



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 31, 2016

Some U.S. and UK POWs May Still Be Alive in North Korean Camps, Says UK Paper

Hundreds of American and British prisoners of war held captive by North Korea at the time of the Korean Armistice Agreement in 1953 that ended hostilities were never released and likely suffered years of inhumane treatment in POW camps. An August 23 article in the *Daily Star*, a British tabloid with a circulation of 424,000, speculated that some of these POWs “could still be alive at the mercy of maniacal Jong-un.”



Any POWs held in 1953 would now be at least 80 years old.

The *Daily Star* article cited “top secret documents” that provided evidence of hundreds of soldiers, including British, were “abandoned by governments who wrote them off as missing in action.”

The primary document cited in the *Daily Star* article was a U.S. Air Force memorandum prepared for the director of the CIA on March 16, 1954, by Air Force Chief of Staff Nathan Twining, who later became chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The memo stated, in part:

1. An unknown but apparently substantial number of U.S. military personnel captured in the course of the Korean War are still being held prisoners by the Communist Forces. These individuals will not necessarily be retained by North Korea or Manchuria, but be held elsewhere within the Soviet orbit....
4. It is therefore requested that requirements be placed on appropriate operating organizations for clandestine and covert action to locate, identify, and recover those U.S. prisoners who are still in Communist custody.

The *Daily Star* writer noted that there is no evidence to suggest that General Twining’s mandate to locate, identify, and recover the POWs ever happened. The report then went on to cite and display a top secret CIA “live sightings report” from 1997 that stated: “There have been numerous report of both American and British POWs in North Korea. One of the most compelling reports received over the years was a sighting reported to DoD by a Romanian in 17 Feb 1988.”

The article went on to refer the book [American Trophies](#) by investigative historian Mark Sauter, which was about the abandonment of American POWs. Sauter told *Daily Star Online*: “The evidence shows allied POWs from Korea, reportedly including some Brits, were kept by the communists after the Korean War. Reports are continuing to escape from North Korea of Caucasian POWs who are still alive.”

The *Daily Star* also quoted a statement from Sauter’s friend, Sydney Schanberg, the reporter whose coverage of the fall of Cambodia was made into the film *The Killing Fields*, who said shortly before his death in July that the U.S. government had covered up the scandalous abandonment of the POWs.

Schanberg said: “Though the evidence of these crimes is monumental, our government has never told this to the American public. Washington has simply covered it up and the timid mainstream press has



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done the same.”

While Schanberg’s accusation undoubtedly had merit, we did uncover one example of America’s most prestigious mainstream publication, the *New York Times*, publishing an article about the U.S. government’s knowledge of North Korea’s failure to turn over hundreds of American prisoners known to be alive at the end of the war. The *Times* article, published on September 17, 1996, reported that then-newly declassified documents, obtained from the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and other government depositories by a congressional committee, revealed that “the Pentagon knew in December 1953 that more than 900 American troops were alive at the end of the war but were never released by the North Koreans.”

The *Times* report also included speculation similar to that just aired by the *Daily Star*:

The documents may only deepen the mystery over the fate of Americans still considered missing from the Korean War. In June a Defense Department intelligence analyst testified that on the basis of “a recent flurry” of “very compelling reports,” he believed that as many as 15 Americans were still being held prisoner in North Korea.

The *Times* article also quoted a statement prepared for delivery before the House National Security subcommittee on military personnel that same month by retired Colonel Phillip Corso, a former military aide to President Eisenhower. Corso said, “In the past I have tried to tell Congress the fact that in 1953, 500 sick and wounded American prisoners were within 10 miles of the prisoner exchange point at Panmunjom but were never exchanged.”

The article also noted that one of the documents obtained by the House subcommittee, a December 1953 memo that had been on file at the Eisenhower Library, “revealed that the Army believed at that time that 610 ‘Army people’ and 300 Air Force personnel were still being held prisoners by the North Koreans, five months after a prisoner exchange between the United States and North Korea.”

The memo said that President Eisenhower was “intensely interested” in the fate of “the missing P.O.W.s,” and that he had wanted to make sure “everybody was doing all they could about it,” reported the *Times*.

The *Times* report continued with even more disturbing news:

The hearing Tuesday of the subcommittee will include potentially explosive testimony from a Czech defector, Jan Sejna, who now works for the United States Defense Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Sejna, a former Czech defense official, had access to information about medical experiments carried out on American prisoners of war by Russian and Czech personnel in a hospital in North Korea during the war. Mr. Sejna had described experiments in which American prisoners were drugged in a program to “develop comprehensive interrogation techniques, involving medical, psychological and drug-induced behavior modification.”

At the end of the testing, the Americans were reportedly executed.

The fact that American POWs were abandoned in Korea has been known for a long time and was recognized in an article ([“Korea: The No-win War That Keeps Giving”](#)) posted by *The New American* in November 2010. Among the consequences of U.S. participation in the UN “police action” in Korea detailed in the article were, “the communists won (in the North), American soldiers died, thousands of POWs were abandoned (to this day), and an international standing army was installed in South Korea as a check against the instability of a third-rate criminal ring in North Korea.”



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The article concluded: “Certainly, General Douglas MacArthur and the thousands of American men and boys who fought and bled in that unhappy battlefield of Korea cry from the dust in protest.”

The Korean War, which was fought from 1950 through 1953, set several bad precedents that were continued in Vietnam during the 1960s and '70s. The single most important common denominator of the two conflicts was that they were both no-win wars, in which no real effort was made to defeat the enemy. More relevant to today’s discussion, however, was that the end of the wars in both Korea and Vietnam saw many American POWs left behind. In “[POWs: Forgetting Those Left Behind](#),” an article for *The New American* posted in 2008, it was revealed that our government followed a similar pattern after the Vietnam War as was conducted after the Korean conflict, with many POWs unaccounted for. The article quoted from an article by Vietnam veteran and POW activist Ted Sampley, who wrote:

When the Senate created the Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs in mid-summer 1991, a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll showed 69 percent of Americans surveyed believed Americans remained captive in Southeast Asia and 75 percent said the U.S. government was not doing enough to bring them home.

The article’s writer, William F. Jasper, went on to state:

In 1973, the communist North Vietnamese regime released 591 American POWs. With this “Operation Homecoming,” the U.S. government intended to close the books. But more than 2,400 POWs were still unaccounted for, and there was good reason to believe many of them were still alive. Thousands of POW family members, as well as U.S. veterans groups, refused to write them off as dead, which is precisely what many bureaucrats and politicians, along with businessmen eager for commerce with Vietnam, were willing to do.

Jasper noted something we have also mentioned in recent articles, that Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.) has been one of the strongest opponents of the quest for POW/MIA groups to reopen investigations into the plight of those who were unaccounted for. Many people find this surprising, since McCain’s entire political career was launched by capitalizing on his record as a former POW in Vietnam.

The aforementioned Ted Sampley, a highly decorated Special Forces combat veteran in Vietnam, who has been, since 1983, one of the most ardent and well-known champions of the POW/MIAs, wrote a book titled, *Vetting John McCain*. Jasper notes that the book is a scathing exposé of the too-little-known story of Senator John McCain’s decades-long collaboration with those in both Democrat and Republican administrations who led the efforts to debunk all live POW/MIA reports, and to push for normalization of relations and trade with — and aid to — Vietnam.”

Many readers may recall seeing the black and white POW-MIA flag flying in various locations. It is an important reminder to all that we must not forget the brave military service members who risked everything for their country. Every unaccounted-for POW and MIA must be accounted for, if possible, and any found to be alive must be brought home.

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