



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA**

5673 COLUMBIA PIKE, SUITE 100, FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22041

PH ---703/465-7432

Chartered May 28, 1970

FAX ---703/465-7433

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AMERICANS RECENTLY ACCOUNTED FOR: Most recently, DPAA posted on its website the news that **LTC Robert G. Nopp, USA**, of OR, listed as MIA 7/14/66, was recovered 2/17/16 and ID'd 2/1/18. On January 18th, DPAA released notice that **Col Edgar F. Davis, USAF**, of NC, listed MIA in Laos on 9/17/68, recovered 4/29/15 and ID'd 12/22/17, is now accounted for, the first such announcement since September 11th of last year. At that time, DPAA reported the accounting for **CAPT James. R. Bauder, USN**, of CA, listed as MIA 9/21/66 in North Vietnam, recovered 6/11/17, and ID'd 8-28-17. DPAA previously announced the accounting for **CMSgt Donald J. Hall, USAF**, listed as MIA 2/6/67 in North Vietnam, recovered 4/3/17, and ID'd 8/18/17. Previously, DPAA's 8/15/17 Statistics cited **Col Martin R. Scott, USAF**, of OK, listed as MIA 3/15/66 in North Vietnam, recovered 12/12/15 and ID'd 6/15/17, and **1st Lt David T. Dinan, III, USAF**, of NJ, listed as KIA/BNR in Laos on 3/17/69, recovered 4/8/14, and ID'd 8/7/17. On July 12, 2017, DPAA listed **Major James B. White, USAF**, of FL, listed MIA in Laos on 11/24/69, remains recovered 4/4/14, and ID'd 6/16/17. On June 28th, DPAA announced the ID of **Capt Robert E. Holton, USAF**, of MT, listed as MIA in Laos on 1/29/69, recovered 2/16/17 and ID'd 6/8/17. The prior week, DPAA released the name of **Col Roosevelt Hestle, USAFR**, of FL, listed as MIA in North Vietnam on 7/16/66, remains recovered 12/12/16, and ID'd 6/8/17. On June 2nd, DPAA announced the ID of **Capt Joseph S. Smith, USAFR**, of IL, listed MIA in Cambodia on 4/4/71, recovered 1/27/93, and ID'd 5/4/17, and **LT Charles B. Goodwin, USN**, of TX, listed MIA in North Vietnam on 9/8/65, recovered 12/12/16 and ID'd 5/18/17.

The number still missing (POW/MIA) and otherwise unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR) from the Vietnam War is 1,600. Of the 1,600, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,253 (VN-458, VS-795); Laos-292; Cambodia-48; PRC territorial waters-7. (Country-specific numbers fluctuate when investigations result in changes to loss locations.)

Since formation 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 1973 is **983**. A breakdown by country of these 983 Americans is: Vietnam – 665, Laos – 273, 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 1,045. These 63 Americans, accounted for by US-only efforts in accessible areas, were not due to cooperation by post-war governments in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. Combined, a total of 281 have been accounted for from Laos, 720 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

DPAA DIRECTOR SELECTED: On September 5th, the Department of Defense (DoD) announced the long-overdue, welcome selection of **Kelly K. McKeague** as **Director, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency** (DPAA). This critical position had been vacant for over a year. Major General McKeague was the last Commander, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, (JPAC) and the first DPAA Deputy Director, a brief assignment just prior to his military retirement. During his last year on active duty, he was honored with the League Award and the Special Operations Association (SOA) President's Award. His selection as DPAA Director had been endorsed by the League, the SOA, the Special Forces Association (SFA), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and others.

Chairman's Comment: DoD could not have selected a finer, more qualified man for the job. The League is again working closely with him, pleased that Secretary of Defense Mattis ensured serious consideration of the need to select a person with experience, character, commitment and dedication to the mission. Director McKeague had already earned the trust and respect of affected families and veterans, as well as foreign officials whose willingness to authorize necessary cooperation is critical to success. We wish him the very best and every success in carrying out his responsibility to truly lead DPAA in accomplishing shared accounting objectives. He brings to DPAA the integrity and respect necessary to regain credibility and overcome three fractious years during which leadership failures destroyed agency morale and confidence of the families and our nation's veterans.

YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED! Contact your elected officials to urge passage of the DoD budget that includes \$131 million to fund DPAA's FY2018 operational plan to handle worldwide accounting and recovery efforts. Urge an exemption of DPAA funding from any/all reductions and an end to sequestration. Funding for Veterans' care has rightfully increased and is protected by exempting VA budgets from across-the-board cuts and/or sequestration. America's UNRETURNED veterans, our POW/MIAs, deserve equal funding protection.

H. RES. 129 PASSES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: On February 12th, this important resolution passed the US House of Representatives by a vote of 411 – 0, sending a unified message to the American people – including our Armed Forces serving today and our veterans, as well as foreign nations. Introduced by **Representative Sam Johnson (R-TX)**, a returned POW from the Vietnam War, his strong message on the Floor of the House occurred almost precisely 45 years after he and America’s other returned POWs were released from many years of captivity in Vietnam. Passage of this resolution reflects true bipartisan, non-political support for the humanitarian accounting mission.

It is now the US Senate’s turn to act. The identical measure was simultaneously introduced in the US Senate by **Senator John S. McCain (R-AZ)** as **S. RES. 61**. Non-partisan, non-political passage by the US Senate would further reinforce our country’s support for achieving the fullest possible accounting for those who serve our nation – past, present and future. That needs to happen quickly.

CONTACT YOUR TWO SENATORS TO URGE IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF S. RES. 61.

LEAGUE DELEGATION RETURNED FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA: A National League of POW/MIA Families Delegation, led by Chairman of the Board/CEO Ms. Ann Mills-Griffiths, traveled to Southeast Asia (Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, & Thailand) January 11th, and returned January 30th. She was joined once again by the League’s Senior Policy Advisor since 1989, Richard Childress, COL, USA (Ret), and, for the first time, MIA daughter Cindy Stonebraker, elected member of the League’s Board of Directors. Parallel to the League Delegation, and representing the Special Operations Association (SOA) and Special Forces Association (SFA) was Mike Taylor, LTC, USA/SF (Ret), Vice President of SOA and Chairman of the joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee. Mrs. Elli Childress and Mrs. Laura Taylor accompanied their respective husbands and participated with delegation members in some social events and cultural activities.

Both delegations met in each country with US Ambassadors and Embassy officials, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Stony Beach specialists and DPAA Detachment personnel. While in Hanoi, the League Delegation met briefly with **US Secretary of Defense James Mattis** who was in-country for meetings with Vietnam’s Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense, as well as other senior Vietnamese officials. The League Delegation also met with senior Lao, Vietnamese and Cambodian officials to discuss concepts to advance the accounting mission. In addition to meeting with US officials, SOA/SFA’s Mike Taylor met with American and foreign veterans, some of whom fought as enemies during the war. While in Laos, representatives of both delegations (Stonebraker, M. Taylor and L. Taylor) visited a remote recovery site to thank US and Lao personnel for their often dangerous efforts during Joint Field Activities (JFAs) to account for missing Americans. A comprehensive report will be distributed as soon as possible, but suffice it to say that primary objectives were met and all participants hold the view that, difficult as such missions are, this was well worth the effort.

PRESIDENT TRUMP MEETS WITH VIETNAMESE COUNTERPART IN HANOI: Following the Asia Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) meeting in Da Nang, President Trump and his party went to Hanoi. While there, he and Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang held a Joint Press Conference during which President Trump referred to the POW/MIA accounting mission.

President Trump made a clearer statement at the Hyatt Regency in Da Nang, while participating in a “Meet and Greet” with American veterans, stating, *“Our accountability efforts in Vietnam are very, very important to all of us. We will not rest until all of the 1,253 missing veterans are returned home. I want to thank the government of Vietnam for their assistance in our efforts.”*

Clarification: The number used (1,253) pertains only to those listed as missing and unaccounted for in Vietnam, provided in error by staff too new to the POW/MIA accounting mission to be fully aware of the facts. Of the 1,600 still missing from the Vietnam War, 292 are unaccounted-for in Laos, 48 in Cambodia and 7 in the PRC, 90% of them lost in areas controlled by Vietnamese wartime forces.

