



**Korean War MIA Meeting  
6 March 2018  
Russell Offices Canberra**

**Summary of Key Outcomes**

This document is a summary of the key outcomes to facilitate working group members' ability to communicate with constituents and stakeholders. It does not cover all items discussed, nor does it replace the minutes which are distributed for members' purposes. It deliberately does not document the full nature of discussions as it is considered that to do this would stifle open and honest working group discussion over time and is not in the common interest of working group members or their constituents.

**1. MOU Updates**

**DPAA** - There have been developments since the then draft MOU was shared with attendees at the October 2017 meeting. The change of leadership within DPAA meant that the nearly completed exchange of letters was changed to a proposed Memorandum of Agreement. DPAA subsequently sent a revised draft Memorandum of Understanding (or MOU) for Australian consideration in December 2017. The change to MOU status has meant increased scrutiny from Defence lawyers, has triggered the inclusion of a number of standard clauses that are included in MOU between Australia and the United States and, unfortunately, further delayed the process.

Discussion followed regarding disappointment with delays in the MOU process and the decision not to share the content of the current draft with working group members. The meeting agreed to a formal resolution that the current draft MOU be available to the working group for consultation before its release to DPAA, and again after DPAA input in the event that there are significant amendments.

Members appreciated the government representatives' candour in explaining delays in the process, but expressed significant disappointment at the lack of progress and reserved the right to engage with politicians and the media on the issue in the event that the process was not quickly and efficiently concluded.

In response to a question about whether arrangements would change after the introduction of the MOU, it was noted that the MOU would simply formalise the existing cooperative arrangements that were in place at the working level at present.



**MAKRI** – The Australian Defence Attache (DA) to the Republic of Korea is liaising with MAKRI regarding the draft MOU, a copy of which was shared with the working group at the October 2017 meeting. The intention is for the DA and the Commander of MAKRI to sign the document as soon as the content has been agreed.

## **2. UNMCK Unknowns – results of investigation**

Working group members were referred to documents that summarised the results of the UWC-A investigation regarding the 85 UNMCK unknowns and details from the Records of Interment (ROI) for these 85 servicemen, including additional details for the 35 unknowns whose nationality is also recorded as unknown on the UNMCK website.

For the 35 unknowns listed as unit/nationality unknown, each ROI indicates that the serviceman is British, or believed to be British. Closer examination of these 35 records, looking at date of death, recovery location, physical characteristics and any physical evidence recovered with the remains, provides no evidence to support the possibility that any of the remains are those of Australian servicemen.

In relation to date of death, all 35 died within the period September 1950 to October 1951, while among the Australian MIA, only CPL Murphy died within this period. All other Australian soldiers became MIA between July 1952 and May 1953, within the DMZ, during the static phase of the war before the Armistice. Many of the 35 unknowns have a date of death of April 1951 (as per CPL Murphy), but none were recovered near Kapyong, where CPL Murphy was killed.

In relation to a query regarding a potential 104 unknowns at UNMCK, it was noted that the results of the investigation were based on the information published on the UNMCK website, and examination of the ROI for each of those servicemen whose identity was unknown. UWC-A advised that this matter had been raised with the new DA to the Republic of Korea in a briefing in late December 2017, before he took up the role in 2018, and undertook to contact the DA to determine whether he had yet had the opportunity to liaise with the UNMCK administration on this matter.

## **3. Destination of Allied Unidentified Glory Remains - results of investigation**

Working group members were referred to a Powerpoint presentation which explained the fate of the 568 Allied unknowns from Operation Glory. After analysing the figures in the “*War Casualties: Recapitulation of Remains Processed*” document that was provided, it is apparent that the 568 Allied unknowns were Republic of Korea servicemen. Approaches to both DPAA and MAKRI have not been able to shed any further light on the fate of these servicemen; however, the standard treatment of unidentified Republic of Korea remains at the time was cremation.

#### **4. Desktop review of material UWC-A has received regarding Korean War MIA – outcomes**

UWC-A acknowledged the significant time and effort that Ian Saunders had put into pursuing the cause of Australia's MIA from the Korean War, the increased prominence of the issue due to these efforts and the corresponding additional resources that Defence has committed to pursuing avenues of inquiry regarding our Korean War MIA as a result.

A review of all relevant information received regarding Australia's Korean War MIA had been undertaken within UWC-A, including the following significant avenues of inquiry:

- The four Allied Unknowns at UNMCK
- The 85 Unknowns at UNMCK
- The 568 Allied Unknowns processed at Kokura
- The 944 list
- The Allied X-files list
- Information regarding CPL Murphy
- Information regarding possible POW status of Australian servicemen
- Liaison between the Australian DA in Beijing and Chinese authorities regarding Australia's Korean War MIA
- Use of a genealogist to obtain family information to enable gaps in the FRS collection for Australian MIA to be addressed
- DPAA liaison
  - Comparison of short list of X-files where recovery location was close to LKL of Australian MIA
  - Comparison of the dental charts of Australian MIA by Defence Forensic Odontologists against a short list of dental charts of unknowns at the Punchbowl
  - Regular comparison of Australian FRS against the US database of recovered DNA profiles from Korean War remains
  - The possible Russian POW status of a MIA Australian pilot.

No new information was obtained as a result of this review that provides further avenues of inquiry. Work is continuing in the FRS space and to finalise the inquiries regarding the number of Unknowns at UNMCK and the fate of the 568 Operation Glory Allied Unknowns processed by US authorities at Kokura.

#### **5. Dental records update**

An ADF Forensic Odontologist who undertook the comparison work of Australian MIA dental charts against the Punchbowl unknown dental charts visiting DPAA in mid-2018 to do some follow-up work from the comparison, and to further strengthen the bilateral links between the ADF and DPAA.



# Army

## **6. Wreath Laying at Korean War Memorial**

Milt Cottee advised that the new Republic of Korea Ambassador to Australia was laying a wreath at the Korean War Memorial on Friday 9 March and invited other working group members to attend the event.