



## NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

5673 Columbia Pike, Suite 100, Falls Church, VA 22041

PH ---703/465-7432

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[www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)

### Newsletter to Inactive Family Members: June 7, 2021

**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE:** It will soon be two full years since we gathered to celebrate the League's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting in June 2019. Inspiring and motivational as it was to have with us so many near-legendary former officials attesting to 50 years of League efforts seeking answers, many challenges were already apparent and others were building. I waited much too long to share my thoughts on where things stand. despite my concern over serious disappointment on impacted family members, countless veterans and other dedicated Americans who've been key to sustaining the League all these years, I can wait no longer,, .

**Background:** The greatest disappointment and frustration has been DPAA's failure to learn from, overcome and get beyond the initial, failed restructure, directed by former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in early 2014 with the League's strong support and encouragement.

**Current Situation:** After nearly four years of League appeals for an objective intelligence assessment of where the VN War accounting mission stands as compared with original evidence-based expectations, DPAA finally sent a request in October 2020 for an outside intelligence assessment to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security. Since then, little information has been available. Our Senior Policy Advisor Richard "Dick" Childress (President Reagan's NSC point man, 1981-89) and I combed through countless documents and sent them to key US officials to ensure they would have the evidentiary foundation from which to undertake a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE). There must be no political bias or personal agenda as was the case in a pre-normalization assessment conducted in the early 1990s. This current assessment is necessary as the basis for DPAA to develop policy to achieve realistic accounting goals. If there is no foundation, policy can't be formed; without policy approved by interagency leadership, effective implementation to achieve established goals has no solid basis. This is common sense, but knowledge, experience, integrity and common sense appear to be in short supply in some bureaucracies today.

**The Challenges:** We must focus on pushing for changes urgently needed to enable today's DPAA to meet, and hopefully exceed accounting goals. To accomplish the long-sought changes outlined in Secretary Hagel's 2014 directed restructure, the League must continue to be viable, with a strong Board of Directors and reliable funding to hire a qualified Executive Director to represent our interests. While I've decided to again be a candidate for the 2021-23 Board of Directors, I feel it would be irresponsible for me to continue as CEO/Executive Director at the approaching age of 80! We must have well-informed, capable representation here in DC and with foreign officials whose cooperation DPAA and DIA must have to succeed. **THAT MEANS THE LEAGUE NEEDS FUNDING NOW AND IN THE FUTURE!**

You are on a list of "Inactive Next of Kin" for not having responded for several years to infrequent newsletters, but regular POW/MIA Updates as posted on our website. For whatever reason, you have chosen not to remain active, or you've received answers and are no longer interested in thinking about those still missing and their families need for answers. The challenge is, **WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT, AND WE NEED IT NOW!** Daily, you see TV appeals for a commitment of \$10 or \$11 a month to help injured veterans or provide support to surviving families, both worthy causes. As Chairman/CEO since 2011, I haven't asked in years, but now must ask for your commitment going forward, via our website or by check to the League Office. There is no alternative but to ask for your commitment now! Reliable funding for the League is critical to sustaining USG priority and interest – congressional key departments and agencies – as well as that of foreign countries. **YOU CAN HELP!**

**MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED-FOR FROM THE VIETNAM WAR:** The number missing (POW/MIA) and unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR) from the Vietnam War is **1,584**. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced on March 14<sup>th</sup> that US Naval Reserve Cmdr. Paul C. Charvet, 26, killed during the Vietnam War, was accounted for March 1, 2021. On March 21, 1967, his A-1H Skyraider aircraft disappeared near Hon Me Island off the coast of North Vietnam. This recovery was accomplished unilaterally by a Vietnamese Recovery Team; the remains were turned over to the US for identification. This was a significant, important step by Vietnam and one which the League had long advocated, recognizes and appreciates. Until this announcement, there had been no US personnel accounted for from the Vietnam War since July 2020. During the DPAA Family/VSO Quarterly Call & Update on April 29<sup>th</sup>, the Lab affirmed there are NO Vietnam War-related remains awaiting ID.

