

U.S. Pilot May Have Been Secret Soviet Prisoner, New Film Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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WASHINGTON — A documentary set to be released this month tackles the tragic and mysterious fate of U.S. Air Force pilot Harry Moore, whose family believes that he became a prisoner of war in the Soviet Union after his plane was shot down during the Korean War six decades ago.

"The bottom line is to give the Moores closure as to what happened to Harry," Hope Manna, writer and producer of "Keeping the Promise Alive," told RIA Novosti by telephone from Idaho on Tuesday.

The film, set for DVD release later this month, centers around a quest by Moore's widow and brother to uncover the truth about the American pilot's fate after the U.S. military informed them in 2002 that a joint U.S.-Russian commission had obtained evidence suggesting Moore had survived a 1951 firefight with Soviet warplanes during the Korean War and was subsequently interrogated by the Soviet military.

The revelation came nearly 50 years after the Air Force notified Moore's family in 1953 that the pilot was presumed to have been killed in action. Moore's widow Lois and his brother Bob married the following year, adding a potent emotional layer to the prospect that the pilot had actually survived and could still be alive.

"Here we were, married for 48 years on the assumption that he had been killed," Bob Moore told RIA Novosti by telephone from Idaho. "So obviously this was a very emotional thing for us."

The United States has never officially confirmed that U.S. prisoners of war were held in the Soviet Union, although Secretary of State John Kerry said in a 1992 Senate report on POWs from World War II, the Korean War and the Cold War that then-President Boris Yeltsin said several American servicemen were captured and imprisoned by the Soviets.

"President Yeltsin has admitted that some Americans were imprisoned in the former Soviet Union after World War II," Kerry, said in the report. "He has said that some U.S. prisoners were interrogated by the Soviets during the Korean War, and he has acknowledged the capture and imprisonment of perhaps a dozen airmen during the Cold War period."

The U.S.-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, formed in 1992 by Yeltsin and then-U.S. President George H.W. Bush, said in a 2010 report that "there is a high probability that American POWs from the Korean War were transferred to the former U.S.S.R."

The 2002 letter the Moores received from the Pentagon contained intriguing evidence that the pilot may have been taken captive by Soviet forces after the F-51 aircraft he was flying was shot down by a patrolling Soviet MiG-15 jet fighter during a reconnaissance mission over North Korea on June 1, 1951.

U.S. researchers digging through Russian military archives discovered a Soviet combat report of the same incident in which Moore's plane crashed and interviewed the Soviet pilot who said he followed the U.S. plane until it landed safely 20 to 30 meters (65 to 98 feet) from the shore of an island in the Korean Gulf, according to the letter from the Pentagon department responsible for POW affairs.

The Soviet pilot told U.S. researchers that the American pilot should have survived the crash landing, but that he did not know anything about his fate. A different Soviet fighter pilot, Igor Shavsha, told U.S. researchers that he had heard that a pilot interrogated by a Soviet commander was Capt. Gary or Harry Moore, "who had been shot down in the summer of 1951," according to a document obtained by the Moores.

The same document cites an interview given by a man named Nikolai Belyakov in which he stated that an American interrogated by the same commander cited by Shavsha was later sent to serve as an instructor at the Soviet Air Force Academy in the town of Monino outside Moscow.

Bob Moore, 87, said he and Lois decided to team up with Manna and co-producer Kellie Allred to produce the documentary two years ago after their attempts to locate more documentation about Harry Moore's fate ran into a wall.

The film was first screened in Virginia last month, and a second screening is scheduled for August 8 in Washington. It is set to be released on DVD on July 27, the 60th anniversary of the Korean War armistice.

Bob Moore hopes the film will also help spur the United States and Russia to boost their efforts to confirm the fates of Moore and other U.S. military personnel who may have been sent to the Soviet Union.

"So far we haven't been able to get a lot of information from the Russian archives, so we hope to get a better rapport between our government and the Russian government," Bob Moore told RIA Novosti.

Harry Moore and Lois, now 85, had a daughter before the pilot disappeared whom his brother has raised as his own. The desire to figure out exactly what happened to Capt. Moore has become a family mission, all the way down to their great-grandchildren, the couple says.

"When we can't do it any longer, they will continue," Lois said.

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