



**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

**NEWSLETTER: April 13, 2018**

**AMERICANS RECENTLY ACCOUNTED FOR:** On April 5<sup>th</sup>, DPAA posted the names of two Vietnam War personnel now accounted for. **Col Peter J. Stewart, USAF**, of FL, listed MIA 3/15/66, NVN, was ID'd on 2/28/18. **Army SSGT Marshall F. Kipina**, of MI, listed MIA 7/14/66, Laos, was ID'd 2/1/18. Recovery dates were not provided for either serviceman. Prior to that, DPAA posted 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 18<sup>th</sup>, DPAA released notice that **Col Edgar F. Davis, USAF**, of NC, listed MIA 9/17/68, Laos, recovered 4/29/15 and ID'd 12/22/17, is now accounted for, the first such announcement since September 11<sup>th</sup> of last year. At that time, DPAA reported the accounting for **CAPT James. R. Bauder, USN**, of CA, listed MIA 9/21/66 in NVN, recovered 6/11/17, and ID'd 8/28/17. Earlier, DPAA announced the accounting for **CMSgt Donald J. Hall, USAF**, listed MIA 2/6/67, NVN, recovered 4/3/17, and ID'd 8/18/17. DPAA's 8/15/17 Statistics cited **Col Martin R. Scott, USAF**, of OK, listed MIA 3/15/66, NVN, recovered 12/12/15 and ID'd 6/15/17, and **1<sup>st</sup> Lt David T. Dinan, III, USAF**, of NJ, listed KIA/BNR, 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, MIA in Laos on 11/24/69, remains recovered 4/4/14, and ID'd 6/16/17. On June 28<sup>th</sup>, DPAA announced the ID of **Capt Robert E. Holton, USAF**, of MT, listed MIA in Laos 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 MIA 7/16/66, NVN, remains recovered 12/12/16, and ID'd 6/8/17. On June 2<sup>nd</sup>, DPAA announced the ID of **Capt Joseph S. Smith, USAFR**, of IL, listed MIA 4/4/71, Cambodia, recovered 1/27/93, and ID'd 5/4/17, and **LT Charles B. Goodwin, USN**, of TX, listed MIA 9/8/65, NVN, 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 now 1,598. Of that number, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,252 (VN-457, VS-795); Laos-291; 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 **985**. A breakdown by country of these 985 Americans is: Vietnam – 666, Laos – 274, 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 1,048. 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 282 have been accounted for from Laos, 721 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

**DPAA DIRECTOR SELECTED:** On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 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.

**49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD JUNE 20-24<sup>TH</sup>: SEE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION FORM ON LAST TWO PAGES OF THIS LONG-OVERDUE NEWSLETTER.**

**LEAGUE DELEGATION RETURNED FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA MISSION:** 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 11<sup>th</sup>, and returned January 30<sup>th</sup>. She was joined once again by the League's Senior Policy Advisor since 1989, Richard Childress, who left his eight-year position at the Reagan National Security Council Staff and retired from the US Army at the same time. They were joined by Cindy Stonebraker, MIA daughter and 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 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 and initiatives 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.

**DPAA DIRECTOR VISITED SOUTHEAST ASIA:** DPAA Director Kelly McKeague, supported by Policy & Plans Director John Hamilton, Vietnam War Policy specialist Jack Kull and Lt Col Bernard Smith, USAF, the Director's Senior Military Assistant, recently returned from meetings with senior Vietnamese and Lao officials, as well as US Ambassadors, senior staff members and DPAA Detachment staff in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. This was Director McKeague's first official visit to these critical countries since being named DPAA Director on September 5, 2017. The visit was a crucial step in advancing the mission as the US seeks to maximize the favorable environment that has created a unique opportunity to expand the pace and scope of accounting efforts as advocated by Vietnam since first proposed to the League Delegation in 2009.

**YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED!** Contact your elected officials to urge full funding for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) to sustain operational plans to handle worldwide accounting and recovery efforts. Funding for Veterans' care has rightfully increased and is protected by exempting Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) budgets from across-the-board cuts and/or sequestration. America's UNRETURNED veterans, our POW/MIAs, deserve equal funding protection. Urge an exemption of DPAA funding from any/all reductions and an end to sequestration.

**PRESIDENT TRUMP MEETS WITH VIETNAMESE COUNTERPART IN HANOI:** Following the mid-November, 2017, 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 at that time, now 1,252) 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 1,598 still missing from the Vietnam War, 291 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 raised the POW/MIA accounting mission on the agenda as significant to the Trump Administration and, to our knowledge, 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 well 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, the Secretary of State, 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 DIA/Stony Beach, CIA 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 and never before has the door in Vietnam been opened as widely.

