

## Address to Families of American Missing from the Korean and Cold Wars

*Remarks by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs Jerry D. Jennings, Crystal City Hilton, Crystal City, VA, Friday, July 26, 2002.*

---

**Jerry Jennings:** Good Morning. You know, it's almost overwhelming to stand before you to welcome you to our annual government briefings, what some call the national Korean-Cold War Family Update. Just eight years ago, I'm told, only a few of you sat around a table in a conference room in DPMO, fewer than 20 people. So this is quite an accomplishment. Now, more than 700 family members are joining together for an intense two days, to learn about the commitment that your government has to account for your loved ones, and if possible, to bring them home.

Our young nation is only 226 years old. But in that time Americans have never hesitated to step forward to defend their country-with their lives, if necessary. And throughout all our conflicts, our soldiers have always known the unspoken pledge: "no one will be left on the battlefield." The battlefield-Korean War, Cold War, or the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on America-is the place where heroes are born.

A hero could be a brother, a sister, an uncle, a father, a person who, at the risk of his or her life, answered the call. When speaking of heroism, there is no higher honor for America's heroes than the Medal of Honor. It's awarded to those who placed themselves in peril, who risked their own lives to save the lives of their comrades. The memory of these men and women live on, as the pages of history reveal those rare individuals whose names will be forever linked to the glory of selfless service.

Let me tell you about just one of them: His name was Lieutenant Colonel Don C. Faith, Jr. From November 27 to December 1, 1950, Colonel Faith was defending against a fanatical attack by Chinese forces around the Chosin Reservoir. The enemy penetrated American lines. Colonel Faith personally directed counterattacks against overwhelming odds. He personally directed the movement of troops and vehicles across the frozen reservoir until all his wounded had passed through enemy fire, then he returned to the battle, personally leading charges against the enemy once again. He gave no thought to his own safety. He did not spare himself as he faced certain death in his heroic effort. The soldier's pledge, "I will leave no one behind" is nowhere better epitomized than this.

This is the meaning of that sacrifice. This is the man who put that pledge into action.

Sadly, this hero did not return from the field of battle. But his story lives on. And we are very honored this morning to have with us his daughter, Mrs. Barbara F. Broyles, from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Please stand, Mrs. Broyles, so we can all honor the name, the life, and the service of your father. [Applause.]

American heroes are still with us, setting the marks many will aspire to, even decades from now. Young men and women find themselves in harm's way right now on the battlefields of Afghanistan. In the name of self-sacrifice, some already have given their lives to bring their comrades home. And you should know that this nation will continue to honor its commitment, to you and to them, that we will do everything humanly possible to keep them from falling into harm's way.

But failing that, for as long as it takes, we'll make the effort to bring them home. We are "Keeping the Promise."

We are honored this morning by the presence of a man, very recently described by a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter as "the most compelling intellectual presence in Washington." That's just part of the story because, for us, he's been so much more. For decades, he's been a dedicated participant and supporter of POW/MIA accounting objectives. We rely frequently on his advice, counsel and strong support.

This is his third tour of duty in the Pentagon. I can almost say he's a lifer, but not quite. He served earlier as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, reporting to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney. In that job, he was responsible to the Secretary for worldwide security matters relating to strategy, plans and policy. He led the reshaping of strategy and force posture at the end of the Cold War, and importantly for us, he also assumed a very active role in POW/MIA matters. There is no stronger advocate for our issue, or for the families, than our speaker. He has been deeply involved in this issue, working quietly, working effectively, to ensure that this nation never forgets its obligations to you and to your loved ones.

During the Reagan administration, he served as the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, the largest country in the Muslim world. In this post, he was a determined U.S. advocate for political openness and democratic values, and, yes, he was encouraging the Indonesians to intervene with Vietnam and other countries to respond and cooperate more with us on POW/MIA issues. He also served in the Department of State as the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. In that post, he contributed to substantial improvement in relations with over 20 countries in Asia, most especially with Japan and China. And again, he actively participated in negotiations to move us forward on POW/MIA accounting – in this case, those still missing from the Vietnam War.

He also saw distinguished service with the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. He's held a professorship at Yale University. In addition, he was the Dean of International Relations at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. This is a man who has served his country with the highest distinction and with honor. I am pleased to introduce to you this morning the Deputy Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Paul Wolfowitz. [Applause.]

**Paul Wolfowitz:** Good morning. I share Jerry's great pleasure at the huge number of people here. It is an amazing change and a wonderful change. I thank you, Jerry, for most of that introduction. But, the "lifer" term is one I could live without. [Laughter.]

