

January 19, 2023

Senate Armed Services Committee
Russell Senate Building Rm. 228
Washington DC 20510

To Whom It May Concern,

Our beloved family members, Dwight C. Angell, of Colorado and Lloyd Smith of Arkansas were declared missing when their Navy Lockheed P2V-5 Neptune was shot down by Chinese anti-aircraft fire near Swatow on January 18, 1953. Our families have never stopped looking for them. We have recently been working to ensure that their names are included on the Korean War Memorial Wall of Remembrance. Unfortunately, we have been left in limbo on this matter by the Department of Defense and have come to learn that compiling an accurate list of names of US service member casualties and losses in the Korean War is a significant challenge for many reasons. Our concerns on this matter are twofold:

1. Determination of the eligibility criteria for names to be included on the Korean War Memorial Wall of Remembrance.

In 2016, when Congress approved legislation establishing the Korean War Memorial Wall of Remembrance, it mandated that the Department of Defense (DoD) establish criteria for determining the names to be included on the wall. Historically, there was no official definition of the combat zone, so each service branch decided for itself what the boundaries were and which names they counted. General Ridgway, upon assumption of command in 1951 described the boundaries of the conflict to include "... a vast arc from the Aleutians to Formosa." In 2021 the DoD arbitrarily chose to use a more limited geographic region to count the losses for placement on the wall. The site of the P2V plane crash is outside the DoD's 2021 defined geographic region. Despite the geographic boundaries, there are nearly 225 names of American service members who were lost outside of the DoD's geographic region whose names ARE included on the wall. Researchers at the Korean War Project (KWP) have compiled a list of all American losses that occurred outside of the DoD's limited geographic region and notes those whose names are carved on the wall. This list includes air losses. You can access that list here:

<https://www.koreanwar.org/html/korean-war-veterans-memorial-criteria.html>

**Out of respect for the sacrifice that these service members made for their country,
this demands investigation.**

Legislative precedent for determining who is considered "Missing in Action" in Korea was established in 2000 in S.484, the "Bring Them Home Alive Act" which reads, in part, "(3) Missing status. --The term "missing status", with respect to the Korean War, means the status of an individual as a result of the Korean War if immediately before that status began the individual--

(A) was performing service in the Korean peninsula;

or

(B) was performing service in Asia in direct support of military operations in the Korean peninsula.

Analysis of the legislative intent for referring specifically to Asia in (B) here, as opposed to a more restricted geographic region, such as the region defined in subsequent DoD documents to identify the names to be engraved on the Korean War Memorial Wall of Remembrance, demonstrates that this language was used specifically because of the documentation of casualties and losses, including flight patrols, in Asia. It is unknown if DoD researched the congressional record on this subject before defining the geographic region for identifying those whose names would be included on the memorial wall. Clearly the congressional record supports a much larger geographic theater.

2. **Determination of the accuracy of the names to be included on the Korean War Memorial Wall of Remembrance.**

Many mistakes were introduced in the repeated transcribing of casualty lists over time. In 1993 the National Archives list contained the names of thousands of Korean war dead, information that had been first typed up by a squad member, then transferred to a death or burial record, then put on punch cards with a limit of twenty-five characters, then typed again into early digital files—which were finally transferred to official databases. Included among the misspelled names on these lists were those of Puerto Rican, Hawaiian, and Native American troops, many of which had been truncated because of the use of punch cards, and which have continued to be misspelled ever since. Sadly, among current errors on the memorial wall are inaccurate/mis-spelled names of three Medal of Honor recipients.

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In any transcription process, the potential always exists for clerical error. Research of the records indicates that the names of the members of the Navy P2V-5 that went down on January 18, 1953, initially appeared as Korean War casualties in official records kept at the National Archives. In the file from the Korean War Project referred to above you will see that **ONLY the names of the missing crew members from the P2V-5 flight that Dwight Angell and Lloyd Smith were on were removed from the database by the Defense Casualty Analysis System (DCAS) in 2008.** There is no explanation for this of which we are aware. The list from the National Archives figures prominently in the events leading up to the creation and dedication of the wall, as it was the first list that the public was referred to before the DoD established their eligibility criteria for the wall. It was the first list that we researched and how we first became aware that Dwight Angell and Lloyd Smith's names were not going to be included on the wall. It should be noted that the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) and the KWP both recognize the sacrifice of all the crew members of the P2V-5 that went down on 1/18/53, and the Coast Guard crew members that went missing trying to rescue them.

Out of respect for the sacrifice that:

***Dwight Angell
Ronald Beahm
Clifford Byars
William McClure Jr.
Paul Morley
Lloyd Smith Jr.
Winfield Hammond
Gerald Stuart
Carl Tornell
Joseph Bridge and
Tracy Miller***

made for their country on January 18, 1953, this demands investigation.

We respectfully request that a congressional investigation commence forthwith to address these and any other egregious errors that have been made in the conception, development, and implementation of the Korean War Memorial Wall of Remembrance, with a goal to ensure that the Wall of Remembrance equitably recognizes and honors all American lives lost in the entire theater of the Korean conflict, from every US service branch.

We are deeply grateful for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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cc: file