Of the 1,584 still missing and unaccounted-for, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,244 (VN-442, VS-802); Laos-285; Cambodia-48; PRC territorial waters-7. Since chartered in 1970, the League has sought the return of all POWs, the fullest possible accounting for the missing, and repatriation of all recoverable remains. The total accounted for since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is **999**. A breakdown by country of these 999 Americans is: Vietnam – 674, Laos – 280, Cambodia – 42, and the PRC – 3. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975, the formal end of the Vietnam War, for a grand total of 1,062. These 63 Americans, were accounted for by US-only efforts in accessible areas, not due to cooperation by post-war governments in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. A total of 288 have been accounted for from Laos, 729 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

**DPAA & DIA SIGNED FORMAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU):** On September 17, 2020, DPAA Director Kelly McKeague and then Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Director LTG Bob Ashley, USA, signed an MOU to formalize integration of DIA's Stony Beach Team of specialists into Vietnam War accounting operations. Formed in 1986, and deployed in 1987, well before the accounting mission broadened to include personnel unrecovered from the Korean War, Cold War and World War II, Stony Beach's sole objective was Vietnam War accounting, focused then, as now, on resolving Last Known Alive (LKA) cases of US personnel initially listed as POW/MIA. This MOU was deemed critically important as a means to fully integrate these highly trained specialists to augment the investigation process while there is still time. Having been repeatedly cautioned about time running out, witnesses dying, remains disintegrating, etc., it is hoped that this formal agreement will expand fully integrated cooperation.

**ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS/EVENTS CANCELLED FOR 2020; UNILATERAL SRV RECOVERIES HELPED REDUCE DELAYS CAUSED BY COVID 19:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Defense (DoD) banned all DoD travel in early 2020, and Joint Field Activities (JFAs) in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were canceled. DoD, DIA, State Department and other US agencies are now moving to open up, though some are still teleworking. DIA Headquarters personnel, including Stony Beach specialists, were working in shifts, as were DPAA scientists in the respective laboratories at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, and Offutt AFB, Nebraska, but those restrictions are gradually easing.

During the earlier hiatus, DPAA Deputy Director for Operations RDML Darius Banaji, USN, met virtually with the **Cambodian POW/MIA Committee**. US Ambassador to Cambodia Patrick Murphy and Cambodian Deputy Chairman Sieng Lapresse participated, as did DPAA IndoPacific Regional Director Col Brian Peterson, USMC. Field operations resumed in early February in **Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia**. Also encouraging was a 70-day DPAA partnership recovery with the University of Illinois-Chicago that ended March 23<sup>rd</sup> and was undertaken at Koh Tong, Cambodia.

During this difficult time, and very significantly, **Vietnam fielded three Unilateral Recovery Teams (URTs)** that focused on several cases. US teams recently concluded the 142<sup>nd</sup> Joint Field Activity (JFA) in **Ha Tinh Province, Vietnam**. Reportedly, there were three RTs and one joint Investigation Team (IT) that included DIA Stony Beach specialists. Two Vietnamese URTs were added to plus-up the pace and scope of long-delayed operations. Also in Vietnam, a large Joint Field Activity (JFA) now ongoing includes 3 Recovery Teams (RTs), 1 underwater RT, a Research Investigation Team (RIT), plus 2 SRV URTs.

A **Joint Field Activity in Laos** was unfortunately canceled when US personnel were not permitted in-country due to further COVID pandemic-related restrictions. Thankfully, DIA's Stony Beach Lao specialist, permanently in-country, was allowed to utilize the helicopter support previously arranged, so investigations occurred. Three Recovery Teams are now conducting operations in Laos, following the required quarantine before going to the field sites; however, this time, the DIA Stony Beach Investigations that move from one location to another had to be cancelled due to raised COVID concerns.

DPAA continues to conduct **WWII, Korean War and Cold War** field recoveries in Europe and the Asia-Pacific Region, most recently in Austria and Belgium, and the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea. Planning is ongoing for a recovery in Germany, and investigations are planned to take place from May – September in Germany, Poland, Italy, Belgium and Panama, a more recent US Navy incident which DPAA was requested to handle.