**STONY BEACH TEAM PERMANENT STATUS IN VIETNAM NOT YET CONFIRMED:** In early December, the League was informed that the Government of Vietnam had formally given approval for a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Stony Beach specialist to be permanently assigned to the US Embassy in Hanoi. The information, therefore the announcement, appears to have been in error, or at least premature, though provided as solid and reliable. All should have been able to celebrate the successful result of many, many years of effort, in particular by the League. Permanent assignment of a Stony Beach specialist was a high priority of League and DPAA discussions in Hanoi. Strong support was also provided by past US Ambassadors and successive DIA Directors. Current Ambassador Dan Kritenbrink is fully supportive, but Vietnam’s approval has not yet been formalized. Despite this delay, the League deeply appreciates the efforts of all who helped form the DIA Stony Beach Team in 1986, supported them through years of personnel reductions, and fought attempted reassignments.

**Chairman’s Comment:** The DIA Stony Beach Team is comprised of highly trained specialists, language-capable, culturally familiar investigators who augment DPAA Investigation Teams, as they have done effectively for years despite sporadic, insufficient integration by DPAA and having to rotate on a temporary basis in and out of Vietnam. A favorable decision on permanent presence of Stony Beach by Vietnam’s leadership is overdue, but a positive response now is in keeping with current assurances of openness, an end to limits on the numbers of US personnel in-country simultaneously, increasing military-to-military and economic cooperation, and the current political environment. I am confident Vietnam’s leadership will act soon to approve permanent change of station (PCS) for DIA’s Stony Beach specialist. When that occurs, it will be most welcome, deeply appreciated and will expedite investigations to develop leads by interviewing firsthand witnesses before it is too late. There has long been a permanent Stony Beach specialist in Cambodia, filling the gaps since the former JTF-FA Detachment was pulled out and its responsibilities transferred to JPAC, now DPAA Detachment 1 in Bangkok. The Stony Beach specialist is on-site point-of-contact with very high level Cambodian POW/MIA Committee members. A few years ago, and after 14+ years of consistent League effort, the Lao Government agreed that a Stony Beach specialist should be permanently assigned to the US Embassy in Vientiane. For greatest effectiveness in expanding the pace of interviews and investigations, smaller teams must be able to pursue opportunities as they arise, not limited to the timeframe of in-country DPAA Joint Field Activities (JFAs).

**US-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION (USRJC) ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS MET FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> PLENUM:** On November 8<sup>th</sup>, the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 Vostrotin. 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, now former Chief of the Russian Commission Support Office, Russian Embassy in Washington, DC. (Unfortunately, he was one of the 60 Russians recently expelled due to ongoing tensions between the US and Russia.) This US Delegation was a follow-on to earlier USRJC plenary sessions and the Russian Commission's participation in the League's 48<sup>th</sup> 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, and the Plenum was well worth the time, effort and expense. 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. The content and presentation by DPAA Director McKeague, US Chairman of the Vietnam War Working Group, aided by Svetlana Shevchenko, senior DPAA Russia/Ukraine 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. 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 7<sup>th</sup> at the Russian (and former Soviet Union) Air Defense Museum, outside central Moscow. A dedicated knowledgeable historian briefed on every era, including the Vietnam War, and was very informative. Archival documents originated by former Soviet personnel who served as Air Defense advisers in the early years of the Vietnam War logically would provide useful information and leads to solve incidents involving missing and unaccounted-for US personnel.

On November 9<sup>th</sup>, US Chairman General Foglesong, VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace, Russian Chairman General Colonel Vostrotin 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. The entire US Delegation later 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. Following several hours spent walking through the displays and listening to presentations, all enjoyed a delicious farewell dinner at the military dining hall.

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, 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 continue to be interested, well-informed supporters and advocates. Detailed 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 15<sup>th</sup>, League Chairman and CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths met with Vietnam's Vice Minister of National Defense Senior LTG Nguyen Chi Vinh for in-depth discussions. Vice Minister Vinh was in DC to participate in the October 17<sup>th</sup> session of the bilateral Defense Policy Dialogue. 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. He affirmed flexibility in field operations, noting there are no longer any areas restricted to US access, 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 held 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 recently passed Omnibus appropriations bill included the entire DPAA request, plus an additional \$15M increase (\$10M specifically for SEA operations and \$5M for partnerships) for a total of \$146.3M for DPAA Operations and Maintenance. Real DPAA transparency is required to rebuild trust and confidence. Now that Director Kelly McKeague is in place, there is greater reason for confidence in that regard.

**H. RES. 129 PASSES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 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 past time that the US Senate acts. 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.**

**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 17<sup>th</sup>. 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.

**49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING:** The League's 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting will be held June 20-24<sup>th</sup>, again at the Hilton Crystal City Hotel, 2300 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington VA 22203. This national convention will offer an opportunity to hear from senior Trump Administration and DoD officials, plus senior Service Officers.