In addition, the White House issued a “Joint Statement between the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.” In that official document, citing President Quang’s invitation to President Trump for a “state visit to Hanoi,” the following paragraph pertains:

“Both leaders reaffirmed the importance of continued cooperation to address the legacies of war. In this regard, President Quang expressed appreciation for the contribution of the United States to the successful dioxin remediation at Da Nang Airport, and welcomed the United States commitment to contribute to remediation at Bien Hoa Airport. He welcomed further United States assistance for persons with disabilities. President Trump expressed his appreciation for Vietnam’s full and continued cooperation in accounting for United States personnel still missing from the war, and pledged to cooperate with Vietnam in its efforts to locate its missing soldiers. The two leaders committed to cooperation in the removal of remnants of explosives from the war.”

Chairman’s Comment: President Trump’s trip to Vietnam brought the first inclusion of POW/MIA accounting on the agenda as a priority of the Trump Administration and the first known mention by our President concerning priority on accounting for our unreturned veterans, America’s POW/MIAs. It is reassuring that Trump Administration officials are now willing to listen and learn about the mission which the League has officially pursued since May 28, 1970, and for many POW/MIA families, for over 50 years.

Communication, transparency and integrity are key factors in restoring shattered credibility to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). With support from the White House, Secretary of State Tillerson, Secretary of Defense Mattis, our supportive US Ambassadors to Vietnam (Dan Kritenbrink), Laos (Rena Bitter), Cambodia (Bill Heidt), the Russian Federation (Jon Huntsman) and the People’s Republic of China (Terry Branstad), plus the intelligence agencies and Members of Congress, there is reason for cautious optimism, but time is short. The opportunity resulting from many years of League effort to incrementally support increased military and political ties in response to ever-improving accounting cooperation is now reaching the point where achieving the fullest possible accounting is doable. There are many political factors that can cause implosions, but the opportunity is real!

US-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION (USRJC) ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS MET FOR 21ST PLENUM: On November 8th, the 21st Plenum of the USRJC met in Moscow, led by US Co-Chairman General Robert “Doc” Foglesong, USAF (Ret), and Russian Co-Chairman General Colonel Valery Vostrotnin. This was DPAA Director McKeague’s first participation as a US Commissioner. He was joined on this occasion by two other US Commissioners, Mr. Tim Shea, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and Dr. Tim Nenner, National Archives & Records Administration (NARA). Invited to participate as Observers were VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace and League Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths. DPAA European-Mediterranean Regional Director Colonel Chris Forbes, USA, and members of his Joint Commission Support Directorate (JCSD) staff also attended and put in long, arduous hours in preparation, as did Mr. Maxim Alexeyev, Chief of the Russian Commission Support Office, Russian Embassy in Washington, DC. This US Delegation was a follow-on to earlier USRJC plenary sessions and the Russian Commission’s participation in the League’s 48th Annual Meeting in June, as well as the August DPAA-hosted Korean War/Cold War Annual Government Briefings, both held in the DC area.

Russia’s Ministry of National Defense was the venue. The content and presentation by DPAA Director McKeague, US Chairman of the Vietnam War Working Group, aided by Svetlana Shevchenko, senior DPAA Russia specialist, were substantive and useful. Counterpart officials seem dedicated to assisting, but it is clear that top level Russian Government authorization is still required to gain access (directly or contracted) to necessary archival records. (More detailed information should be released by DPAA when the official “minutes” of the Plenary and all working groups, including WWII, Korean War and Cold War, are completed and posted on DPAA’s website.)

The 21st Plenum was well worth the time, effort and expense to attend. Importantly, inclusion of family members (League) and veterans (VFW) showed unified support for the USRJC and gave the League and VFW the opportunity to make a few points about the type of assistance and support needed from the Russian Federation. That evening, US Ambassador to the Russian Federation Jon Huntsman and Mrs. Huntsman hosted a reception for the Russian and US Commissioners, observers and staff, at their lovely residence, Spaso House.

A highlight of the trip was time spent on November 7th at the Air Defense Museum, outside central Moscow. A dedicated knowledgeable historian briefed on every era, including the Vietnam War, and was very informative. Hopefully, archival documents originated by former Soviet personnel who served as Air Defense advisers in the early years of the Vietnam War will provide useful information and leads to solve incidents involving missing and unaccounted-for US personnel.

On November 9th, US Chairman General Foglesong, VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace, Russian Chairman General Colonel Vostrotnin and National League of POW/MIA Families Chairman/CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths placed memorial wreaths at the beautiful, recently constructed national military cemetery, Russia’s version of Arlington National Cemetery.

