



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

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AMERICANS ACCOUNTED-FOR: There are still **1,643** personnel listed by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. DPMO just posted the identification of **SSG Lawrence Woods, USA/SF**, of TN, listed as KIA/BNR in South Vietnam on October 24, 1964, is now accounted for. His remains were recovered on April 13, 2010 and identified September 4, 2013. Earlier, DPMO has posted the identification of **Colonel Francis J. McGouldrick, USAF**, CT, listed as MIA in Laos on December 13, 1968, is now accounted-for. His remains were repatriated May 22, 2012 and identified August 28, 2013. The number of Americans announced by DPMO as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now 940. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and ID'd before the end of the war, bring the official total of US personnel accounted-for from the Vietnam War to 1,003. Of the 1,643 unaccounted-for personnel, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,275 (VN-469, VS-806); Laos-308; Cambodia-53; PRC territorial waters-7; over-water losses on DPMO's list of No Further Pursuit cases number well over 600.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE & CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, PLEDGE SUPPORT: On September 20th, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, in remarks at the Pentagon's ceremony commemorating National POW/MIA Recognition day, stated in part, *"Words and promises cannot make the lingering uncertainty, the headache, and the heartache go away. But I hope it provides comfort to know that as long as members of our Armed Forces remain unaccounted for, the Department of Defense will do everything – whatever we can to find them and bring them home....we will not rest until we fulfill this pledge – no matter how long it takes.....Today, as the POW/MIA flag is raised in communities across America, we pledge to live by its creed, 'You are not Forgotten.'"*

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Martin E. Dempsey, USA, speaking at the Pentagon, stated in part, *".....a special welcome to the families of those still missing in action and all who remain dedicated to bringing them home. It's a great honor to share this day with you... I am also inspired by the efforts of the countless individuals and organizations that are dedicated to honor American prisoners of war and who continue the search for those missing in action....Their efforts reach deep into the four corners of the globe, into foreign lands far from home..... Today, as we fly the familiar black and white flag across our country, it's not only a symbol to remember the POW and MIA community, it's a charge – to keep faith with every prisoner of war, those still missing in action, their families, and our military community ... to remain undaunted by time and undeterred by challenges... wherever our missing lie, wherever a prisoner waits, we will remain committed to freeing them....to not rest... to not call our mission complete ... not until our family is whole again."*

VIETNAM: US-Vietnam POW/MIA Consultations were held September 26th, led by JPAC Commander Maj Gen Kelly McKeague, USAF, with DPMO, DIA's Stony Beach and Embassy-Hanoi participation. A commemorative dinner was held the night before to celebrate recent years of steadily improving POW/MIA cooperation. Although invited to attend, League Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths regretted and sent a letter to be read aloud that was well-received, according to the JPAC Commander. It now appears that the **Joint Field Activity (JFA) in Vietnam, scheduled for November, may have to be postponed**, as were JFA's in Laos, Cambodia and the PRC, due to lack of a Continuing Resolution (CR) to make funding available in the absence of an FY2014 budget.

In other important developments, Vietnamese President Sang led a large delegation to Washington in mid-July, during which Presidents Sang and Obama met at the White House. Senior Vietnamese leaders met with counterpart officials at the Departments of Defense, State, Commerce and Veterans Affairs, and with Members of Congress. Secretary of State John Kerry hosted a luncheon in honor of President Sang and his delegation at the State Department, and the League Chairman of the Board attended that function, as well as a meeting of Vietnamese and US veterans. Vice Foreign Minister Ha Kim Ngoc, former Director of the Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP), led another Vietnamese delegation for bilateral Policy Security Defense Dialogue (PSDD) talks here in Washington last week, another step in the rapidly expanding bilateral relationship. A senior Ministry of Defense delegation will be meeting in Washington later this month for bilateral discussions with US Defense Department officials.

CAMBODIA: Consultations were held September 30th in Phnom Penh, also led by the JPAC Commander, with DPMO, DIA's Stony Beach and Embassy-Phnom Penh participation. It is hoped the legal obstacles raised by the US bureaucracy will not recur to pose further difficulties for the JPAC teams and counterpart Cambodian officials who, though puzzled, have been most patient. **The long-delayed JFA in Cambodia was scheduled to take place from October 23 – December 6th but has now been postponed again.** Operations by two RTs and one Underwater Recovery Team (URT) in Cambodia have been postponed twice this year.

LAOS: On August 16th, US-Lao Bilateral POW/MIA Consultations, led by JPAC Commander Maj Gen Kelly McKeague, USAF, with Embassy-Vientiane and DPMO representatives participating, were held in Vientiane, Laos. The talks were the most productive such discussions in quite some time. At long last, the Lao Government agreed to allow the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA's) Stony Beach POW/MIA specialist to pursue field investigations year-round, on an as-needed basis. Though the details have yet to be worked out, the League welcomes Lao responsiveness to specific appeals, including on Stony Beach, contracting the use of smaller helicopters and on-site base-camping. These Lao Government decisions are in keeping with the improved political, economic and military relationship. This latter agreement was to have been tested during **the October 16 – November 29th JFA that has now been postponed due to the lack of funding.** If funds become available, and if current plans hold, use of the smaller helicopters is scheduled to occur early next year. Newly Senate-confirmed **US Ambassador to Laos Dan Clune** was sworn into office at an August 27th State Department ceremony attended by the Lao Ambassador to the US and his wife, and the League Board Chairman. Ambassador Clune replaced Ambassador Karen Stewart who was serving her third assignment in Laos. While her knowledge of and commitment to the POW/MIA accounting was most helpful and will be sorely missed, Ambassador Clune is already fully engaged and increasingly knowledgeable.

GAO REPORTS ACCOUNTING COMMUNITY AS DYSFUNCTIONAL: The congressionally mandated study by the General Accountability Office (GAO) completed its year-long investigation into all aspects of the accounting community. 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, 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 on August 1 before 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 (DASD) Montague Winfield, JPAC Commander Major General Kelly McKeague, USAF, and Chief of the Artifact Section, Life Science Equipment Laboratory (LSEL) John Goines. League Chairman Ann Mills-Griffiths provided a Statement for the Record. The HASC Subcommittee hearing, chaired by Representative Joe Wilson, 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 (Ret). 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 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."* The League is awaiting information as to when follow-up hearings will be held, though it is unlikely until after the DoD/IG and CAPE review are completed and reported.

JPAC PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRACTICE: Investigative journalist Bill Dedman recently published a story on what he touts as JPAC's "fake" arrival ceremonies. JPAC's attempt to honor those recovered by reenacting a formal arrival ceremony should be recognized as well-intentioned, rendering honor to Americans missing from our nation's past wars and conflicts. Mr. Dedman's talents could more usefully focus on reporting the ever-improving quality of field operations and expanded cooperation by foreign countries.

DPMO WEBSITE DOWN: DPMO's website (www.dtic.mil/dpmo) is not operational. We were informed it was due to the fact that the host server, the Defense Technical Information Center (dtic) is unfunded; however, many other DoD-related sites, with dtic as server are up and running. No further information is available.

CHECK THE LEAGUE WEB SITE: www.pow-miafamilies.org