**KOREAN WAR REMAINS RECOVERIES & IDENTIFICATIONS:** There still is no clarity on when/whether agreement to resume remains recovery operations in North Korea will occur, but there is ongoing effort, amid speculation. Reportedly high on the agenda, the subject is something leaders of both countries agree can be pursued on a separate humanitarian basis, regardless of political and/or policy differences. It is hoped working level talks to sort through specific issues related to in-country cooperation can resume soon.

It should be noted that 74 IDs of US personnel have now been made on remains unilaterally repatriated by North Korea in the 55 flag-draped transfer cases, due to agreements reached during the 2018 US-DPRK summit in Singapore. DPAA leaders stated publicly that DNA on as many as 170 US personnel and approximately 80 likely indigenous personnel may be represented by the remains turned over. Prospects are very good for a large number of identified remains of Korean War personnel to be returned to their families for honorable burial because of the high percentage of DNA reference samples that Korean War families have ensured are available. This expectation is also raised due to identification of remains disinterred from US cemeteries and from the earlier unilateral DPRK turnover of the K-208, representing an estimated 500-600 individuals.



**DPAA DISINTERMENT CEREMONY, May 17, 2021:** Members of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) salute a casket during a disinterment ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 17, 2021. The ceremony was part of DPAA's efforts to disinter the remains of unknown service members lost during the Korean War. DPAA's mission is to achieve the fullest possible accounting for missing and unaccounted-for U.S. personnel to their families and our nation. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Jacqueline A. Clifford)

**POW/MIA FLAG IN US CAPITOL ROTUNDA:** Media coverage of the lawless intrusion at the US Capitol on January 6th visibly showed the POW/MIA flag on display. It is important to understand that the accounting mission is bipartisan-supported and has been since the League was formed on May 28, 1970. With unanimous bipartisan support in the 100<sup>th</sup> Congress, the League's POW/MIA Flag was installed in the US Capitol Rotunda on March 9, 1989. Since that date, it has been displayed *"as a powerful symbol of America's determination to account for US personnel still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War."* The 101st Congress also passed bipartisan legislation recognizing our POW/MIA flag and designating it *"the symbol of our Nation's concern and commitment to resolving as fully as possible the fates of Americans still prisoner, missing and unaccounted for in Southeast Asia."*

**POW/MIA FLAG REMOVED FROM TOP OF WHITE HOUSE:** Despite President Trump's decision to sign bipartisan-supported House and Senate legislation into law (PL 116-67) on November 7, 2019, the mandate and intention of the National POW/MIA Flag Act was violated. By law, the League-originated POW/MIA flag was, and is, directed to be visibly displayed whenever the US flag is posted on Federal properties, including the White House, the US Capitol, all US Senate and House Buildings, the World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial and the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, every national cemetery, buildings containing the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs and the Director of the Selective Service system, all major military installations, as directed by the Secretary of Defense, all VA medical centers, and all offices of the US Postal Service. On Flag Day, June 14, 2020, the POW/MIA Flag was removed from atop the White House and placed on a separate flag pole, under the US flag, but scarcely visible in a small cluster of trees outside the circular drive around the South Lawn of the White House grounds. More problematic, Flag Day is one of the six days each year when long-existing laws required that our POW/MIA flag be flown, in addition to Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day.

### **POW/MIA FLAG RESTORED TO TOP OF WHITE HOUSE**

The League is grateful for the Biden Administration's decision to restore the POW/MIA flag to its rightful, intended position atop the White House on April 9, 2021. We are also grateful to Senators Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) and Tom Cotton (R-AR) for their initial introduction of legislation that became the National POW/MIA Flag Act and for asking President Biden to restore our flag to its rightful place.

The League is also grateful to the many who weighed in to support the restoration, as we are to the 100<sup>th</sup> and 101<sup>st</sup> Congresses for the meaningful signals their actions conveyed to senior US and foreign officials whose cooperation and responsiveness were and are absolutely necessary to the accounting mission.

Our POW/MIA flag flying under the US flag atop the White House signals worldwide that America stands behind and with those who serve – past, present and future – and, if captured or missing, all reasonable efforts will be made to recover and bring home as many as possible of our missing veterans.



## VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATION (VSO) SUPPORT CONTINUES

**THE AMERICAN LEGION** (from website): The American Legion is committed to achieving a full accounting of all POW/MIAs from the Gulf War, Vietnam War, Cold War, Korean War and World War II. This means returning living POWs, the repatriation of their remains, or finding convincing evidence why neither of these is possible. The American Legion supports the continued declassification of all POW/MIA information, the strengthening of joint commissions with Russia, North Korea and China, and adequate resourcing of investigative efforts and field operations to resolve POW/MIA issues. The American Legion has also worked continuously with both Congress and DoD to improve the policies and programs for the accountability of missing persons. This includes urging the President and Congress to fully fund the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) for its current and future mission of ensuring the accountability of US servicemembers. The American Legion will continue to speak out and exert maximum pressure on both the administration and on Congress to fully account for America's POW/MIAs.

**AMERICAN VETERANS (AMVETS):** In addition to demanding accountability from the government for service members missing in action, AMVETS announced that in addition to calling attention to the need to account as fully as possible for America's POW/MIAs, their 2021 **Rolling to Remember** will also focus on the veterans suicide epidemic....."It is a serious demonstration to bring awareness and accountability for POWs and MIAs left behind and suicide prevention," AMVETS National Executive Director Joe Chenelly said. "Millions of motorcycle-riding patriots from all walks of life, from every corner of the United States, and even from other countries, have spent their Memorial Day weekends for the past three-plus decades in our nation's capital because they want to make a real difference. This event will ensure those who take part are making a difference. The number of congressional offices displaying the POW/MIA flag has dropped from nearly all to just about half over the past 10 years." An AMVETS official stated, "That's unacceptable. Perhaps they didn't realize how meaningful and purposeful it is to display that flag. I hope that by the time Rolling to Remember is upon us, 100 percent of the offices will have it up, properly." AMVETS stated an up-to-date list would be published showing which lawmakers are displaying the POW/MIA flag outside their offices on Capitol Hill.

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS (DAV), RESOLUTION #176:** RESOLVED, that DAV in National Convention assembled in Orlando, FL, August 3-6, 2019, urges the U.S. government to ensure this issue be considered as one of America's highest priorities by accelerating efforts to obtain the release of any American who may still be held captive and obtain, to the fullest possible extent, an accounting of those still missing and the repatriation of the remains of those who died while serving our nation; AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the government of the SRV to increase its unilateral efforts to account for American POW/MIAs, including locating and making available remains of Americans last known alive in captivity that have not previously been returned. **RESOLUTION #341:** RESOLVED that DAV remains steadfast in its commitment to the goal of achieving the fullest possible accounting for all U.S. military and designated civilian personnel missing from our nation's wars; AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on our government to support personnel increases and full funding for the efforts of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL), including specific authorization to augment assigned personnel when additional assets and resources are necessary.

**JEWISH WAR VETERANS (JWV),** from the testimony of National Commander Jeffrey Sacks before the Joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, **March 4, 2021:** "For many years, JWV has consistently sought the return of all POWs, the fullest possible accounting for the missing, and repatriation of all recoverable remains. At every National Executive meeting, JWV displays the POW/MIA flag in front of the dais to show our continued support. JWV asks the Congress to provide the necessary personnel and funding to continue to make every effort to bring closure to the families of the missing. The number of still missing and otherwise unaccounted for service members from the Vietnam War is 1,584. The Jewish War Veterans of the United States of America urges Congress to provide adequate funding to support the greatest possible accounting of missing service members and the repatriation of all recoverable remains. JWV remains a strong advocate for the return of all those missing in action and prisoners of war. It's important that as many families as possible have closure."



**SPECIAL OPERATIONS ASSOCIATION/SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION/ (SOA/SFA)**, from LTC Mike Taylor, USA, (Ret), Vice President, SOA, and Chairman of the SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee, May 21, 2021:

“The SOA POW/MIA Committee was not very active until 2013. New leadership and new members quickly realized that SFA had no such committee, despite serious interest in the accounting mission. An SOA proposal to form a Joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee was quickly adopted by SFA, and we’ve since been very busy representing 12,000+ Army Special Forces, Navy Seals, Marine Force Recon, Air Commandos and our supporting air assets.