Later that day, the entire US Delegation visited Patriot Park, listened to briefings and observed the largest collection of military hardware imaginable, including WWI and WWII equipment from the US, France, Great Britain and Germany, as well as current, sophisticated military equipment in use today in Syria and elsewhere. Several hours were spent walking through the displays and listening to presentations, then all enjoyed a delicious farewell dinner at the military dining hall.

On November 10th, Mr. Wallace and Ms. Mills-Griffiths met with Ambassador Huntsman and his senior staff at Spaso House, accompanied by longtime DPAA Russia specialists Dr. James Connell and Ms. Shevchenko. Ambassador Huntsman and Embassy Moscow are and will be interested, well-informed supporters and advocates. Joint Commission Support Directorate (JCSD) reports are now posted on the DPAA website: <http://www.dpaa.mil/>

SRV VICE MINISTER OF NAT'L DEFENSE MEETS WITH LEAGUE AND DOD OFFICIALS: On Sunday, October 15th, League Chairman of the Board/CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths met with Vietnam's Vice Minister of National Defense Senior LTG Nguyen Chi Vinh for in-depth discussion. He was in DC to participate in the October 17th session of the bilateral Defense Policy Dialogue which we welcome.

In the private meeting, Vice Minister Vinh stated there were no longer any restrictions on the number of US personnel who could work in-country simultaneously, affirming flexibility in field operations and that there are no longer any areas restricted to US access to conduct them, including in previously sensitive areas along the northern coastal provinces. He noted the importance of continuing and increasing cooperation between the US and SRV Navies and the SRV Coast Guard's increasing capability for mapping these sensitive, under-water coastline areas. He affirmed his country's appreciation for US humanitarian assistance to deal with dioxin remediation and unexploded ordnance.

League Chairman Mills-Griffiths welcomed the positive news, indicating the specifics would be most welcome to all in the US, in particular the families, veterans, DPAA and the USG writ large. She also noted that his assurances were especially welcome in light of DPAA's hope to maximize the weather window to increase operations in the Central Provinces; thus, larger numbers of participants would be very helpful.

Mills-Griffiths raised the importance of the SRV proposal at the August Technical Talks in Hawaii to form a new Last Known Alive (LKA) Investigation Team. She assured the Vice Minister that the concept for engaging one DIA Stony Beach specialist and one SRV investigator would be very effective and efficient, with positive results then pursued by joint or unilateral DPAA or SRV surveys and, hopefully, recoveries. She assured the Vice Minister that plans for a League Delegation in early January would definitely include calls on him and Minister of Public Security To Lam and, hopefully, Minister of Foreign Affairs Pham Binh Minh, as well as others.

VIETNAMESE DELEGATION MEETS DPAA OFFICIALS IN HAWAII: As now occurs annually, Vietnamese and US specialists met last fall to discuss operational issues and exchange views. In earlier years, before joint field operations were the norm or unilateral Vietnamese field operations were even considered, such technical talks were quarterly, then semi-annually, now annually. A primary objective is to find ways to enhance the processes that have expanded dramatically over the years, thanks to improved cooperation by Vietnam.

Chairman's Comment: Though a long time coming, and fraught with unpredictable US budget constraints, field operations in Vietnam have improved tremendously. Further improvements can and should occur to meet Vietnam's 2009 proposal to the League to "increase the pace and scope of operations." Funding for FY17 saw reductions in Vietnam War accounting efforts in both Vietnam and Cambodia, though operations in Laos were sustained. Now that Kelly McKeague is DPAA Director, the deep-seated, continuing internal dysfunction within DPAA should end, but some changes will take time. Due to the death of firsthand witnesses, destruction of remains due to acidic soil, and incident sites endangered by development projects, Vietnam War accounting efforts are on borrowed time. For FY18, the amount requested (\$131 million) is in the DoD budget and reportedly is sufficient to meet DPAA's operational plans; however, the League is working to ensure that Vietnam War accounting continues to be the agency priority. Real transparency is required to rebuild trust and confidence. Now that DPAA's new Director is in place, there is greater reason for confidence in that regard.

