



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

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AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR: The number of US personnel missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War is still **1,618**. Most recently accounted for was **Colonel Patrick H. Wood, USAF**, listed as MIA on 2/6/67, North Vietnam, remains returned on 12/14/15, and identified 2/29/16. Just prior to this was **LCDR Frederick P. Crosby, USN**, listed as KIA/BNR, North Vietnam, on 6/1/65, remains returned 12/14/15, and identified on 2/17/16, but not announced by DPAA until 5/25/16. Also recently confirmed as accounted for was **Major Dean A. Klenda, USAF**, listed as MIA, North Vietnam, on 9/17/65, recovered 12/8/14 and identified 12/30/14, but also only recently announced by DPAA. Prior to that release, the most recent was **SFC Alan L. Boyer, USA/SF**, listed as MIA 3/28/68, Laos, recovered 6/16/98, and identified 3/16/16. This brings the total accounted for to **965** since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and identified before the end of the war, bring the total of US personnel accounted for from the Vietnam War to **1,028**. Of the 1,618 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-1,261 (VN-463, VS-798); Laos-301; Cambodia-49; PRC territorial waters-7. These country-specific numbers can and do 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 those still missing, and repatriation of all recoverable remains.

DPAA DIRECTOR RESIGNS: LTG Michael S. Linnington, USA (Ret), named as DPAA Director in June, 2015, abruptly resigned on June 16th to accept a position as CEO of the Wounded Warrior Project, an NGO headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. There had been considerable anticipation of hearing a comprehensive report on his first full year since assuming the reins at DPAA. All were looking forward to learning what has occurred, changes and improvements made, and plans for further implementing his promise a year before to be DPAA Director for at least ten years and his commitment to sustain DPAA's priority on Vietnam War accounting for at least the next 3-5 years. This unexpected reversal of his pledge changed the environment dramatically; however, all present for the League's 47th Annual Meeting (see below) were courteous and attentive to Mr. Linnington's explanation on the reasons for his abrupt departure.

LEAGUE POSITION: In response to Mike Linnington's June 16th emailed announcement, the following statement was released by Ann Mills-Griffiths, League Chairman of the Board & CEO:

"Almost exactly a year ago, at our 46th Annual Meeting, DPAA Director Mike Linnington gave the families and veterans his word that he would be with this mission 'for the long term, at least ten years.'" His unexpected resignation came as a shocking reversal. Emails and calls since the announcement expressed understandable frustration and anger, but we've been through many disappointments since 1992 and know the long-serving dedicated civilians have been the core of accounting efforts for years. We trust them to continue as they have, in the interest of all. This latest episode will bring greater, even more unified determination to move forward, on that you can rely."

PRESIDENT VISITS VIETNAM: On a trip to Vietnam from May 22-25, President Obama met with senior Vietnamese officials. During a press conference concluding his official meeting, he stated, *“On behalf of the American people, including our veterans, I want to thank the government and the people of Vietnam for the many years of cooperation to account for Americans missing in action – solemn efforts that we’ll continue together.”*

US-RUSSIA JOINT COMMISSION (USRJC) ON POW/MIAs HOLDS PLENARY

SESSION: After a lapse of over ten years, the USRJC finally held plenary discussions May 22-25 at the Pentagon. This lack of official contact, much less substantive discussions, can be attributed primarily to on-again, off-again bilateral tensions and lack of high level support by both governments for resuming joint humanitarian accounting efforts. During this lengthy period, various scenarios were in play to terminate the Presidential Commission and replace this special presidentially-established communication channel with routine diplomatic contacts. Those efforts failed for many reasons, not least the strong opposition to such a move by the League and the major national veteran organizations. Those most directly impacted are eager to see momentum return to the work of the USRJC, a viable channel for engaging Russia and the former states of the former Soviet Union.

The plenary was led on the Russian side by General Colonel Vostrotin, a national hero in the Russian Federation, and on the US side by General Robert “Doc” Foglesong, USAF (Ret). A report published on May 26 by DPAA stated, *“...the USRJC was re-energized to make further progress in each of the four conflicts’ working groups. All agreed to expand archival research opportunities in both countries. The US side declared that they will continue work to find information on the 264 servicemen Russia lists as MIA from its LONG involvement in Afghanistan. The US also indicated it will increase efforts to help the Russian side determine what happened to its missing citizens from other past wars and conflicts.”* VFW Executive Director and Assistant National Adjutant Bob Wallace and League Chairman of the Board & CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths attended social functions hosted by the two delegations, one at the Army-Navy Country Club in Arlington, VA, another at the Russian Cultural Center, hosted by the Russian Chairman, and a closing reception at the VFW’s Headquarters on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

ADVANCING THE PLENARY: Following coordination with General Foglesong, and with interagency approval, then DPAA Director Linnington traveled to Moscow on February 8th to meet with the Russian Co-Chairman, General Colonel Vostrotin, to propose the date and agenda for the plenum. The League is cautiously optimistic that the work of the USRJC will be renewed and restored, especially since the Russian Federation named its new Chairman and opened an office in their Embassy in Washington, DC. Recognizing it was well past time to get beyond the endless delays that have plagued the Commission’s work, the League welcomes and appreciates these new initiatives by leaders in both countries and looks forward to increased efforts and accounting results. While traveling, Mr. Linnington also visited several European countries and senior US officials in the region who are now contributing to the effort to conduct WWII recoveries.

