

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS AFFAIRS**



***AMERICAN
PRISONERS OF WAR (POWs)
AND MISSING IN ACTION (MIAs)***

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“We’re here to remember, we’re here to honor, the courage of America’s captives and our missing countrymen who risked everything, facing the worst of war to preserve the best of America.”

(Then-Acting) Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England at the Pentagon on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, September 16, 2005

Introduction

This report is an annual update (for calendar year 2005) of the numbers of American POWs and MIAs. The information used to provide the numbers comes from disparate sources, including: historical books and reports, official Defense Department records, rosters kept by POW and MIA organizations, and demographic estimates. Often, the sources do not agree. Often, information changes over time. More often, actual records do not exist and estimates, based on broad assumptions, need to be made. Therefore, the reliability of the numbers herein varies from table-to-table and from footnote-to footnote. Information on more recent cohorts of POWs/MIAs is generally more reliable than information on older cohorts of POWs/MIAs because the data on the former are more current and based on better recorded information. With this in mind, a summary of the nature of the data is provided below:

- Information on POWs and MIAs of World War (WW) I, World War (WW) II, Korea, and the Cold War are based on original official battle reports, records on casualties, and other DOD sources. Estimates of surviving WW II and Korean Conflict POWs alive at the end of calendar year 2005 are based on estimated male veteran deaths and population by period of service for that year (Source: VA Office of Policy, VetPop2004, June 2005).
- Information on POWs and MIAs of the Vietnam period and the U.S.S. Pueblo incident come largely from the Defense POW/MIA Personnel Office (DPMO); counts of surviving POWs alive at the end of 2005 are based as much as possible on records about individuals kept and followed under various auspices, such as NAM-POWs and the Pueblo Veterans Association (please see acknowledgments and sources in this report).
- Information on POWs and MIAs for post-Vietnam periods also comes from the DPMO. Because there is no one official source on the current status of all repatriated POWs, this report assumes those of periods after Vietnam were alive at the end of 2005.

A comparison of data and estimates from the end of calendar years 2004 and 2005 shows notably that during 2005:

- The estimated number of living POWs decreased from nearly 32,550 to about 29,350, caused mainly by estimated deaths among WW II and Korean POWs.
- There were eight recorded deaths among Vietnam POWs (their names appear at the end of the report). [In 2005, the PMSEA (Personnel Missing in S.E. Asia) reclassified an army POW returned alive to AWOL/Deserter; it also added an Air Force POW who died while a POW].
- The number classified as MIA and unaccounted for in Vietnam, declined from 1,842 to 1,807.
- Capt. Michael Speicher and Spc. Keith Maupin, both of the Gulf War era (1990 to date), remain missing/captured.

Summary of Wars

Table 1. Summary of Wars

	Captured and Interned	Died While POW	Returned to U.S. Military Control	Refused to Return	Alive at end of 2005
GRAND TOTAL	142,246	17,010	125,213	21	29,350 ^(a)
WW I	4,120	147	3,973	--	--
WW II	130,201	14,072	116,129	--	26,750 ^(b)
Korea	7,140	2,701	4,418	21 ^(c)	-2,000 ^(b)
Vietnam	725	65	660	--	579
Gulf War (Desert Storm)	47 ^(d)	25 ^(d)	21 ^(d)	--	21 ^(d)
Somalia	1	--	1	--	1 ^(e)
Kosovo	3	--	3	--	3 ^(e)
Bosnia	--	--	--	--	--
Iraq	9 ^(f)	--	8	--	8 ^(f)

^(a) Number rounded to nearest 50.

^(b) Number alive at end of 2005 is based on mortality estimates derived from VA Office of Actuary data and rounded to nearest 50. -Because of the advanced age of WW I veterans, estimates of those alive at end of 2005 would be too unreliable to report. However, the number might be zero. Estimated death rates in 2005 for all "WW II only" and "Korean War only" male veterans are used to estimate living POWs of WW II and the Korean War, respectively.

^(c) While initially 21 Korean Conflict POWs refused repatriation, only one remained in China, one died and 19 left China for Western countries.

^(d) The DPMO lists 47 captives (including Navy Captain Michael Speicher, who is listed as "missing/captured"). Of the 47, 25 are listed as killed in action (the remains of 2 have not been returned because they were in aircraft lost at sea), and 21 were repatriated. The 25 killed in action are listed here as died while POW. Since DOD indicates that it does not officially maintain contact with ALL living POWs, it cannot say for certain how many are still alive. The assumption for this report is that those of this era were still alive at the end of 2005. Captain Speicher is not included in the number alive at the end of 2005, but this in no way is meant to suggest anything about his status.

^(e) The assumption for this report is that those of this era were alive at the end of 2005.

