

## UPDATE: August 8, 2013

**AMERICANS ACCOUNTED-FOR:** There are still **1,645** personnel listed by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. Over a month ago, DPMO posted the name of **Lt Colonel Robert Pietsch, USAF**, from OH, listed as missing in Laos on April 30, 1968, as now accounted-for, with remains recovered August 2, 2006 and identified May 7, 2013. **Major Luis F. Guillerman, USAFR**, from PA, listed as MIA on April 30, 1968, in Laos, with remains returned on February 14, 2006, was identified on May 13, 2013. The number of Americans announced by DPMO as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is still 938. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and ID'd before the end of the war, bring the official total of remains repatriated from the Vietnam War to 1,001. Of the 1,645 unaccounted-for personnel, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,276 (VN-469, VS-807); Laos-309; Cambodia-53; PRC territorial waters-7; 600+ over-water losses are on DPMO's list as No Further Pursuit. **PRESIDENT OBAMA REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT:** At Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day, the President made remarks, after laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, affirming his commitment by stating in part ....."And that's why, on this day, we remember our sacred obligation to those who laid down their lives so we could live ours: to finish the job these men and women started by keeping our promise to those who wear America's uniform – to give our troops the resources they need; to keep faith with our veterans and their families, now and always; to never stop searching for those who have gone missing or who are held as prisoners of war." **GAO FINDS ACCOUNTING COMMUNITY TO BE DYSFUNCTIONAL:** The congressionally mandated study by the General Accountability Office (GAO) completed its year-long investigation into all aspects of the accounting community. Though not as in-depth and penetrating as some might wish, the outcome was objective, with some recommendations that warrant attention and corrective action. Unfortunately, there was over-reaction at the highest levels in DoD, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, USA, who cited the accusations as "discouraging" and moving rapidly toward "disgraceful." To complicate matters, an internal draft study by a temporary ORISE (Oak Ridge Institute for Science & Education) fellow, Dr. Paul Cole, hired by JPAC's Lab leadership, was earlier leaked to House Armed Service Committee (HASC) staff, then to AP journalist Bob Burns, timed to coincide with release of the GAO Report. The resulting clamor brought about hearings in the HASC Subcommittee on Military Personnel and the Senate Homeland Security & Government Affairs Subcommittee on Financial Contracting and Oversight. Senators Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) heard testimony from DPMO Director/Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Montague Winfield, JPAC Commander Major General Kelly McKeague, USAF, and Chief of the Artifact Section, Life Science Equipment Laboratory (LSEL) John Goines. It was clear from both Senators that they are focused sharply on the GAO recommendations, chief among them the recommendation for a reorganization that will ensure a single chain of command, streamlined and with one commander at the top. It was also made clear that if the accounting community could not agree on how to proceed, the Senate would provide its own solution to get the job done. There was clearly no patience for the infighting and dysfunction that has long plagued the POW/MIA issue and prevented a unified effort to develop the capability and capacity to increase the level of remains identifications to at least 200 per year, as called for in the 2010 Defense Authorization Bill. The dissension stems in large part from

DPMO's inability or unwillingness since formed in 1992 to fulfill its assigned role - policy control and oversight of the POW/MIA accounting mission, opting instead to become operational. As requested by Chairman McCaskill, League Chairman Ann Mills-Griffiths provided a Statement for Record. The HASC Subcommittee hearing called Dr. Cole and a GAO official to testify on the results of their respective assessments, though the Cole study, entitled "Information Value Chain," was much earlier renounced in its entirety by former JPAC Commander MG Stephen Tom, USA. Just after the leak to AP, the League posted the following statement on our website: *"Months ago, Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths, and League Policy Advisor Richard Childress reviewed the report regarding JPAC that was authored by Paul Cole. The report and the assertions made in it reflect little more than a power-play within the organization. Recommendations made by Cole, if followed, would have set back efforts of the accounting community in a drastic way. The League continues to support the efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting and the work being done by each of the agencies in support of that mission – including JPAC."*

**VIETNAM OPERATIONS:** Another month-long JPAC mission, involving six Recovery Teams (RTs) and two Investigation Teams (Its), began August 5<sup>th</sup> and is scheduled to conclude on September 7<sup>th</sup>. US-Vietnam POW/MIA Consultations will again be held in late September.

**OPERATIONS IN LAOS:** At long last, the Lao Government renewed a business license for Helicopters New Zealand, the company JPAC previously contracted to provide smaller, certified-safe helicopter support for remote site access. This has not yet been tested and won't be on this coming JFA, as it will consist of "drive-to" sites, a welcome development, and JPAC is seeking agreement to base-camp near at least one of the sites. US-Lao POW/MIA Consultations will occur August 16<sup>th</sup> in Vientiane, led by JPAC Commander Maj Gen Kelly McKeague, with Embassy-Vientiane and DPMO representatives participating. The League deeply appreciates Laos' responsiveness to specific appeals for the favorable decisions on helicopter contracting and base-camping and looks forward to a renewed pace of operations. We also urge expanded opportunities for DIA's Stony Beach specialist to conduct in-country investigations as the need arises, accompanied by a Lao official, and fully coordinated in advance. Ambassador Dan Clune, recently confirmed, will replace Ambassador Karen Stewart.

