



## NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

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**UPDATE: April 27, 2021**

**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**. Though there finally was one US Navy officer recovered and identified, the Navy Casualty Office has still reportedly been unable to locate the PNOK. For this reason, DPAA is not releasing the name and unique circumstances involved. Until very recently, there had been no US personnel accounted for from the Vietnam War since July 2020. Weeks ago, DPAA publicly stated that some identifications are pending and may be announced soon, but no number was given. DPAA laboratories and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) continue to focus efforts on identifying remains previously recovered, turned over unilaterally by foreign countries and/or buried in US cemeteries as unknowns and now disinterred.

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. **NO IDs have been announced since October, 2020.**

**ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS & EVENTS SCHEDULED FOR FY2021; UNILATERAL SRV RECOVERIES HELPED REDUCE THE PULL-BACK CAUSED BY COVID 19:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Defense (DoD) banned all DoD travel in early 2020 and resumption of full scale Joint Field Activities (JFAs) in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia was canceled. During this 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.

Also during this difficult time, **Vietnam fielded three Unilateral Recovery Teams (URTs)** that reportedly focused on many cases. Though DPAA has provided few details, some remains were reportedly recovered. DoD, DIA, State Department and other US agencies are still largely teleworking, but some are alternating schedules to try to ensure greater in-person coverage and productivity. DIA Headquarters personnel, including Stony Beach specialists, are working in shifts, as are DPAA scientists in the respective laboratories at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, and Offutt AFB, Nebraska.

Field operations resumed in early February in **Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia**. A DPAA “partnership” recovery was undertaken more recently in Koh Tong, Cambodia, with the University of Illinois-Chicago, and is still ongoing. US teams recently concluded the 142<sup>nd</sup> Joint Field Activity (JFA) in **Ha Tinh Province, Vietnam**. Reportedly, there were three Joint Recovery Teams (RTs), one joint Investigation Team (IT) that included DIA Stony Beach specialists and two Vietnamese Unilateral Recovery Teams (URTs) were added to plus-up the pace and scope of long-delayed operations.

Unfortunately, a **Joint Field Activity in Laos** was canceled when US personnel were not permitted in-country. No rationale was announced, but possible reasons include COVID pandemic-related restrictions or a negative Lao Government reaction to US sanctions levied due to Laos' reluctance to accept Lao nationals being returned to country of origin for illegal activity in the US. Thankfully, DIA's Stony Beach Lao specialist, permanently in-country, was allowed to utilize the helicopter support previously arranged, so investigations occurred, though no further information is available as to what was accomplished. Hopefully, next-of-kin of those whose cases were being investigated or recovered have been or will be notified of all case-related information as required by long-existing law. A JFA in Laos is scheduled for April 25 – June 21<sup>st</sup> (with 14-day quarantine at the beginning), consisting of three Recovery Teams. In Vietnam, a large JTF will include 3 RT's, 1 underwater RT, a Research Investigation Team (RIT), plus 2 SRV Unilateral Recovery Teams (URTs).

DPAA continues to conduct WWII, Korean War and Cold War field recoveries in Europe and the Asia-Pacific Region, most recently in Austria (mid-April) and the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating North and South Korea. The latest large-scale unilateral turnover of remains was the K55 repatriation that followed the Singapore Agreement reached in the summer of 2018 by former President Trump and DPRK President Kim Jong Un. Reportedly, DPAA's Lab has made 74 IDs on the comingled remains, estimated to possibly be those of as many as 160-170 US personnel, plus 80 remains, believed to be those of indigenous personnel, were recently turned over to the South Korean Government.

**DPAA & DIA SIGNED FORMAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU):** On September 17, 2020, DPAA Director Kelly McKeague and 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, before the accounting mission broadened to include efforts to account as fully as possible for personnel unrecovered from the Korean War, Cold War and World War II, Stony Beach's sole mission was and is Vietnam War accounting, focused on Last Known Alive (LKA) cases of US personnel initially listed as POW/MIA.

**LEAGUE 51<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD SEPTEMBER 15-19, 2021:** As previously announced, no annual meeting could be held in 2020, was rescheduled for June 23-27, 2021, and, after again re-scheduling, the **51<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting will be held September 15-19, 2021, IF DoD travel restrictions are lifted.** Hilton Crystal City Hotel is now open on a limited basis, and we're hoping for fewer restrictions and greater normalcy by September. 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 Board can be accessed on the League website and will be sent in advance by USPS.

**DPAA-HOSTED FAMILY MEMBER UPDATES:** Last year, DPAA cancelled Family Member Updates previously scheduled for March, April, May, August and September. DPAA-hosted Annual Government Briefings for Korean War/Cold War Families, previously planned for August, 2020, were also cancelled and are now scheduled for August, 2021. The next DPAA FMU will again be virtual and held May 22<sup>nd</sup> in Oklahoma City, OK. During all such FMUs, individual case reviews can be held virtually with US officials.

**SUPPORT THE LEAGUE:** You can support the League on Facebook by creating a fundraiser to celebrate meaningful occasions and events. Opportunities are nearly endless, ranging from appeals for donations to the League in lieu of birthday gifts or to honor a missing loved one on the anniversary of his loss and, if returned, his story commemorating his recovery, etc. If you would like to create a fundraiser to benefit the League, visit [www.facebook.com/fund/powmiafamilies](http://www.facebook.com/fund/powmiafamilies). **100% of the proceeds** raised from your Facebook fundraiser will benefit the League! You and your family, friends and colleagues can also support the League by shopping at **Amazon Smile**. It is simple and automatic, **at no extra cost to you**. Just visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7071242>, and you will find the exact same prices, vast selection and convenient shopping to which you may be increasingly accustomed. The added bonus? The **Amazon Smile Foundation** automatically donates 0.5% of the cost of your eligible purchases to the League. **Donate today, 501(c)(3), Fed Tax ID #23-7071242, at [www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)**