When Secretary Rumsfeld swore me in for this job, he commented on the fact that this was my third tour of duty in the Pentagon and just as I was starting to feel that this was a compliment, he said, "Paul, we're going to keep bringing you back until you get it right." [Laughter.] And I thought, maybe that is a life sentence. [Laughter.]

Jerry accused me of being an intellectual in his introduction. I'd have to say that's another term of somewhat questionable origins. I remember years ago-I'm old enough to remember-when James Buckley and Daniel Patrick Moynihan were running against each other for the senate seat from New York State. It was 1976, and in the opening minutes of their fist senatorial debate, Buckley referred to Moynihan in a nice way as an intellectual. Moynihan's response was, "This debate is only ten minutes old and already my opponent is slinging mud." [Laughter.]

The truth is, as valuable as intellect may be at times, character is much more important. There is no question that bringing missing Americans home is a cause that demands men and women of character. Jerry, as I've said many times before, you are a testimony to character. As the

Marine you are-and my Marine assistant keeps reminding me, there's no such thing as an ex-Marine; you are a Marine-you have been working tirelessly to ensure that for our missing, America always will be, as Marines put it so well, Semper Fi-"always faithful." I know that the North Koreans who dealt with Jerry this past January and June know that he's a man of character, a man of steel, one who will always be faithful to his country and to the cause of our missing men. And, truly, our government could have no more devoted and dedicated advocate than Jerry, and we thank you. [Applause.]

I'd also like to salute the family members and veterans whose dedication has helped us in our common quest: the quest of the fullest possible accounting for our missing. I am very pleased to see members of our Armed Forces with us today, our extraordinary Armed Forces who are doing such an outstanding job today, defending our country, both active duty and retired, from all the services.

Of course, our primary purpose this morning is to address family members of our missing Americans, the parents, the wives, the siblings, the children, the nieces, the nephews and the grandchildren-particularly those of the next generation who have taken up the torch to bring their missing relatives home at last. To those of you who live close by and to those of you who have come from far away, I want you to know that, for me personally, it is an honor to be here with you this morning. We all draw strength and inspiration from your commitment and your devotion.

In fact, the number of family members of Korean War and Cold War missing attending this meeting has grown exponentially. Some of you know that is a mathematician's term. I once studied mathematics, but I gave it up a long time ago. I know that word, though. This is exponential growth from the days, just a few short years ago, when attendees at these briefings could fit around a single conference table. Today, you've reached the record-breaking total, I'm told, of 739-give or take one or two-who are here today. And you don't have to be a mathematician to share an appreciation for those numbers. I know that family members have lobbied hard to persuade Congress to authorize assistance in getting you here, just as with the Vietnam War POW/MIA families whose efforts established the precedent-many precedents-for us all, and gave us the accounting principles that we're now pursuing around the world.

There has also been a tremendous effort on the part of the Department of Defense, particularly by Jerry's people, the men and women in DPMO, assisted by our national veterans organizations and their publications to get the word out. But, the greatest share of credit goes to you-to the friends and family-who have kept the vigil these many years, who've made a commitment to this cause, and made the effort to be here today. So, on behalf of Secretary Rumsfeld, welcome and a hearty thanks to all of you.

Over the many long and frustrating years that you have kept this often lonely vigil, I've heard it said that if we fail to keep faith with those who did their duty in the past, we could not expect Americans to do their duty in the future, should the need arise.

It might have been easy to dismiss those words during times of peace and prosperity, but it's impossible to do so now that that need has arisen with such stark clarity. The truth of those words came home to us once again inescapably on September 11<sup>th</sup>, and in the weeks and months since then.

The brave men and women who are serving today in Afghanistan and in other theaters of the war on terror can do so with full confidence that if they do fall in battle, their nation will spare no effort to bring them home. The fullest possible accounting is our solemn pledge. However long it takes, wherever it takes us, whatever the cost.

I will say again now for the benefit of those who served in years past and for the benefit of those who are serving this very day in the defense of freedom and peace in lonely places around the world, we will not rest until that pledge has been fulfilled.

We can never fully understand the anguish that you have felt as families, and in many cases still feel, but we do recognize something of the burden that you have had to bear over these many years. We know that many of you have lived through times when it was fairly standard practice to simply assume that missing loved ones were dead, that their remains were not recoverable. So, along with your loss and uncertainty, perhaps one of the great hardships you had to bear was the idea that your government had closed the book on the fate of your loved one, when you had not.

We might say that some good came even from that particular hardship, since you drew closer together with those who shared your burden. And, in doing so, you have learned that, over time, things can change—even in Washington. Today there is hope that you may find the answers you have sought for so long. For the first time, we have a comprehensive list of the 8,100 servicemen missing from the Korean War, compiled as a result of a three-year effort. And a DNA database to help identify remains is well underway. But, while we have made a very good start, we also know we have much work ahead of us. But, we are determined to succeed.

