



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

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AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR: On 2/25/19, DPAA announced that **Navy Reserve Journalist 3rd Class Raul A. Guerra, USN**, listed as missing on 10/8/67, SVN, was accounted for. His remains were recovered on 8/15/05 and identified on 2/20/19. On January 15, DPAA posted the accounting for **Roy F. Townley** and **Edward J. Weissenback, Air America/CIA**, listed as missing on 12/27/71, in Laos. The DPAA release on accounting for **George L. Ritter**, from the same **Air America/CIA** incident, indicated his recovery on 12/13/17, and ID on 9/25/18. Both Townley and Weissenback were recovered late last fall and their families were notified just before Christmas, 2018. Before that, no changes in the Vietnam War statistics had been posted since October 17th when DPAA posted the names of two Vietnam War personnel now accounted for, Ritter, noted above, and **LT Richard C. Lannom, USNR**, TN, listed MIA on 3/1/68, NVN, recovered 12/13/17 and ID'd on 9/25/18.

The number still missing (POW/MIA) and otherwise unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR) from the Vietnam War is now 1,589. Of that number, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,246 (VN-452, VS-794); Laos-288; 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 **994**. A breakdown by country of these 994 Americans is: Vietnam – 672, Laos – 277, 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 1,057. The 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 285 have been accounted for from Laos, 727 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

US/VIETNAM COOPERATION: DPAA and DIA/Stony Beach (DIA/SB) field operations resumed in mid-February and are expected to conclude in early April. In early December, a repatriation ceremony was held in Da Nang to conclude the last Joint Field Activity (JFA) of the calendar year that consisted of several investigation and recovery teams. The year culminated with a US-hosted, joint commemoration to celebrate 30 years of sustained joint field operations. The annual US-SRV Technical Talks took place September 10th in Hanoi, led by DPAA Deputy Director Rear Admiral Jon Kreitz. As anticipated, Vietnam was responsive to US requests, other than a couple that are still under consideration, and the pace and scope of cooperation continues to expand.

Chairman's Comment: The League deeply appreciates efforts by the government and people of Vietnam to work constructively and effectively to achieve the fullest possible accounting. Vietnam's early on-again, off-again cooperation has improved and steadily expanded over the last 40 years and today can be described as forward leaning, proposing initiatives and providing increased opportunities for success.

US/CAMBODIAN COOPERATION: DPAA/DIA Stony Beach investigation and recovery teams began work in mid-January at several sites that had been on hold awaiting action by Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen to lift the "temporary suspension" he had levied nearly 18 months earlier. On October 12th, the long-serving Prime Minister announced his decision to lift the suspension in a letter to Washington State officials, copied to the League Chairman of the Board. His action came despite continued Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sanctions for inadequate steps by Phnom Penh to accept Cambodian citizens who committed crimes and were subject to deportation according to international law. Thankfully, throughout the suspension, DIA's Stony Beach Cambodia specialist, Eric Phillips, continued to conduct case investigations. The ongoing JFA will wrap up mid-March, and investigations will continue to the end of the month.

Chairman's Comment: The League is grateful that Prime Minister Hun Sen lifted the suspension, and looks forward to resuming longstanding cooperation with his full support for this important humanitarian issue. We are also grateful to Washington State Senator Ericksen and Representative Buys for their work in advocating resumption of POW/MIA operations in Cambodia. Coming just in time for the dry season, this decision enabled DPAA and DIA/Stony Beach to proceed with important field operations, working alongside their thoughtful, capable Cambodian counterparts.

US/LAO COOPERATION: DPAA and SB personnel recently concluded field investigation and recovery operations on cases of US personnel missing in northern Laos that concluded with another repatriation ceremony conducted at the Luang Prabang Airport on February 27th. Annual US-Lao consultations were held September 7th in Vientiane, led by RDML Kreitz. Significant agreement was reached to expand support for year-round DIA/SB investigations. Joint Field Activities (JFAs) resumed, including completion of the site in NW Laos that resulted in the accounting for three Air America/CIA personnel. It was a very successful recovery effort after many years on the Master Excavation List while awaiting a JPAC (before DPAA was formed) decision to excavate.