Our mission: (1) Represent SOA and SFA on all matters related to the accounting mission and support those working responsibly to account as fully as possible for missing and unrecovered personnel from all previous wars and conflicts, especially from the Vietnam War in which most of us fought and knew those still missing; and (2) keep SOA and SFA members informed regarding the accounting mission. Our committee attends national conferences to represent SOA/SFA and attends regional DPAA Family Member Updates to assist and support family members of special operations personnel. Our members have accompanied DPAA and predecessor organizations on in-country investigation and survey teams to provide eye-witness insights directly from participants in operations where our missing brothers were lost.

We encourage SOA and SFA members to (1) provide accounting-related data to DPAA and DIA officials; and (2) support the accounting mission budget with their Congressional representatives. We understand that a full accounting will never be possible and that DPAA pledges that Vietnam War accounting is their highest operational priority; but the fact remains that there has been only one Vietnam War ID since July 2020, and the last remains ID of one of our lost brothers resulted in his burial with honors on May 11, 2018. We urge DPAA to restore the once robust Vietnam War research and analysis capability that has been allowed to deteriorate shockingly. We applaud the sterling efforts of DIA’s Stony Beach Team; their significant and expanding contributions are sorely needed and greatly appreciated. We also found DPAA recovery teams in the field worthy of special commendation. Team members spend a great deal of time away from home, working under often difficult conditions, and they are doing a terrific job. If Vietnam War accounting is truly DPAA’s top priority, there should be a full-court press on increasing field operations which have dropped to a small number, as compared to the prior historical pace.

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA (VVA)**, from testimony of VVA President John Rowan before the Joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, **March 4, 2021**: “*THE FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING* of America’s POW/MIAs has long been our solemn priority. VVA continues to press for answers regarding those Americans still missing and listed as killed in action, body not recovered, in the Southeast Asia theatre of operations. We must insist that Congress fund the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) with what is required to investigate potential crash and burial sites, and to recover and identify remains. This is the 27<sup>th</sup> year of our Veterans Initiative Program. We continue to assist our former enemy in locating their unrecovered loved ones by providing fate-clarifying information such as maps of mass burial sites, ID cards, photos, and more. As we continue to work veteran-to-veteran with our former enemy, we have strengthened the trust between American and Vietnamese veterans and have encouraged the continued cooperation by Vietnamese authorities with DoD search teams.”

**VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS (VFW)**, from testimony of VFW Commander-in-Chief Harold J. “Hal” Roesch, II, before the Joint House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs, **March 18, 2021**: “Locating, identifying, and recovering the remains of those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our country from conflicts spanning nearly 80 years is a difficult and hazardous mission, but it is one of the most important obligations that we have as a grateful nation. It is a promise to those serving in uniform today that no matter what, we will travel to the ends of the Earth to return you home to your families. As an Air Force veteran who served in Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, I am fully aware of the cost of war and the importance of returning fallen veterans to their loved ones. Congress must continue to support full mission funding and personnel staffing for DPAA, as well as its supporting agencies, such as the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory and the military service casualty offices. The fullest possible accounting mission remains a top priority for the VFW, and we will not rest until every possible missing American military service member is brought home.”

## VIETNAM WAR ACCOUNTING EFFORTS



RDML Darius Banaji, USN, DPAA Deputy Director for Operations, speaks with Mike Taylor, SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee Chair, at the Family Member Update (FMU) hosted by DPAA in Portland, Oregon, February 22, 2020.

DPAA visited the area meeting with strategic partners, government leadership, service members and DoD personnel. 259 family members representing 136 losses attended the FMU. The breakdown by conflict was Vietnam War: 43 family members representing 18 losses; Korean/Cold War: 88 family members representing 48 losses; and WWII: 127 family members representing 48 losses. (USAF photo by SSgt Leah Ferrante)

## FIELD OPERATIONS IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA, JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2020



US Ambassador to Cambodia Patrick Murphy, prepares to screen dirt during a DPAA recovery mission in Ratanakiri Province, **Cambodia**, February 1, 2020.