ELKO POW/MIA AWARENESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CHILI FEED RESOUNDING SUCCESS: The Elko POW/MIA Awareness Association once again held its annual fundraiser for the League on February 17th. Held during Presidents Day Weekend each year, the "Chili Feed" brings together a remarkable community of people dedicated to supporting our Armed Forces – active duty, veterans and America's POW/MIAs – our UNRETURNED veterans still missing and unaccounted-for from our nation's past wars and conflicts.

The committed, patriotic people of Elko and surrounding communities are inspirational and unbelievably generous in supporting the League, years ago saving the League's national office from being forced to close. Beyond this notable support, Les Brown, Director of the Elko POW/MIA Awareness Association, serves as Northern Nevada League Coordinator and Chairman of the Sergeant-at-Arms Committee for each annual meeting.

48TH ANNUAL MEETING: Despite unwarranted challenges imposed by the DPAA "leadership" then in place, the annual meeting was the largest and most productive in a very long time. Opening Session included the accustomed formalities, Color Guard conducted by our Sergeants-at-Arms, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation and "*America the Beautiful*," sung by Wendy Coble, former League Administrator, now with DPAA. A brief "In Memory and Honor" ceremony recognized those accounted for since the 47th Annual Meeting in 2016.

The principal Opening Session speaker was **League Senior Policy Advisor Richard T. Childress**, a highly trained Army officer and Vietnam Veteran who served as Director of Asian Affairs for eight years on the National Security Council (NSC) staff. He was the chief architect of policy developed by the POW/MIA Interagency Group, approved at the highest level, and pursued as a matter of highest national priority during the two terms of President Ronald Reagan. He has served as the League's Senior Policy Advisor since February, 1989, and has participated in all League Delegations since 1999.

Under the umbrella title of "**Competence, Comprehension & Caring**," his prescient remarks cited specific examples of faulty thinking and failed efforts by US officials, while noting serious commitment over the years by many frustrated specialists. He also provided constructive recommendations to what all hoped would be seriously considered by the (then) soon-to-be selected DPAA Director, a position already vacant for a year and counting. (Note: Thankfully, Director McKeague was named September 5, 2017.)

- Provide newly assigned personnel in middle and upper management – civilian and military – the same advantages others in government have. Establish an informal training period that involves a mandatory reading of the issue's history and what was effective and not effective in the past. Supplement that with visits to the League office, veteran leaders, and sessions with long-time veterans in this issue, both current and former US Government employees. These new employees deserve no less, and it sure beats being thrust into the issue with competence, but no comprehension.
- Immediately remove the gag rule. Instead, urge close consultation with the League and other responsible organizations – encourage an attitude of asking these groups possessing real comprehension, "*What do you think?*" before a policy decision. Or, simply say, "*I have a problem, and can you help?*" This is true transparency, not what is now the practice.
- Identify those in the organization, at any level, with real comprehension and seek their views on policy formulation; then reinforce, recognize and reward them.
- Clear up any ambiguity on the mission – it is the return of a live prisoner, his remains or convincing evidence as to why neither is possible, sharing the full record of effort with the next-of-kin.
- Evaluate and develop the budget in the context of the challenges enumerated earlier that relate to the Vietnam War effort. First, build the Vietnam War budget for a surge of investigations and excavations to meaningfully meet Vietnam's constant requests to increase the pace and scope of operations.
- Look at an all-wars approach that gives priority to Last Known Alive (LKA) cases and incidents with remains in danger – whether Vietnam War, Cold War or WWII – those in acidic soil, threatened by development or other compelling reasons. Then, look at what is left in assets and resources to apply to remaining WWII cases and form a contingency plan for additional funding if North Korea opens up again, a dim prospect in the near term.
- Sensitize senior policy personnel, as well as Congress, to the need for budget and policy reorientation. The current body-count mentality is counterproductive, and a shift is logical, consistent and publicly defensible. If Congress is still insistent on the unintended consequence of the random number of 200 IDs per year, ask them to make up any budgetary shortfall, as the above is the path the Executive Branch is going to follow for all the right reasons.

