



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

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AMERICANS RECENTLY ACCOUNTED FOR: On March 28th, DPAA Statistics listed three USMC personnel as recently accounted for: **Captain John A. House** of NY, **Cpl Glyn L. Runnels, Jr.**, of AL, and **LCpl John D. Killen, II**, of IA. All were listed as KIABNR on June 30, 1967, in South Vietnam. Their remains were recovered in June, 2012, and identification was authorized on December 22, 2015. DPAA has not yet published the formal announcement with interment plans. On March 7th, DPAA released an announcement that **Captain Daniel W. Thomas, USAFR**, listed as MIA on July 6, 1971 in South Vietnam, had been accounted for. Remains were recovered by a Vietnamese Unilateral Recovery Team (URT) in August, 2014, and identified in August, 2015, as those of **Major Donald G. Carr, USA**, the other person in the OV-10A piloted by Capt Thomas. Subsequent recovery efforts by the URT and repatriation of additional remains and material in April, 2016, brought the more recent ID of Capt Thomas. DPAA also listed on its website, under Statistics, the accounting for **Colonel William E. Campbell, USAF**, listed as MIA in Laos January 29, 1969. His remains were recovered April 17, 2014, identified August 29, 2016, and his name was placed on the DPAA website as accounted for on March 3rd. On February 22nd, DPAA announced the ID of **Capt Robert R. Barnett, USAF**, listed as KIA/BNR on April 7, 1966 while piloting a B-57B over Laos. His remains were recovered June 18, 2015 and identified August 16, 2016. Earlier this year, a Marine Corps Reserve officer, **1st Lt William C. Ryan**, was the first person since June of 2016 announced as accounted for from the Vietnam War. 1st Lt Ryan was listed KIA/BNR in Laos on May 11, 1969. His remains were recovered January 27, 2016, and identified December 7, 2016.

The number still missing and otherwise unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War is now 1,611. Let's hope these are the first of many announced in 2017, though most had long ago been identified. Of the 1,611 still missing (POW/MIA) and unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR), 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,257 (VN-463, VS-794); Laos-298; Cambodia-49; PRC territorial waters-7. These 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 now **972**. There follows a breakdown by country of the 972 Americans accounted for since the April 30, 1975 end of the Vietnam War: Vietnam – 661, Laos – 268, Cambodia – 40, and the PRC – 3. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975, for a grand total of 1,035. Of the 63, 9 were from Laos, 53 from Vietnam, and 1 from Cambodia. These Americans were accounted for by unilateral US effort 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 277 have been recovered and identified from Laos, 714 from Vietnam, 41 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

DPAA FIELD OPERATIONS: The data concerning ongoing operations is vague, due to lack of reliable information from DPAA, but we understand that Vietnam operations, reduced as they were to only one recovery team and some undetermined investigations, including some with the assistance of several US Vietnam Veterans, have concluded and the teams are en route back to Hawaii. The three Recovery Teams (RTs) and additional support personnel engaged in the third Joint Field Activity (JFA) of this fiscal year in Laos have only a few more days in-country. In Cambodia, about one week remains to pursue answers on one case, previously cut from 60 to only 30 days. This team was attempting to account for two US servicemen from an aircraft crash

site in northern Cambodia. A former US Special Forces soldier who visited the site shortly after the incident was accompanying the teams to assist in the recovery.

VIETNAM WAR ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS REDUCED: DPAA drastically cut the Vietnam JFA that began last month. With initial plans to conduct multiple recovery operations and investigations, DPAA deployed only one Investigation Team (IT) and one Recovery Team (RT), as well as a team to handle a Field Forensic Review (FFR) and a Joint Forensic Review (JFR). Thankfully, Vietnam provided one Unilateral Recovery Team (URT) and one Research Investigation Team (RIT).

After being assured by Acting DPAA Director Fern Sumpter Winbush that funding was secured, though at a lower level, but adequate to sustain operations until April 28th, this news was a serious blow to confidence in DPAA's commitment to pursue Vietnam War accounting as a continuing priority. The earlier JFA in Laos was also postponed by three weeks due to an aircraft breakdown and delay in Guam; however, the trilateral investigation reportedly began as scheduled on January 9th and the three RTs and one IT began three weeks late. The lost time was due to US budget constraints, NOT any obstruction from the Lao, and could not be recovered.

Of Note: Symbolic of how far the accounting mission has come: During January 8-11th trilateral defense-related talks in Da Nang that included Laos, Vietnamese Defense Minister General Ngo Xuan Lich, thanked the Cambodian Government for supporting Vietnam's "*search for and repatriation of the remains of Vietnamese volunteer soldiers and experts who'd sacrificed their lives in Cambodia*" and agreed with Cambodian Defense Minister Tea Banh to continue this cooperation.

DPAA BUDGET REQUIREMENTS NOT MET: Apparently, DPAA does NOT have the funding in Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) required to "increase the pace and scope of operations," as has repeatedly been requested by Vietnam. Despite continuing internal dysfunction, DPAA had been proceeding well since becoming fully operational in January of 2016. Now, due to inadequate funding, the damage is increasingly clear. The plus-up of \$20 million to reach the necessary FY17 budget total of \$132 million for planned operational requirements was not requested, reportedly due to it already being too late to contract and utilize those funds, if approved, for use in the 3rd and 4th quarters of FY17.

YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED! Write your elected officials to object to the lack of funding for DPAA to meet FY17 operational requirements and ask for additional funding and 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, US POW/MIAs, deserve that protection and adequate funds to achieve the fullest possible accounting.

DPAA DIRECTOR SELECTION PROCESS: As of this date, there is still no DPAA Director; however, an announcement seeking applicants for this crucial position has been distributed. The responsible official now "Acting in the capacity of" Undersecretary of Defense for Policy is Ms. Theresa Whelan, a career DoD official. It is encouraging that new Secretary of Defense General James Mattis, USMC, has signaled his intention to ensure a viable Director is named. It is hoped that serious consideration will be given to recommendations provided by the League, Special Operations Association (SOA), Special Forces Association (SFA) and others. Up to now, there had been no indication that important qualifications - experience, character, commitment and dedication to the mission – were given consideration, nor crucial factors such as having earned the trust and respect of the families, veterans and foreign officials whose willingness to authorize necessary cooperation is critical to success.

ATTEND DPAA-HOSTED FAMILY UPDATES: The remainder of the 2017 calendar for DPAA-hosted Family Updates: April 22nd, Kansas City, MO; May 20th, Syracuse, NY; during the League's 48th Annual Meeting June 21-25th; and September 9th, Detroit, MI. You may have noticed postings on the DPAA website indicating 1,276 family members had attended these updates in 2016. What is unstated, therefore unclear, is that only about 20% of that number are Vietnam War family members. **ATTEND DPAA-HOSTED FAMILY UPDATES TO SHOW YOU ARE ENGAGED AND EXPECT PRIORITY EFFORTS BASED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF FIRST PRIORITY ON THE MOST RECENT WAR.**