**CAMBODIA FIELD OPERATIONS POSTPONED:** Unfortunately, JPAC postponed field operations scheduled in Cambodia last February that were to include two RTs and one Underwater Recovery Team (URT). Despite serious efforts by Commander JPAC, recently imposed US legal requirements were not met in time to proceed. Legal hurdles, never before viewed as obstacles, are requirements under new regulations and now appear to have been resolved; thus, a JFA is scheduled for early September. US Ambassador to Cambodia William Todd visited JPAC Headquarters earlier this summer and held a "round-table" with senior JPAC staff.

**WORLDWIDE OPERATIONS:** JPAC regularly deploys teams worldwide and continues to expand into more countries, seeking to recover remains of US personnel who served and sacrificed for our country during WWII, the Korean War and the Cold War. JPAC's permanent team in South Korea meets regularly with South Korean counterparts and, though access is still denied into North Korea, operations are conducted in South Korea. Operations recently concluded in Germany and Burma/Myanmar; cooperation in planning for the latter mission was reportedly outstanding, including good public reaction to a "hot line" set up for source reporting. In addition, JPAC teams were recently deployed to the Philippines, Solomon Islands, other European countries, Palau and Papua New Guinea (PNG). Phase Two Testing (P2T) in India, also on WWII sites, was scheduled May 8<sup>th</sup> – June 7<sup>th</sup>, but postponed by the Government of India. JPAC also hosted

a team of Chinese archivists from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) on May 21-22<sup>nd</sup>. The League is proud and grateful that our work since 1970 has brought the enormous effort now ongoing. We strongly support such efforts, so long as the fullest possible accounting for Vietnam War missing personnel is not reduced or jeopardized. **COMMISSION**

**CHARTER:** At long last, the White House approved the official charter of the **US-Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) on POW/MIAs. Nothing further has been heard since the public announcement at the VFW National Convention in Louisville, KY, in July.** Since Secretary of State John Kerry was confirmed months ago, his position on the USRJC as the Senate Democrat has been vacant, but the League is hopeful that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) will name another Senate Democrat willing to be actively engaged. Then, perhaps, action will finally occur. The other USRJC Congressional members are Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA), and Representatives Sam Johnson (R-TX) and Tim Walz (D-MN). We appreciate the patience that these Commissioners and US Chairman General Robert "Doc" Foglesong, USAF (Ret) have shown throughout the unwarranted delay, and we continue to hope for results, soon.

**ANOTHER HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE PROPOSED:** Representative Michelle Bachman (R-MN), just introduced **H. Resolution 231**, requiring "a select committee to be known as the Select Committee on POW and MIA Affairs" to be formed. This Select Committee would be charged to "*conduct a full investigation of all unresolved matters relating to any United States personnel unaccounted for from the Vietnam era, the Korean conflict, World War II, Cold War Missions, Persian Gulf War, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation Enduring Freedom, including MIAs and POWs missing and captured.*" If formed, this select committee would be empowered to hold hearings, hire staff and conduct interviews for the remainder of the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress, i.e. for two years until the next election is held for the House of Representatives. **Comment:** The League strongly opposes H. Res. 231, due to past experience about the detrimental impact that would likely occur. In a worst-case scenario, the League would consider supporting such a proposal, but only as a last resort. **OTHER**

**CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS:** Also introduced by Rep. Michelle Bachman, H.R. 2091 would "*amend Title 36, United States Code, to require that the POW/MIA flag be displayed on all days that the flag of the United States is displayed on certain Federal property.*" Introduction of this measure is appreciated, but chances of passage are almost nil due to the scope and financial impact of adoption.

## **REGARDING THE RECENT ARTICLES CONCERNING JPAC AND THE REPORT WRITTEN BY PAUL COLE:**

Months ago, Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths and League Senior Policy Advisor Richard T. Childress reviewed the internal JPAC report that was authored by temporary employee Dr. Paul Cole. Inaccuracies and manipulated data in his report, largely unfounded assertions and personal accusations reflect a Lab-generated power-play seeking greater Lab control within JPAC. The vast majority of Cole's recommendations, if followed, would adversely impact the accounting mission, in particular the Vietnam War effort on which the expanded accounting effort was founded. The League continues to support responsible efforts to improve community-wide capabilities to achieve the fullest

**possible accounting and the invaluable work being done by each organization and element in support of that mission – especially within JPAC, the most central and largest . The League also recognizes the critical importance of credibility, as we do clarity on the three-fold objective: the man returned alive, recovery and identification of his remains, or convincing evidence as to why neither is possible, all that may be possible in many cases. This mission should not be the subject of competition for control, but of varied, necessary elements of the US Government working with foreign counterparts to achieve valid, responsible accounting goals.**