- Review and implement the proposal that the League and I furnished to begin a bilateral comprehensive review of the joint and unilateral mission areas in Vietnam which was received positively by the last Director, but never raised in meetings. Sadly, a similar, personal request to the White House National Security Adviser for President Obama to do so was ignored. Further, even the President's (Obama's) speech in Hanoi to the Vietnamese people did not mention the issue.
- Given the differences between Vietnam and Laos, consider a similar approach to Laos with complementary, but somewhat different provisions. After years of requests, the Lao government's recent agreement for base-camping near excavation sites is a hopeful sign to build upon.
- Vigorously reinforce the new, positive signs of life in the USRJC, a vital supplement to the issue that was almost destroyed in the past. Their presence (Russian and American) and participation in the 48th Annual Meeting is a significant step in the right direction.
- Reinforce and expand the public-private partnership initiative under Tom Holland that is demonstrating effectiveness on WWII cases, with cautions to the partners that DoD-conducted excavations will not take precedence over cases where remains are in jeopardy.
- Finally, use the proven competence of DPAA employees to focus on remains recovery of those in danger of being lost forever.

In addition to up-to-date briefings by qualified professionals representing all aspects of the accounting mission, there were presentations by senior DPAA officials. Principal Director Fern Sumpter Winbush, then DPAA Deputy Director BG Mark Spindler, USA, Policy & Plans Director John Hamilton, Outreach & Communications Director Todd Livick and Asia Pacific Regional Director Col Mike Gann, USMC, outlined DPAA's policy approach and operational direction, focused primarily on Vietnam War areas of interest. Specialists dealing with all aspects of in-country activities, from investigations, including Stony Beach Team members from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and larger-scale DPAA Investigation Teams (ITs), to surveys, recoveries, underwater recoveries (both US and Vietnamese), and processes utilized within the three separate DPAA Laboratories in HI, NB & OH.

Those gathered also listened attentively to presentations on specific assets that can be incorporated to augment field operations, such as Army mortuary affairs personnel with specialized training uniquely qualifying them to support field recovery teams and help reduce deployment of highly trained anthropologists. Such augmentation would help focus their time and scientific skill for identifying remains recovered, whether by DPAA, private contractors or unilaterally turned over, as well as remains being disinterred from US cemeteries around the world. The latter now incorporates exhuming remains not earlier identified to attempt individual identification, including the known dead from the USS Oklahoma, sunk in Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Russian Delegation Participates in 48th Annual Meeting: A highlight of the annual meeting was the first-ever attendance by a Russian Delegation. They participated throughout, observed Opening Session, made an official presentation that afternoon, joined by **USRJC Co-Chairman General Doc Foglesong, USAF (Ret)**, and attended the 48th Annual Meeting Dinner that same evening, June 22nd, as League VIP Guests. Very importantly, **Russian Delegation Chairman Colonel Andrey Taranov** openly and effectively participated in the Q & A Session on Saturday, June 24th, and was forthcoming and responsive.

This was a unique first for the League and for Russian officials on the **US-Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) on POW/MIA Affairs**. Their visit, plenary session, and working group talks just prior to our 48th Annual Meeting, were initiated by COL Chris Forbes, USA, DPAA's Europe-Mediterranean Regional Director, with full support from General Foglesong, and made possible by Mr. Maxim Alexeyev, Chief of the Russian Embassy's Commission Support Office.

Follow-up on US-Russia Discussions: Bilateral talks were again held in Washington in conjunction with the DPAA-hosted Korean/Cold War Annual Briefing in mid-August, during which it was agreed that the 21st Plenum of the USRJC would be held in Moscow November 7-9, 2017. Unfortunately, on the negative side, DPAA's Moscow Detachment was closed and the officer in charge was moved to DPAA in DC as part of the 755-person reduction in US personnel assigned to US Embassy-Moscow, ordered by the Russian Government in response to controversial US actions.

In addition, four Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) with roughly 15 years of archival document experience supporting the US side of the USRJC, were terminated. Nevertheless, General Foglesong and COL Forbes traveled to Moscow for a September 14th meeting with Russian Chairman General Colonel Valery Vostroin in preparation for the Plenum. (The skilled FSNs were later rehired as contractors and have resumed work.)

Chairman's Comment: The League deeply appreciates the contributions and commitments made on behalf of the Russian side of the USRJC. Russian Delegation Chairman Colonel Andrey Taranov's participation in the Q & A Session on Saturday, June 24th, was unprecedented, and he was responsive to questions raised by the League Chairman. Following are examples:

Q1: Last Known Alive (LKA) reports are the US #1 priority. How many POW debriefs are in Russian archives that you can provide?

Answer: It is difficult to determine the amount of information because the information is classified. We are working to declassify the information and provide it, including, if found, information on LKAs.

