, 1950

Accounted for: Sept. 7, 2022

On Jan. 20, DPAA reported that remains of Army Pfc. Ithiel E. Whatley were identified more than 70 years after he was reported MIA. Whatley went missing after his unit engaged in fighting south of Chochi'won, South Korea. Previously, the Army issued a presumptive finding of death in January 1954 and declared Whatley "nonrecoverable" in 1956. DPAA also reported that it was possible Whatley was taken as a POW, but there are no eyewitness accounts substantiating it.

This article is featured in the 2023 June/July issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Dave Spiva](#), associate editor for VFW magazine.