Chairman's Comment: The League looks forward to positive results from these efforts, recognizing and applauding several significant developments in POW/MIA cooperation that the Lao leadership has authorized in recent months. These include base-camping at remote locations, increasing the number of US participants on a case-by-case basis, and extensions of time on field recovery sites when justified. Despite often difficult conditions, including advance destruction of unexploded ordnance, humanitarian cooperation to account for US personnel continues to improve, for which all Americans are grateful. Hopefully, further **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sanctions against Laos** for failing to accept Lao nationals who long ago immigrated to the US, were since convicted of criminal acts, and are now scheduled for legal deportation back to Laos, will not negatively impact bilateral US-Lao humanitarian POW/MIA cooperation.

DPAA REACHING OUT TO HELP EDUCATE CURRENT AND FUTURE MILITARY PERSONNEL: In conjunction with travel to host the DPAA Family Member Update (FMU), this time in San Jose, CA, Outreach & Communication (O&C) Director Todd Livick, COL, USA (Ret), Deputy Director Johnnie Webb, LTC, USA (Ret), Jennifer Valle, Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) and other DPAA O&C staff traveled to Santa Clara University and briefed ROTC cadets as well as those from Santa Cruz, San Jose and Stanford. Reportedly, it was a positive experience for all and DPAA plans to continue to work through such channels to educate tomorrow's military. DPAA also traveled to the Defense Language Institute (DLI) and briefed the Commandant, students and Foreign Area Officer class. All felt there was positive engagement and the potential for future impact as some may be assigned in counterpart nations' embassies around the world.

At the FMU, a total of 242 family members, representing 112 losses, were in attendance, though only 44 family members, representing 16 losses, were related to the Vietnam War. That breakdown, roughly 20% of the total, is predictable, considering how relatively few of the total missing/unaccounted-for personnel (82,000 is the round number most often used) are from the Vietnam War. Currently numbering 1,589, representation by Vietnam War-related families is fairly high, if sorely outnumbered. The good news is that DPAA Director Kelly McKeague has pledged continued priority on Vietnam War investigations and recoveries for at least the next five years.

50th ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL MEETING: June 19-23rd, the League's 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting will again be held at the Hilton Crystal City Hotel. Registration will be Wednesday, June 19th, 5:00 – 8:00 PM in the Virginia Ballroom Foyer, and an Orientation/Ice Cream Social will be held from 7:00 – 8:30 PM, same location. Opening Session will be on Thursday, June 20th, during which a Retrospective of the League's past 50 years of effort and evolution of the accounting mission will be presented in brief by those directly involved in the accounting mission from the Paris Peace Accords to the present. Recognizable officials from the early post-war years through today will give brief remarks in sync with archival, visual footage. The day will conclude with the 50th Anniversary Annual Dinner that evening. Friday, June 21st, headquarters and field officials from DPAA, DIA/Stony Beach and the Armed Forces DNA Lab will brief on a wide variety of field investigations and recoveries (including underwater), identification processes, disinterments, scientific advances in DNA ID processes and other initiatives, such as partnerships. The League's Archival Research Committee will also give a special presentation. A special event will occur on that evening. On the last day, June 22nd, a three-hour Q&A Session will be held during which all who briefed on specific areas of interest will be present to respond to questions, moderated by the League Chairman or Vice Chairman. Saturday afternoon will be the annual League Business Session, followed by a League-hosted Farewell Reception, and all registered for the 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting are invited and eligible to attend. REMINDER: Applications to be a candidate for the 2019-21 Board of Directors are due by Friday, April 5th, 2019.

50th VIETNAM WAR ANNIVERSARY COMMISSION: During the League's 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting, eligible individuals will be presented a Certificate of Honor from the United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration. If you are immediate family (parent, spouse, sibling, or child) of a US serviceman listed by DoD as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War and have not yet received a Certificate of Honor, be sure to attend this year's 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting. On behalf of a grateful nation, each recipient will be presented a Certificate of Honor, an MIA lapel pin, and two Presidential Proclamations dealing with the Vietnam War Commemoration that highlight the service and sacrifice of you and your loved one. If you have any questions about the Certificate of Honor Program, or your eligibility, please contact the Vietnam War Commemoration by phone, 703-697-4933, or e-mail, whs.pentagon.wso.mbx.vnwar50th-cpp-coh@mail.mil.

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