^(f) This number in the first column includes Spc. Keith Maupin, who is listed as "missing/captured." The number in the last column pertains only to those who were returned to U.S. military control; all are assumed to be alive at the end of 2005. Spc. Maupin is not included in the number, but this in no way is meant to suggest anything about his status.

Excluded from Table 1 are:

- The crew of the U.S.S. Pueblo, captured on January 23, 1968, because those captured were not considered POWs of the Vietnam War, the era in which the incident occurred. North Korea captured this naval vessel and held the entire crew as POWs. One died during captivity and 82 were held captive, including two civilians. Of the 80 military POWs that were repatriated, 70 were alive at the end of 2005, according to the U.S.S. Pueblo Veterans Association.
- Merchant Marine casualties in WW II: 4,780 missing, 882 dead, including 37 POWs, and 572 released from captivity and one civilian POW accounted for. An estimated 140 were alive at the end of 2005 (applying estimated death rates of male WW II only veterans and rounding to nearest 10). Merchant Marines were granted veteran status after WW II, not during the time of their service. (Summary of Merchant Marine casualties, WW II, from U.S. Coast Guard report dated July 1, 1950.)
- Approximately 600 captured construction workers on Wake Island and American Airlines workers on Guam; an estimated 90 were alive at the end of 2005 (applying estimated death rates of male WW II only veterans and rounding to nearest 10). Construction workers on Wake Island and American Airline employees on Guam were treated as veterans for purposes of VA benefit eligibility in accordance with DOD Directive 1000.20 (P.L. 95-202).
- POWs from wars prior to WW I: during the Civil War, 220,000 were captured by the North, with 26,436 dying during confinement; 126,950 were captured by the South, with 22,576 dying during confinement. (*The Civil War*, Garden Press, New York, New York.) During the American Revolution, unofficial reports indicate up to 11,000 died during captivity, most while confined in prison ships in New York harbor.

World War II, Korea, and Vietnam

Table 2. World War II POWs by Status, Branch and Theater (for Army and Air Corps)

	Captured and Interned	Died While POW	Returned to U.S. Military Control	Estimated Alive at End of 2005
GRAND TOTAL	130,201	14,072	116,129	26,750
Army & Air Corps – Total	124,079	12,653	111,426	25,800
European theater/ Mediterranean ^(a)	93,941	1,121	92,820	21,950 ^(b)
Pacific (Other than the Philippines)	1,885	457	1,428	300 ^(b)
Other Theaters of Operation	2,673	425	2,248	550 ^(b)
The Philippines ^(c) (Dec. 7, 1941 thru May 10, 1942)	25,580	10,650	14,930	3,000 ^(b)
Navy & Marine Corps – Total	6,122	1,419	4,703	950
Navy ^(d)	3,848	901	2,947	600 ^(b)
Marine Corps ^(e)	2,274	518	1,756	350 ^(b)

- (a) Includes 23,554 captured during the Battle of Bulge (Ardennes, December 16, 1944 – January 25, 1945).
- (b) The calculation uses an estimated 2005 death rate for male “WW II only” veterans and makes no distinction among WW II branches and theater with respect to death rate. Estimates of survivors are rounded to nearest 50.
- (c) Also known as the Bataan-Corregidor combat zone. Some 7,300 American civilian men, women, and children were involuntarily incarcerated by the Japanese in 1941 – 1942. An additional 13,000 of mixed American and Asian parentage holding American citizenship hid out during this period and were never interned.
- (d) Navy casualty data are allocated to naval vessels, not to theater of operations.
- (e) Marine Corps personnel captured in the Philippines December 1941 – May 1942 totaled 1,388. Data on numbers dying during captivity, repatriated, and still living are not available separately for the Philippines.

Table 3. Korean Conflict POWs by Status and Branch

	Captured and Interned	Died While POW	Returned to U.S. Military Control	Refused to Return	Estimated Alive at end of 2005 ^(a)
GRAND TOTAL	7,140	2,701	4,418	21	2,000
Army	6,656	2,662	3,973	21	1,800 ^(a)
Navy	35	4	31	--	^(b)
Marine Corps	225	31	194	--	100 ^(a)
Air Force	224	4	220	--	100 ^(a)

(a) The calculation uses an estimated 2005 death rate for male "Korean Conflict only" veterans and makes no distinction among branches with respect to death rate. Estimates of survivors are rounded to nearest 50.

(b) Less than 25.

Table 4. Vietnam POWs/MIAs by Status and Branch

	Captured and Interned ^(a)	Died While POW	POWs Returned to U.S. Military Control	POWs Alive at End of 2005	MIAs	
					Remains Returned/Recovered	Still MIA ^(b)
GRAND TOTAL	725	65	660 ^(c)	579^(c)	800^(d)	1,807
Army	167	29	138	118	155 ^(d)	574
Navy	160	9	151	132	153 ^(d)	378
Marine Corps	46	8	38	32	75 ^(d)	220
Air Force	352	19	333	297	401 ^(d)	601
Coast Guard	--	--	--	--	1 ^(d)	0
Civilians	--	--	65 ^(c)	--	15 ^(d)	34

(a) Includes "POWs Dying in Captivity" plus "POWs Returned to U.S. Military Control".