The **Opening Session** will be on Thursday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, and there will be two full days of presentations by current and former US officials and noted private experts, as well as official briefings from analytic personnel, field operators, scientists and guest presenters on the complete range of issue-related policy and operational matters. The **49<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner & Candlelight Ceremony** will be held the evening of June 21<sup>st</sup>. This year's program includes a workshop on Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, immediately following **Service-hosted Luncheons**. That evening, DPAA will host a visit to the USMC Museum in Quantico, VA. Included will be a reception, patriotic music, and an escorted USMC Museum Tour. Bus transportation will be available starting at 5:45 PM and will return to the Hilton between 9:00 – 9:30 PM. Saturday morning, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, a three-hour **Q&A Session** will be held with working-level officials from DPAA. DIA's Stony Beach Team, AFDIL and the Service Casualty Officers, followed by the **League Business Session** and a closing **League-hosted Farewell Reception**.

**Meet Your Congressman:** It is more important than ever that elected Representatives and Senators know what POW/MIA family members, veterans and concerned citizens expect from Congress regarding support for the accounting mission. You can help by calling on Members of Congress to urge full funding and support for DPAA to account as fully as possible for America's unreturned Vietnam Veterans, our missing POW/MIAs, as well as unaccounted-for US personnel from prior wars and conflicts. Plan ahead and **make your appointment now** to go to Capitol Hill this year. You will need to arrive in Washington, DC, one day early, on Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>, to be available on the morning of Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, to meet with League Board Members and obtain materials with current information and suggestions to raise during your visit to Capitol Hill.

MAKE TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS TO ARRIVE ON JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND DEPART ON SUNDAY, JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup>. THIS WILL ENSURE PARTICIPATION ON CAPITOL HILL ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20<sup>TH</sup>, AND THE Q & A SESSION ON SATURDAY, IN PREPARATION FOR VOTING IN THE BUSINESS MEETING ON POLICY RESOLUTIONS. THESE OFFICIAL POSITIONS ARE GEARED TOWARD DEVELOPING LEAGUE POLICY ON THE WAY FORWARD TO ACHIEVE OUR SHARED ACCOUNTING OBJECTIVES.

**Transportation:** As required by law, the Secretary of Defense will again authorize transportation for two family members of each Vietnam War missing and unaccounted-for serviceman or civilian to attend. Service Casualty Officers have sent or will shortly send information to the **Primary Next of Kin (PNOK)** about the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, as well as forms to complete for requesting transportation (COIN Assist), case file reviews, and attendance at **Service-hosted Luncheons**. In authorizing COIN Assist, original Congressional intent was to ensure that each missing American is represented at the League's annual meetings at which official government briefings will be given. **All family members** are eligible to attend, though some League events are open only to those who register for the full League 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. Questions? Call the national office, 703-465-7432.

**IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ATTEND!** Funding, personnel and leadership changes and challenges within the POW/MIA community ensure information provided during this year's briefings and panels will be critical and will affect every family member.

**Registration:** To register for the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, use the separate page of this mailing. PLEASE COMPLETE BOTH SIDES and return the form to the League office with your check covering the cost of meeting registration and dinner (if you choose to attend). Credentials for the meeting will be available for pick-up **Wednesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, from 5:00 – 9:00 PM** in the Virginia Ballroom Foyer, Plaza Level. **Orientation for Newcomers** will also be held on Wednesday, from **7:00 – 8:00 PM** in the Patrick Henry Board Room, First Floor. Cost for League Members (Family & Associate) to register for the meeting only is \$50.00, plus an additional \$50 for the dinner a total of \$100. US officials register for the meeting at no charge, but if attending the dinner as hoped, the cost is \$55 per person, as it is for dinner guests. As noted, registration payment can be by check to the League office or paid online at [www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org), saving check-writing, stamps, and time, if inclined.

**Reservations:** This year, the hotel rate for rooms at the **Hilton Crystal City Hotel** is again **\$155.00** (plus tax), per room, per night – single or double, with a charge of \$20 per night for each additional adult in the room. To make reservations, call 800-HILTONS (800-445-8667), noting affiliation with the League's 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. You can also go to [www.hilton.com](http://www.hilton.com) and use the code **MIA**. **Deadline to secure the special rate is June 1<sup>st</sup>**. The room-block is limited; early reservations are encouraged. Any problems with reservations? Call the League office, 703-465-7432.

**Boutique:** This will again be held in the **Old Dominion Executive Board Room, Plaza Level**. In view of the tremendous success in years past, the League is again seeking suitable items for display or purchase. Please be selective, and either bring the item(s) with you and deliver them to League officials at Registration or send them in advance to the League office, including an itemized list noting each item's value. If you are interested in learning more about suggested donations or items that have sold well in the past, request a list from the national office, 703-465-7432.

**Commemorative Program:** Each year, the League publishes a special program that includes individual and organizational tributes honoring missing US personnel, organizational messages with best wishes to the families gathered, and announcements related to POW/MIA awareness, etc. The back side of the attached Registration Form provides the 2018 Program Rates. The **deadline for receipt of such material is close of business on June 1<sup>st</sup>**. Email your camera-ready artwork to Betty Bartels Murphy, [MIA101925@aol.com](mailto:MIA101925@aol.com), or Office Administrator Leslie Swindells, [leslie.swindells@pow-miafamilies.org](mailto:leslie.swindells@pow-miafamilies.org), and mail a copy with payment to the national office.