



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2005

U.S.-RUSSIAN COMMISSIONERS MEET ON POW/MIA ISSUES

The U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs concluded a series of meetings Wednesday in Moscow as part of a worldwide effort to account for more than 88,000 Americans missing from past conflicts.

The Commission, established in 1992 by Presidents Bush and Yeltsin, held its 19th plenary session Tuesday and Wednesday. Chaired by Commissioner A. Denis Clift on the U.S. side and General Major (ret.) Vladimir Antonovich Zolotarev on the Russian side, the Commission explored open questions in working groups that focused on the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Korean War, and World War II. Clift, president of the Joint Military Intelligence College, served as U.S. chairman for this plenum.

In the two days of discussions, the U.S. pressed the Russian side for assistance on four Cold War shoot downs in the Russian Far East. The Vietnam War group discussed ways in which the Russians could facilitate interviews with former KGB officials and other military and diplomatic personnel who served in Southeast Asia during that war. This group also discussed U.S. access to documents now classified that are believed to hold information about Americans who were held prisoners of war and who did not return from Vietnam.

During the plenum, Mr. Clift also met with General Major Aleksandr V. Kirilin, Chief of the Memorial Center of the Russian Federation Armed Forces. General Kirilin, who represented General Lieutenant Vladimir A. Shamanov, the new Chairman of Russia's newly-established Interagency Commission for Prisoners of War, Internees, and Missing in Action, assured Mr. Clift that the Joint Commission's work will go forward, and General Kirilin's organization will provide the staff to support the work of the Russian side.

The U.S. participants, including the senior staff of the Joint Commission Support Directorate (JCSD) from the Defense Department's POW/Missing Personnel Office, also asked for Russian assistance in arranging expeditions to the Far East in search of WWII downed aircraft.

The U.S. side cited the value of continuing archival access granted by the Russians to DoD researchers in the military archives at Podolsk. Since 1997, JCSD researchers have retrieved more than 45,000 pages from that archive, clarifying the fates of more than 250 U.S. airmen who were shot down during the Korean War. Soviet pilots flew more than 75 per cent of the MiG-15 missions against U.S. pilots during that war.

Outside the working groups, the attendees also discussed with Russian archivists a U.S. initiative to expand archival research in Russia through contracted personnel.

Commissioner Clift welcomed several newly-appointed Russian commissioners and urged them to work closely with the permanent DoD staff and with their U.S. counterparts on the Commission.