



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

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**AMERICANS RECENTLY ACCOUNTED FOR:** The most recent change in DPAA's Statistics, dated July 12, 2017, listed the accounting for **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 28<sup>th</sup>, they announced the ID of **Air Force Capt Robert E. Holton**, 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 identified 6/8/17. DPAA announced on June 2<sup>nd</sup> the ID of **Capt Joseph S. Smith, USAFR**, of IL, listed as MIA in Cambodia 4/4/71, recovered 1/27/93, and identified 5/4/17, and **LT Charles B. Goodwin, USN**, of TX, listed as MIA in North Vietnam on 9-8-65, remains recovered 12/12/16 and identified 5/18/17.

The number still missing and otherwise unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War is still 1,606. Hopefully, there will yet be many accounted for during the rest of 2017. Of the **1,606 still missing (POW/MIA) and unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR)**, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,256 (VN-461, VS-795); Laos-295; 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 1975 is **977**. Following is a breakdown by country of the 977 Americans accounted for since the April 30, 1975 end of the Vietnam War: Vietnam – 662, Laos – 270, Cambodia – 42, and the PRC – 3. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975, for a grand total of 1,040. These 63 Americans were accounted for by unilateral US efforts in areas where access was possible, not due to cooperation with the post-war governments of Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. Added together, a total of 278 have been recovered and identified from Laos, 717 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

**DPAA BUDGET REQUIREMENTS NOT MET:** Due to budget constraints, field operations in Vietnam and Cambodia were dramatically reduced during FY17; however, Lao operations were not as adversely impacted. As is obvious, DPAA did NOT have the funding required to “increase the pace and scope of operations,” as Vietnam has repeatedly urged. Despite deep-seated, continuing internal dysfunction, DPAA field teams had been steadily implementing recoveries since becoming fully operational in January, 2016. After assurance from Acting DPAA Director Fern Sumpter Winbush that funding was secured, though at a lower level, but adequate to sustain operations until April 28<sup>th</sup> of this year, the reduction in field operations was a serious blow to confidence in DPAA's commitment to pursue Vietnam War accounting as a continuing priority. Due to inadequate funding, the damage became increasingly clear. The plus-up of \$20 million to reach the necessary FY17 budget total of \$132 million for planned operational requirements could not be requested until 45 days after a budget was approved. That did not occur and, as a result, it was deemed too late to receive, contract and utilize additional funds for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of FY17.

Of DPAA's initial funding for FY17, funds were already obligated for WWII and Korean War accounting, including recovery of remains from US cemeteries for individual identification; thus the ID count for WWII and Korean War continues to rise significantly. It has also been confirmed that, once again, DPAA will turn back funding finally provided, but not utilized

**YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED!** Write your elected officials to seek full funding for DPAA operations and personnel in FY2018 to handle worldwide accounting and recovery efforts and an exemption of DPAA funding from any/all reductions. Funding for Veterans' care is rightfully protected by exempting VA budgets from across-the-board reductions and/or sequestration. Our UNRETURNED Veterans, America's POW/MIAs, deserve that same protection and adequate funds to return them by achieving the fullest possible accounting.

**DPAA DIRECTOR SELECTION PROCESS:** As of this date, a new DPAA Director STILL has not been named, leaving a vacancy in that critical position for over a year following the abrupt resignation of Mike Linnington. The responsible official now "Acting in the Capacity of" Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (USD-P) is Mr. Robert S. Karem, newly confirmed Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD/ISA). A new person to permanently fill the USD-P position is unlikely to be nominated, confirmed and in place by the time the new DPAA Director is selected and announced. The League is hopeful that Secretary of Defense Mattis will ensure serious consideration of recommendations provided by the League, Special Operations Association (SOA), Special Forces Association (SFA), Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and others. In the earlier selection process that was vacated, there was no indication that important qualifications – such as experience, character, commitment and dedication to the mission – were given serious consideration, nor were crucial factors such as having 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.

**DPAA-HOSTED FAMILY UPDATES:** The DPAA-hosted Annual Government Briefings for Korea/Cold War families has just concluded in Washington, DC. The remainder of the 2017 calendar for DPAA-hosted Family Updates is September 9<sup>th</sup>, Detroit, MI, and November 4<sup>th</sup>, Boise, ID. The first in 2018 is January 20<sup>th</sup>, San Diego, CA, February 24<sup>th</sup>, Ft. Myers, FL, March 24<sup>th</sup>, El Paso, TX, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Rapid City, SD, and May 19<sup>th</sup>, Louisville, KY. You may have noticed postings on the DPAA website indicating 1,276 family members had attended their updates in 2016. What is unstated, therefore unclear, is that about 20% of the total (roughly 255) are Vietnam War-related family members. That means the % for Vietnam War family members, in comparison to the number missing, is much higher than for other wars.

**RUSSIAN DELEGATION PARTICIPATES IN 48<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING:** This year's annual meeting was the largest and most productive in a very long time. A full report will be coming out soon and, in the interim, the League wishes to express special appreciation to the Russian Delegation. They participated throughout, observing the full Opening Session, making an official presentation that afternoon, joined by US Co-Chairman General Doc Foglesong, USAF (Ret), and attending the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Dinner that same evening, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, as League VIP Guests. Very importantly, Russian Delegation Chairman Colonel Andrey Taranov openly and effectively participated in the Q & A Session on Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, and was very forthcoming and responsive. This was a unique first for the League, as it was for Russian officials on the US-Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) on POW/MIA Affairs. Their visit and the plenary discussions and working group talks, held at the Hilton on Tuesday before the start of our 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, were initiated by COL Chris Forbes, 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.