



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

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www.pow-miafamilies.org

UPDATE: August 18, 2020

AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR: The number missing (POW/MIA) and otherwise unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR) from the Vietnam War is now **1,586**. In a July 14th release, DPAA announced that 1st Lt. Alva R. Krogman, USAF, KIA/BNR, was accounted for on July 7th. 1st Lt. Krogman was flying an O1-F Birddog aircraft on a visual reconnaissance mission over Savannakhet Province, Laos, on January 17, 1967, when his aircraft was hit and went down. Search and Rescue (SAR) operations were initiated immediately, but were shut down within a few hours after one of the SAR aircraft was also shot down. In February of this year, a US team of unexploded ordnance removal specialists initially recovered remains while clearing the site in preparation for an April joint recovery mission. **This was the first identification of a previously unaccounted-for Vietnam War Veteran to be announced since July 26, 2019.**

Of the 1,586, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,246 (VN-443, VS-803); 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 **997**. A breakdown by country of these 997 Americans is: Vietnam – 672, 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 1,060. These 63 Americans, were accounted for by US-only efforts in accessible areas, not with cooperation of post-war governments in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. A total of 288 have been accounted for from Laos, 727 – Vietnam, 42 – Cambodia, and 3 from the PRC.

ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS/EVENTS CANCELLED; UNILATERAL SRV RECOVERIES ONGOING: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Defense Department ordered a ban on all DoD travel, initially until May 15th, extended until June 30th and now beginning to be lifted incrementally. DPAA pulled teams from the field to return them to the US and cancelled all field operations until further notice; however, the SRV agreed to conduct unilateral recoveries in Quang Binh Province, North Central Vietnam. There have been three such periods, with multiple recovery teams, and one now ongoing. **Annual US-SRV Technical Talks**, initially planned for mid-September at DPAA Ops Headquarters in Hawaii, and will instead be virtual, with Deputy Director for Operations RDML Darius Banaji, USN, leading for the US.

IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY ALSO LOST DUE TO COVID-19 CORONA VIRUS: In addition to field operations in Laos and Vietnam being put on hold, the **US-ASEAN Special Summit**, scheduled to be held in Las Vegas on March 14th, was cancelled. League Chairman/CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths was scheduled to meet with **Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen** on March 13th, and was awaiting confirmation from the Lao and Vietnamese Prime Ministers, when the cancellation was announced.

LEAGUE 51ST ANNUAL MEETING NOW SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 24-28, 2021: As previously announced, the 51st Annual Meeting did not take place June 24-28th this year, and has been rescheduled for June 24-28, 2021. We just checked with the Hilton Crystal City Hotel, and they are now open on a limited basis, and we're hoping for fewer restrictions and greater normalcy by mid-2021. **DPAA cancelled Family Member Updates** previously scheduled for March, April, May, August and September, previously scheduled in Colorado Springs. **The DPAA-hosted Annual Government Briefings for Korean War/Cold War Families, previously planned for August was also cancelled** Due to the seriousness and unpredictability of the COVID-19 pandemic, DoD travel restrictions have been applied worldwide. In addition, DoD, DIA, State Department and other US agencies had been teleworking, but are now alternating schedules to try to ensure greater in-person coverage.

POW/MIA FLAG TO BE DISPLAYED YEAR-ROUND: On November 7th, President Trump signed into law the “National POW/MIA Flag Act.” The League-originated POW/MIA flag is now to be visibly displayed whenever the US flag is posted on Federal properties, including the White House, the US Capitol and all Senate and House Buildings, World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial and the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, every national cemetery, buildings containing the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the Director of the Selective Service system, all major military installations, as directed by the Secretary of Defense, all VA medical centers, and all offices of the US Postal Service. The League is grateful for this tremendous support, a meaningful signal to counterpart nations from which cooperation is necessary. It also signals all nations that America stands behind and with those who serve – past, present and future – and if captured or missing, all possible efforts will be made to recover and bring home our UNRETURNED Veterans.

FLAG DAY CONFUSION: Flag Day is one of the six days each year when existing laws required that our POW/MIA flag be flown, as well as on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day. This year, on Flag Day and for unknown reasons, our POW/MIA Flag was taken down from on top of the White House and placed on a separate flag pole, under the US flag, but scarcely visible in a small cluster of trees just outside the circular driveway around the South Lawn. Strangely, this occurred only six months after the President had signed into law the bills passed by the House and Senate requiring visible display of the POW/MIA flag on “all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed.”

Chairman’s Comment: When this occurred, DPAA and the League were notified within minutes of each other and were given no reason, nor any indication as to who had made the decision to construct a new flagpole near the South Lawn and remove the POW/MIA flag from atop the White House, especially on Flag Day, June 14th, where it had proudly flown for decades. The way this was handled was truly bizarre and, to date, neither DPAA Director Kelly McKeague nor League Chairman/CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths has been provided any rationale. The subject had been raised at the White House Memorial Day Ceremony by a Public Liaison official, and he was informed as to why such a decision would send conflicting signals to counterpart governments which figure prominently in US efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting, in particular for Vietnam War POW/MIAs. It was stressed that it would be viewed as reducing the priority and seriousness of US intentions, including with the DPRK; accounting for Americans lost in the Korean War was element #4 of the 2018 Singapore Agreement.

THE LEAGUE OFFICE IS CLOSED AND ALL ARE TELEWORKING UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

SUPPORT THE LEAGUE: Facebook Birthday Fundraisers: Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, September 18, 2020, and Veterans Day.....

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