



**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 Department of Defense (DoD) as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. The most recent DoD posting on the issue identified **Ssg Lawrence Woods, USA/SF**, of TN, listed as KIA/BNR in South Vietnam on October 24, 1964. His remains were recovered on April 13, 2010 and identified September 4, 2013. Earlier, DoD posted the identification of **Colonel Francis J. McGouldrick, Jr., USAF**, of CT, listed as MIA in Laos on December 13, 1968. His remains were repatriated May 22, 2012 and identified August 28, 2013. The number of Americans announced by DoD as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is still **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 DoD's list of No Further Pursuit cases number well over 600.

LEAGUE CHAIRMAN MET WITH SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths met on December 4th with Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to discuss the way ahead for the entire accounting community. Recognizing the growing negative impact on Vietnam War accounting caused by the US bureaucracy's internal dysfunction and the bias of some in pursuing accounting objectives, the League leadership determined the need to develop a cohesive structure to reorganize the entire effort. Critical August 1st hearings in the House and Senate reinforced the urgency of moving quickly. The usual outcome of such hearings held by lawmakers frustrated in seeking answers is to require investigations and assessments; however, they are usually limited in scope and based on pursuing answers to questions based on unverified, misleading accusations from biased, relatively uninformed individuals. Rather than awaiting results from further internal investigations and assessments, and based on decades of experience dealing with successive organizations and administrations, Mills-Griffiths sought suggestions from former and current US officials who are firmly committed to the mission. The task of generating a League reorganization proposal was made more critical by negative media focused on the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC). The Secretary pledged to carefully review the League's background memo and proposed reorganization plan and respond directly to the League.

US-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION ON POW/MIA AFFAIRS (USRJC) FINALLY POISED FOR ACTION: On December 11th, US Co-Chairman of the USRJC called a meeting of US Commissioners and staff to update the Commissioners and discuss the way ahead. VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace, former USRJC Executive Secretary, now League Advisor on Russia and the former USSR, Norm Kass, and League Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths were also invited to attend. This was the first USRJC meeting in over two years, and the first since US Co-Chairman General Robert "Doc" Foglesong, USAF (Ret), was formally re-named by the President and reinforced in his position by the Secretary of Defense, who also designated him a special employee of the Defense Department, primarily for logistical support.

The newly named, long overdue replacement for former Senate Democrat, now Secretary of State, John Kerry, is a very welcome addition; however, the Honorable Joe Manchin (D-WV) was unable to attend. Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) and Representative Tim Walz (D-NE) were present and contributed significantly, but the Honorable Sam Johnson (R-TX), a returned Vietnam War POW, was unable to make it due to hearing conflicts. The State Department's Commissioner, Ambassador Paul W. Jones, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, was present and promises to be actively engaged.

Ambassador Jones has prior service at US Embassy Moscow, as well as in Southeast Asia, most recently serving as US Ambassador to Malaysia. The night before the meeting, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) Montague Winfield was formally named a DoD Commissioner, as was the Defense Intelligence Agency's Mark Handy. Dr. Tim Nenninger, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), will continue serving as Commissioner, another positive.

Mr. Stephen Aldridge, National Security Staff, and Acting USRJC Executive Secretary Dr. James Connell, DPMO, organized the session, with active support and assistance of congressional staff, additional DPMO staff and the Joint Commission Support Directorate (JCSD), now cut to only four positions in DPMO, led by Rich Lyda, previously Deputy Chief of JCSD-Moscow. The current Moscow Chief is Major Rob Patterson, USA, ably assisted by four Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs). The very talented linguist and capable Foreign Affairs Specialist, Svetlana Shevchenko, was illogically removed from her JCSD position by DASD Winfield and assigned to DPMO's External Affairs Directorate, focusing on liaison with Congress, family members and veterans.

As to future USRJC direction, the immediate need is for Russian President Vladimir Putin to name a Russian Co-Chairman as counterpart to General Foglesong. Reportedly, President Putin intends to name someone soon and the delay is simply bureaucratic; however, that remains to be seen. The US and Russia have serious and substantive differences at present; however, this issue is one on which both countries should be able to work together toward achieving humanitarian objectives despite other political and policy challenges. It is hoped that all senior US officials will note to their Russian counterparts that it is time to resume this humanitarian channel for cooperation.

Chairman's Comment: The League appreciates the patience that General Foglesong and these Commissioners have shown and is grateful for their tenacity and determination to help. If President Putin can quickly name a Russian Co-Chair, and with the significant addition of Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), the USRJC may finally be sufficiently restored to contribute as intended. Sadly, that will be without skilled, principled former officials who spent years supporting and fighting for the USRJC's mission, dedicated professionals such as Norm Kass, Roger Schumaker and Dave Martin – all forced out of their JCSD positions by a former DPMO Director.

VIETNAM WAR FIELD OPERATIONS: Despite nearly endless challenges, including budget glitches, operational postponements and juggling required to reschedule Joint Field Activities (JFAs), JPAC is deploying teams to two Southeast Asian countries during this first month of 2014, despite more last-minute scares regarding funding reliability.

LAOS: With budget agreement reached, JPAC started a JFA in Laos January 14th that is expected to conclude on February 17th. Three teams are conducting recovery operations and one Investigation Team (IT), augmented by the DIA Stony Beach specialist, will also conduct several investigations.

CAMBODIA: Operations in Cambodia by one Recovery Teams (RT) and one Underwater Recovery Team (URT), postponed twice this past year, are now scheduled for January 28th – April 2nd. Since the Stony Beach specialist is permanently in-country and conducts investigations whenever needed, there are no investigations scheduled in conjunction with the JFA.

VIETNAM: Four RTs are scheduled to conduct operations in Vietnam from February 28th to March 27th. Two ITs will also deploy on this JFA.

Check the League Website: www.pow-miafamilies.org