Q2: Russia has established an office at the Russian Embassy in Washington to support the USRJC. What can be done to speed archival access to information on Russian (Soviet) advisors in SEA?

Answer: We opened our US office to support archival research from WWII forward. We are working with the US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). We are digitizing information (from the German Trophy Documents) and will make it available to the public. With respect to Soviet advisors in Vietnam, we are working in the archival collections which contain documents, including NVA (North Vietnamese) intelligence reports. All relevant information we find will be declassified and provided to the US side. We will work on facilitating interviews with former Soviet advisors.

Q3: Soviet pilots flew missions early in the war. Will you provide that and related information?

Answer: We have not discovered any documents concerning Soviet actions against US aircraft (in Vietnam). As we have said, when we find any documents, we will work to declassify them.

Q4: Will Russia release the pictures taken by the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) during the Vietnam War?

Answer: It will be up to the journalists if they wish to release the pictures.

Q5: What NVA Air Defense Units were Soviet Advisors assigned to? Did Soviet personnel capture any US personnel?

Answer: There is no information in our documents attesting to Soviet advisors capturing US pilots. The documents we have are the documents of the North Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense's intelligence on interrogation of US pilots. We will continue this work to review and declassify documents. All documents which concern US personnel will be transferred to the United States.

Q6: What is included in Russian archival holdings?

Answer: The Russian (Soviet) documents we hold are in the Russian language and include Vietnamese documents translated into Russian.

Q7: What types of reports did the Soviet advisors send back to Moscow?

Answer: There were no special templates or requirements.

Q8: Have you consulted with the Vietnamese in their efforts to account for their dead? Have you discovered any information on US MIAs?

Answer: We have received no requests for assistance from the Vietnamese.

Q9: What are your recommendations for moving forward? Three-party discussions? US, Russia and Vietnam/Laos?

Answer: We are ready to participate in any efforts to progress forward.

Q10: Are the Russian people/government supporting this effort? That is, cooperation with the US Government for this mission?

Answer: Our technical talks are filling up the Internet with positive comments. Russian leadership and government have already published reports on these technical talks. The government is supportive. The Russian Delegation's presence speaks to Russian Government support.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY LEAGUE MEMBERS: 6-24-17

#1

RESOLVED, that the League recommends that DPAA re-look at resource allocation and place priority on Vietnam War cases at risk due to acidic soil, development, or other compelling reasons that would prevent future accountability. (Resolution #1 passed by overwhelming majority, with no abstentions, and one nay vote.)

#2

RESOLVED, that the League rejects a DPAA's laboratory-related policy of "first in-first out" and urges that first priority be given to remains recovered during field operations; and further

RESOLVED, that the League urges DPAA to shift its policy from trying to achieve an arbitrary number of 200 identifications per year to first priority on identifications from field recoveries from endangered sites related to unaccounted-for US personnel. (Resolution #2 passed by overwhelming majority, with five abstentions and no nay votes.)

#3

RESOLVED, that the League recommends the DoD establish contingency plans for additive funding, personnel and resources for DPRK operations should they re-start, and not be drawn from the existing DPAA budget. (Resolution #3 passed overwhelmingly, with two abstentions.)

#4

RESOLVED, that the League commends the Russian Members of the US-Russia Commission on POW/MIA Affairs (USRJC) for commitments made during the 48th Annual Meeting and looks forward to expedited implementation; and further

RESOLVED, that the League commends the Russian Federation leadership for its support for the work of this bipartisan humanitarian effort. (Resolution #4 passed unanimously.)

#5

RESOLVED, that the League commends DPAA leadership for commitment at the 48th Annual Meeting to ensuring that DIA's Stony Beach specialists are fully utilized and integrated into the in-country investigation process, including participation in as many JFAs as possible, dependent upon Stony Beach's availability. (Resolution #5 passed unanimously.)

#6

RESOLVED, that the League appreciates and fully supports initiatives by Dr. Holland's Partnership Directorate to seek out all potential opportunities in the public and private sector to expand the accounting process and expedite results. (Resolution #6 passed unanimously.)

#7

RESOLVED, that the League urges DPAA to concentrate its efforts to locate, recover, identify and repatriate our heroes still unaccounted for on foreign soil. (Resolution #7 passed unanimously.)