

To: Nally Khoshra
From: Dan Ryan-

5/26/95 1:00 p.m.

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
POW/MIA STAMP UNVEILING
THE WHITE HOUSE
MAY 29, 1995**

Acknowledgments: Secretary Brown
Postmaster General Runyon
Distinguished Veterans
Members of the Armed Forces

It is a pleasure to welcome you all to the White House. I am particularly glad that a number of former prisoners of war could join us today, and I would like to recognize several of them.

Lieutenant Colonel Charles Prigmore was a young bombardier during World War II. On his 14th mission over Germany, his plane was shot down, and he spent a year as a POW -- and today he is national commander of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

Infantryman Bill Rolen fought at Anzio Beach and helped liberate Rome. During the invasion of southern France, he was captured -- and forced to spend the rest of the war in a slave labor camp.

When the Philippines was attacked in 1941, Ruby Bradley had already been an Army Nurse for seven years. She was captured just days after Christmas; her internment lasted until 1945.

Robert Fletcher was serving in Korea in 1950 when he was captured. He spent almost three years as a prisoner of the North Korean and Chinese forces before he could finally return home.

Captain Isaac Camacho -- a Green Beret -- was captured outside Saigon when his camp was overrun in 1963. He endured the jungle prisons of the Viet Cong for almost two years -- and he was one of the very few to escape those awful places and survive. It is especially appropriate to have him here because today he is a U.S. Postal Service station master in El Paso, Texas.

Finally, Lieutenant Colonel Rhonda Cornum is flight surgeon who served in Operation Desert Storm. On a rescue mission in Iraq, her helicopter was shot down. She was badly injured with broken arms and a gunshot wound, captured by Iraqi forces and held until the end of the fighting.

Make no mistake, ladies and gentlemen, today we are among heroes. These are some of the finest, bravest individuals our nation has ever produced. They had to bear unspeakable hardships, and they never faltered. They inspire us, as they will generations to come. I am pleased that millions of Americans will be reminded daily of their extraordinary service by the stamp we are unveiling today.

On this Memorial Day, as we do every year, we also remember those who answered the call but did not come home. Their loss is one of the greatest costs our nation has paid for freedom. Most of us cannot imagine the pain their families have experienced -- the grief that comes with uncertainty...the grief that is denied even a proper grave.

But we know very well our obligation to them and their families -- to leave no stone unturned as we try to account for their fate, and if possible, bring them home. We have worked hard, and we

have made good progress. We have put the issue of MIA cases ahead of all others in our dealings with Vietnam -- and today Hanoi is cooperating more than ever before. A Presidential delegation headed by Veterans Deputy Secretary Hershel Gober just returned from Vietnam and Laos, and we believe that cooperation with both countries will continue.

Our joint investigations are moving forward, the Vietnamese are turning over essential documents -- and more than 200 sets of remains have been returned since I took office. Of the nearly 200 so-called "discrepancy cases," we have confirmed the fate of all but 55. And we will not stop until we have taken every step possible for every MIA and every MIA family.

Thanks to our new relationship with Russia, we are also making progress on MIA cases from World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam and a number of Cold War incidents. The U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs has gained access to thousands of pages of once-classified documents....conducted hundreds of interviews in Russia and the other New Independent States....received important information about the fate of American service personnel. That work too will go forward until we have done all there is to do.

These efforts are part of our larger commitment to stand by all those who stood watch for our freedom. Whether it is improving veterans' health care....^{breaking the cycle of} helping homeless veterans....confronting the legacy of Agent Orange...^{or} getting to the bottom of Gulf War-related illnesses.

protecting benefits veterans have earned

Our nation must uphold its solemn obligation to veterans -- not for a few months or a few years but for their entire lives. As long as I am President, the United States will fulfill this sacred tradition.

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