As President Bush's point man on this issue, Jerry Jennings has renewed and refocused efforts to ensure that the cause is moving forward in the right direction—in all the regions in which we are concerned: from Korea and China to the former Soviet Union and Vietnam. And Jerry has the full support of our President, who has reaffirmed his personal commitment to the POW/MIA community and to the families and friends of the missing in particular. In words the President addressed to the families of those who are still missing, he said: "We renew our unwavering commitment and determination to obtain the fullest possible accounting for them, including their recovery or repatriation and the identification of the remains of those who have died." Those words of our President define our mission. As we carry out this mission by seeking answers, we must deal, to put it mildly, with some tough customers, particularly in North Korea. We have found our counterparts in these governments, at times, can be obstinate—again, to put it mildly. One of our biggest challenges in dealing with North Korea, for example, is to move forward despite efforts to exploit the United States through this issue. They have tried—successfully in some past cases—to use the emotions surrounding this sensitive cause to try to demand a great deal of money, while giving us very little in return. Under Jerry's leadership, we have taken a new tack, one that we believe promises over time to be successful.

In his two meetings with the North Koreans in Bangkok this year, Jerry refused to be swayed by unreasonable demands; he held the line in these negotiations. We have encountered such methods in dealing with the Vietnamese in the past. But, as we learned from that experience, with toughness and determination, with a strong sense of purpose, with integrity and resolve, we can ultimately make progress. But, we have also learned that progress requires patience. And, as hard as it can be, especially after so many years, we will be patient, when necessary.

Another important aspect of the negotiations is an agreement with North Korea that veterans and families will be allowed to visit the North. This is exciting news for everyone. It's especially exciting news for another great Marine, another Medal of Honor winner, General Ray Davis. Jerry told me that General Davis recently sent him a letter, reminding him that he would very much like to take a group of veterans of the Chosin Reservoir back to visit that battlefield where they fought so bravely and with such historic heroism. As he wrote to Jerry, he wants to do it before he's "too old and feeble to do so." Now, those of you who know General Davis know that he is still very young at heart and anything but feeble. Nevertheless, we want to see a man who has served our country and this cause with such bravery and devotion get his wish and get it soon. And, so, we call on North Korea to honor this agreement.

In that humanitarian spirit of cooperation, I ask the leaders of all the countries in which our men are still missing to respond to our appeals. Their cooperation will be recognized and appreciated by a grateful American nation, and it can provide a bedrock of trust for the future, despite current differences.

I'd like to tell you briefly about an experience I had some 16 years ago at the time that I was serving in the State Department as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs. I traveled to Vietnam then with Dick Childress, who was working for President Reagan on the National Security Council staff; Dick was probably the person who first put the issue of missing Korean War veterans on the radar screen during his time on the NSC staff under President Reagan. Ann Mills Griffiths was also with us. She was and remains the Executive Director of the National League of Families. And Rich Armitage who was then my colleague at the Defense Department-I guess we've switched roles; he's now the Deputy for Colin Powell at the State Department, and we still work closely together. That was our group.

At that time, we were the highest ranking executive branch delegation to visit Vietnam since the end of the war, and, I must say, we went with some real skepticism about the people we would be dealing with. In fact, as Ann Griffiths will tell you, in my case, skepticism is an understatement; I had doubts about whether we should go at all. But, I believe that the results, over many years since, have justified that trip-and many others since then. By the time we had concluded our talks with senior Vietnamese officials in Hanoi, we felt that we had begun to make some progress. More importantly, we were confident that we were moving the issue in the right direction.

By the same token it was also clear beyond a doubt that further progress would only come if we as a country maintained our sense of purpose, both in our future dealings with the Vietnamese government and in our own policies here in Washington. That is a lesson that we have never forgotten. I can assure you, speaking for Rich Armitage, as I said, who is now at the State Department, as well as myself and now speaking for Secretary Rumsfeld, that we are not about to forget that lesson now as we continue to deal with more governments, over more cases.

And I would add that it is the firm support and leadership on the part of more State Department officials, including my old friend Jim Kelly from those days who now has my old job, who have helped make breakthroughs with the Chinese, such as we have seen in some Cold War cases earlier this month. In fact, a search team from the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii is in northeastern China right now, trying to recover the remains of two American pilots who were reportedly buried there when their CIA plane crashed in 1952. That is an important development-one that demonstrates that both our countries can cooperate on a humanitarian issue.