During his visit, Amb. Murphy spoke with DPAA recovery team members and local nationals and witnessed the recovery efforts for a missing US service member lost during the Vietnam War. Ambassador Murphy continues to be a helpful champion of the accounting mission, and for that we extend our deepest gratitude. (USAF photo by SSgt Rusty Frank)

Mr. Alexander Garcia-Putnam, right, a senior recovery expert assigned to DPAA, speaks to US service members and Lao officials during a joint field activity (JFA) in Khammouan Province, **Laos**, February 2, 2020.

During the JFA, a group of more than 70 personnel, assigned to DPAA and augmented from military units around the globe, worked together to help fulfill our nation's promise to provide the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel. (USMC photo by Sgt Jacqueline Clifford)







SSG Carter Caraker, USA, a DPAA supply non-commissioned officer, passes buckets to local workers during a JFA in Khammouan Province, **Laos**, February 10, 2020. During the JFA, a group of more than 70 personnel, assigned to DPAA and augmented from military units around the globe, worked together to help fulfill our nation's promise to provide the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel. (USMC photo by Sgt Jacqueline Clifford)

Photos taken during field operations are regularly posted on DPAA's website, <https://www.dpaa.mil/>.

**US-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIA:** The 23<sup>rd</sup> Plenum scheduled for November 2020 was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Russian President Putin demonstrated his country's continued commitment to the USRJC by filling long-standing vacancies on the Russian side of the Commission, including officials from the Russian security services, Armed Forces General Staff, and legislators from the Duma and Federation Council. The US and Russian Chairmen General Robert "Doc" Foglesong, USAF (Ret), and Russian Chairman Colonel General Valery Vostrotin talk regularly by phone, and plans continue for virtual working level sessions to be held and the Plenum rescheduled in 2021. Despite tension between the US and Russia, including expulsion of US and Russian diplomats from each country, it appears that both sides continue to respect earlier agreement to sustain direct bilateral dialogue on the accounting mission as a separate humanitarian effort.

**LEAGUE 51<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MEETING IS A GO!** As previously announced, no annual meeting could be held in 2020 and it was rescheduled for June 23-27, 2021. After further COVID-19 requirements to again re-schedule, the **51<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting is now set for September 15-19, 2021**. It appears that DoD travel restrictions will be lifted, thus Service-supported travel for eligible next-of-kin (two family members representing each Vietnam War missing serviceman or civilian) will be available as stipulated by law years ago. The Hilton Crystal City Hotel is now open on a limited basis; restrictions are easing rapidly and are expected to be fully lifted before September.

This year, National POW/MIA Recognition Day falls on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, in the midst of our rescheduled 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting. As a result, we're hopeful that this meaningful commemoration will be hosted by President Biden and held for only the second time ever, on the South Lawn of the White House, where President Reagan hosted it on July 20, 1984. It was during this first White House commemoration that the accounting mission's status as "a matter of highest national priority" for the United States was reinforced.

This positive action by the Biden Administration would also clearly signal that America's determination to account as fully as possible for those who served our nation and have yet to come home will be sustained as the bipartisan-supported, non-political humanitarian mission that it is. The positive messages that can, and hopefully will, result from President Biden hosting this event at the White House are enormous, will expand the pace and scope of US and partner nation efforts, and have tremendous worldwide impact.

**LEAGUE 2021-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION POSTPONED:** The Board of Directors Election for 2021-2023 was postponed and will be held prior to the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting, with results announced at that time. Applications to run for the 2021-2023 Board can be accessed on the League website, [www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org), and will soon be sent to all League family members by US Postal Service.

**DPAA-HOSTED FAMILY MEMBER UPDATES:** Last year, DPAA cancelled Family Member Updates previously scheduled from March through the end of the year. Virtual FMU's were then arranged and have continued, and individual case reviews can also be arranged virtually with US officials.