(b) Source: DPMO, *Vietnam-Era Unaccounted for Statistical Report*, 1-24-06, p.1. At the conclusion of hostilities, League of Families data indicated 2,583 were classified as MIAs (including 48 civilians).

(c) Civilians, excluding foreign nationals, are not included in grand total for this column. Source of data: www.NAMPOWS.org. NAM POWs is source of data for living POW's by branch.

(d) The source of the branch data is PMSEA, *Summary Report by Service and Status Code*.

The Cold War and Post-Vietnam Conflicts

The Cold War

The DPMO has an official designation of POWs/MIAs from the Cold War (1946-1991). These are primarily U.S. pilots and crew downed during operations against hostile communist foe during this period (exclusive of action considered part of the other wars occurring during these years). Details are as follows:

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Returned or Recovered Alive</u>	<u>Remains Returned</u>	<u>MIA</u>
Air Force	81	3	21	57
Marines	1	0	0	1
Navy	79	7	6	66
<u>Civilians</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	165	12	27	126

Source: DPMO, *Cold War Report—Cold War Losses, Single Page Summary*, 8/31/00

Note: There is insufficient information to estimate the number of survivors alive at the end of 2005.

The Gulf War (Desert Storm)

The total number of American servicemen captured was 21 and all were immediately repatriated when hostilities ceased. Captain Michael Speicher is listed as missing/captured. See Table 1, note (d) for more details. Source: DPMO web site (www.dtic.mil/dpmo/gulfwar.htm)

Somalia/Bosnia/Kosovo

One U.S. serviceman was captured and briefly held prisoner in Somalia, none in Bosnia, and three in Kosovo.

Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom)

No POWs / MIAs to date.

Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom)

9 POWs / One MIA to date, viz., Spc. Keith Maupin.

Additional Sources

Estimated Deaths and Estimated Population for Computing Death Rates for WW II and Korean Conflict POWs

VetPop2004, June 2005, Washington, DC: VA Office of Policy.

World War II

Army Battle Casualties and Non-Battle Deaths in WWII: Final Report, 7 December 1941 – 31 December 1946, Published 1 June 1953.

Combat Connected Naval Casualties: WWII by States – 1946 UNS – MC – GC, 2 Vol. Published by Casualty Section, Navy Department.

History of Medical Department of Navy in WWII: Statistics of Diseases and Injuries, US Govt. Printing Office (*Navy Med. P.* 1318, Vol. 3).

History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in WWII: Volume V. Appendix A, Published 1968 by Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.

Korean Conflict

DoD Public Information Release No. 1088 – 54, November 5, 1954.

DoD Tentative Final Report of U.S. Battle Casualties in the Korean War, Office of Secretary of Defense, November 4, 1954.

Vietnam

The number of Vietnam Era POWs still alive on December 31, 2005 provided by Mike McGrath, Historian/ Statistician, NAM-POWs Association (www.nampows.org). Those POWs who died in 2005 are: Capt. Ronald Bliss (USAF), Lt. Col. Robert Daughtrey (USAF), Lt. Cmdr. Phillip Kientzler (USN), Vice Adm. William Lawrence (USN), Col. Harold Monlux (USAF), CW3 Donald Rander (USA), Vice Adm. James Stockdale (USN), and Lt. Col. Russell Temperley (USAF).

Updates on remaining MIAs provided by Ann Mills Griffiths, National League of Families (www.pow-miafamilies.org); and from DPMO, *Subject: Vietnam Era Unaccounted for Statistical Report*, 1-24-06.

Post-Vietnam Era Conflicts

Number captured and returned to US Military Control provided by the DPMO for Desert Storm, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. DPMO web site: www.dtic.mil/dpmo/generalinfo.htm

U.S.S. Pueblo Incident

Don Peppard, President, U.S.S. PUEBLO Veterans Association (www.usspueblo.org)

Acknowledgements

This report continues the series of annual reports and updates on the status of Americans who were POWs and MIAs during various wars. Charles A. Stenger, Ph.D., a veteran of WWII and former POW of the European theater himself, produced the series almost single-handedly from 1977 until 2003. Dr. Stenger worked at VA in the Mental Health and Behavioral Science Service from 1964 through 1980. He continued preparing the POW/MIA report long after retirement from VA. OPP&P assumed the task of updating the report starting in 2004 not only because OPP&P serves as a VA center for data collection, data evaluation, and analysis, but also to honor all POWs and MIAs and to acknowledge the enduring contribution of Dr. Stenger.

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