



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

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AMERICANS RECENTLY ACCOUNTED FOR: DPAA's Statistics dated June 28th announced the ID of **Air Force Capt Robert E. Holton**, of MT, listed as MIA in Laos on 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 as MIA in North Vietnam on 7/16/66, remains recovered 12/12/16, and identified 6/8/17. DPAA announced on June 2nd the ID of **Capt Joseph S. Smith, USAFR**, of IL, listed as MIA in Cambodia 4/4/71, recovered 1/27/93, and identified 5/4/17, and **LT Charles B. Goodwin, USN**, of TX, listed as MIA in North Vietnam on 9-8-65, remains recovered 12/12/16 and identified 5/18/17. DPAA's March 28th Statistics listed three USMC personnel as 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 KIA/BNR on June 30, 1967, in South Vietnam, remains recovered in June, 2012, and the ID was authorized on December 22, 2015.

The number still missing and otherwise unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War is now 1,607. Hopefully, these are the first of many who will be accounted for during the rest of 2017, though some of these had long ago been identified. Of the **1,607 still missing (POW/MIA) and unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR)**, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,256 (VN-461, VS-795); Laos-296; 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 now **976**. Following is a breakdown by country of the 976 Americans accounted for since the April 30, 1975 end of the Vietnam War: Vietnam – 662, Laos – 269, Cambodia – 42, and the PRC – 3. In addition, 63 US personnel were accounted for between 1973 and 1975, for a grand total of 1,039. Of the 63, 9 were from Laos, 53 from Vietnam, and 1 from Cambodia. These Americans were accounted for by unilateral US efforts 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 276 have been recovered and identified from Laos, 717 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

DPAA BUDGET REQUIREMENTS NOT MET: Due to budget constraints, field operations in Vietnam and Cambodia were dramatically reduced during FY17; however, Lao operations were not as adversely impacted. As is obvious, DPAA did NOT have the funding required to "increase the pace and scope of operations," as Vietnam has repeatedly urged. Despite deep-seated, continuing internal dysfunction, DPAA field teams had been steadily implementing recoveries since becoming fully operational in January, 2016.

After assurance from Acting DPAA Director Fern Sumpter Winbush that funding was secured, though at a lower level, but adequate to sustain operations until April 28th of this year, the reduction in field operations was a serious blow to confidence in DPAA's commitment to pursue Vietnam War accounting as a continuing priority. 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 could not be requested until 45 days after a budget was approved.

That did not occur and, as a result, it was already too late to receive, contract and utilize additional funds for the 3rd and 4th quarters of FY17. Of DPAA's initial funding for FY17, funds

were already obligated for WWII and Korean War accounting, including recovery of remains from US cemeteries for individual identification; thus the ID count for WWII and Korean War continues to rise significantly.

YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY NEEDED! Write your elected officials to object to the lack of funding for DPAA operational requirements and ask for sufficient funding and personnel in FY2018 to handle worldwide accounting and recovery efforts and an 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, America's POW/MIAs, deserve that same protection and adequate funds to return them by achieving the fullest possible accounting.

DPAA DIRECTOR SELECTION PROCESS: As of this date, a new DPAA Director STILL has not been selected, leaving a vacancy in that critical position for just over a year following the abrupt resignation of Mike Linnington. Advertisements seeking applicants were placed, and it is understood that many applied before the closing date of April 6th. The responsible official now "Acting in the Capacity of" Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (USD-P) is Mr. Robert S. Karem, newly confirmed Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD/ISA). A new person to permanently fill the USD-P position is unlikely to be nominated, confirmed and in place by the time the selection is made. The League is hopeful that Secretary of Defense Mattis will ensure serious consideration of recommendations provided by the League, Special Operations Association (SOA), Special Forces Association (SFA), Vietnam Veterans of America and others. In the earlier selection process that was vacated, there was no indication that important qualifications – such as experience, character, commitment and dedication to the mission – were given consideration, nor were crucial factors such as having 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.

DPAA-HOSTED FAMILY UPDATES: The remainder of the 2017 calendar for DPAA-hosted Family Updates is September 9th, Detroit, MI, and November 4th, Boise, ID. The first in 2018 is January 20th, San Diego, CA, February 24th, Ft. Myers, FL, March 24th, El Paso, TX, April 22nd, Rapid City, SD, and May 19th, Louisville, KY. 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 despite only roughly 20% of that number being Vietnam War-related family members, the representational percentage for Vietnam War family members is much higher than for other wars.

LEAGUE CHAIRMAN'S NOTE: During January 8th-11th trilateral Vietnamese/Cambodian/Lao (SRV/KOC/LPDR) defense-related talks in Da Nang, 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 sacrificed their lives in Cambodia*" and agreed with Cambodian Defense Minister Tea Banh to continue this cooperation. Standing by those who serve, and achieving the fullest possible accounting for them, is now truly accepted worldwide, symbolic of how far the accounting mission has come. Senior Vietnamese and Cambodian officials met this past week and reconfirmed ongoing operations to recover Vietnamese personnel from Cambodia and return them to Vietnam.