Throughout the stresses and strains of these negotiations, we have found that to keep moving forward, our overall strength will reside in our resolve to do this right. We must not allow any government to open the door to exploitation or extortion. We must not allow any government to debase the principles and values that your loved ones fought and sacrificed to defend. What I want to assure you of today is this: while our primary worry is dealing with the governments involved, you don't have to worry about the involvement, the determination or the commitment of your government. We are committed. Committed to doing this right. Committed to accounting as fully as possible for your missing loved ones.

And, at this moment, there are other dedicated members of CILHI, that laboratory in Hawaii, trying to further our accounting goals in two locations in North Korea, where they are conducting recovery missions north of Pyongyang and near the Chosin Reservoir.

Vince Krepps, whom I'm told is here this morning-good to see you-Vince Krepps witnessed

such recovery work first hand during a trip to North Korea in 1998. For him, I'm told, this trip had special significance. There he got to walk the ground that his twin brother, Dick, had walked so many years before. Dick was captured and taken to the infamous Camp #5 near the Yalu River. He never came home, and Vince searched 48 years until he found someone who had been with his brother in a POW hospital when he died. Today, Vince hopes to see his twin brother's remains returned home. But, if you have the opportunity to talk to Vince, he probably won't tell you about his own combat experiences. So let me say just a word. You see, 19-year-old Private Vince Krepps served alongside his brother in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. He was awarded the Silver Star for conspicuous bravery in battle-bravery, I'm told, spurred on as Vince thought of his brother. Vince will more likely tell you about his devotion to the cause of bringing his brother home. "I left someone there I knew very well," Vince has said. "And I have to [speak for him]." Thank you on behalf of all of us.

Indeed Vince, and all of you gathered here today, in your steadfast devotion, you have been brave. You have spoken on behalf of your missing relatives more eloquently than words could ever do. You greatly honor their service and their memory, and I salute you all. [Applause.]

I'd like to say something beyond what I had planned to say, because when I got to this point, going over my remarks again, I thought it would be appropriate to say something about what those great heroes accomplished, because I don't think it was appreciated at the time. The Korean War was that first ugly shadow war of the Cold War. It ended in something short of what satisfied the American desire for clean results-it was a stalemate. But, if you look at it from the perspective of 50 years, the heroism of those people who fought and died in battle or were captured, it has changed the face of Asia, it has changed it for the better, it has changed it so that the United States has enjoyed peace in that region for the last almost 50 years in a way that we have not historically. It has changed the basis of our ability to deal with the big countries in that region, including China. It's brought a much, much better future to the people of Korea. So, while they died and they suffered, and while those of you still seek full accounting, it was a truly noble cause and I believe it was a cause that we all owe them a great debt for.

I'd like to close this morning with something that I've quoted often in recent days because it has given me great comfort in this period since September 11<sup>th</sup>. Back some 60 years ago, the very day after Pearl Harbor was attacked, the day America had been drawn into World War II, England's great prime minister, Winston Churchill, wrote in his memoirs-remember this was December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1941, almost four years before the end of World War II-he said, we have won; the war is over because the United States is in it with us.

He put it in these words: "I knew the United States was in the war up to the neck. So we have won after all." He went on to about "silly people," some of them in England and many obviously in Germany, people who had discounted the force and power of the United States. "Some," Churchill said, thought the Americans "were soft, others thought that the Americans would never be united. They would fool around at a distance," these people were saying. "They [the Americans] would never come to grips. They couldn't stand the bloodletting. Their democracy and system of recurrent elections," these people in Germany were saying, "would paralyze the [American] war effort. They would be just a vague blur on the horizon to friend or foe."

I remind you this was December 8, 1941. "Now we would see," these people were saying, "the weakness of this numerous but remote, wealthy, and talkative people."

We haven't changed much in 60 years, have we? [Laughter] Neither have our enemies-they continue to underestimate us.

But, Churchill knew better. "I had studied the American Civil War, fought out to the last desperate inch. American blood flowed in my veins." His mother was an American. "I thought of a remark which Edward Grey"-the British Foreign Minister-"had made to me more than thirty years before [as the United States entered that World War I]." Grey had said "that the United States is like 'a gigantic boiler. Once the fire is lighted under it, there is no limit to the power it can generate.'"

This gathering, driven by that extraordinary American spirit of ordinary Americans organizing to achieve a common purpose is part of the energy that drives that gigantic boiler.

Today, I would encourage you in your task. Now is the time for all of us to redouble our efforts. You have friends in the right places. But, we need your continued help. Working together, we hope to account for our missing and truly close the book on this noble cause.

Thank you, God bless you. God bless our missing heroes. And God bless this great country.  
[Applause.]