FORMER DPAA DIRECTOR’S VISIT TO THE PRC AND SOUTH KOREA: Former Director Linnington also traveled to Beijing and Seoul. No specific information was shared on the discussions or their outcome, but shortly after the talks concluded, the PRC cancelled a long-planned field recovery mission near their border with North Korea (DPRK) purportedly for security reasons. Mr. Linnington also visited Seoul and held talks with officials there, renewing longstanding ties with South Korean officials who continue to support US accounting efforts, even building their own “DPAA-equivalent” agency, with the experienced advice and counsel of DPAA’s Deputy Director Outreach & Communication, Johnnie E. Webb, retired Army LTC and former Commander and Deputy Commander of the Central Identification Laboratory, absorbed into JPAC in 2003.

Prior to his trip, the League urged Mr. Linnington to raise the need for responsiveness by Beijing, not only on the known PRC-controlled POW camps during the Korean War, but on records that surely exist related to PRC personnel who served during the Vietnam War. Specifically requested were archival documents related to communication units in the Vieng Xai/Sam Neua cave complex in northern Laos visited by the League Executive Director in 1982. The League recognizes the need for PRC cooperation to account for US personnel lost during both the Vietnam and Korean wars, hoping that new initiatives will be undertaken without extensive delay, and is hopeful that PRC officials will at long last be responsive.

47TH ANNUAL MEETING HELD LAST WEEK: Despite Mr. Linnington's unexpected resignation and the last-minute withdrawal of Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work, replaced by **Acting Under Secretary for Personnel & Readiness Peter Levine**, as the Opening Session Keynote Speaker on June 23rd, the 47th Annual Meeting was the largest and most productive in years. It included the 47th Annual Meeting Dinner & Commemorative Candlelight Ceremony in which **Army Chief of Staff General Mark A. Milley** was the speaker. His supportive, meaningful remarks inspired all present, as did his participation, along with **Vietnam's Ambassador to the United States H.E. Pham Quang Vinh**, in reading aloud the names of 16 American and Vietnamese personnel who lost their lives on April 7, 2001 in a tragic helicopter accident while on a mission to account for our missing. Some of their families were honored guests at the dinner. **League Senior Policy Advisor Richard T. Childress** read the names of men still missing and unaccounted-for whose loved ones were present. At the Opening Session, Mr. Childress presented remarks – fully coordinated with and supported by League Chairman of the Board and CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths – assessing DPAA's first year as a DoD agency. His fair, objective, critical observations held the rapt attention of family members, veterans and all US officials present. The full text of Childress' remarks is available here, [A Glimpse into the Future](#), as are nearly all official presentations, though former DPAA Director Linnington again had nothing in writing. The incoming **Deputy Director of DIA, Ms. Melissa Drisko**, spelled out DIA's full and continuing support for its Stony Beach Team of specialists, now the only US Government unit focused solely on Vietnam War accounting, primarily on Last Known Alive (LKA) cases, interviewing witnesses, collecting relevant archival material and augmenting DPAA investigation capabilities, including those of DPAA Detachments in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. A full report of the 47th Annual Meeting will be included in the upcoming League Newsletter.

Special Announcement In response to an announcement distributed June 16th, by Mike Linnington, Director, DPAA, The National League of Families released the following statement: "Almost exactly a year ago, at our 46th Annual Meeting, DPAA Director Mike Linnington gave the families and veterans his word that he would be with this mission 'for the long term, at least ten years.'" His unexpected resignation came as a shocking reversal. Emails and calls since the announcement expressed understandable frustration and anger, but we've been through many disappointments since 1992 and know the long-serving dedicated civilians have been the core of accounting efforts for years. We trust them to continue as they have, in the interest of all. This latest episode will bring greater, even more unified determination to move forward, on that you can rely."

Ann Mills-Griffiths, Chairman of the Board & CEO

Mr. Linnington's announcement:

Dear friends of DPAA:

In the past year, we have made remarkable progress in the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) and its great mission. From how we research/investigate/recover and identify our missing and unaccounted for from our nation's past wars, to how we communicate with the families. And just as important, is increased communications/accountability of our efforts to Congress, our stakeholder community, and the American people. I feel confident that we now have the right people, processes and procedures in place so DPAA has irreversible momentum

with the gains we have made for even greater success.

I was recently approached by a large non-profit that serves our military community also deserving of our nation's every effort — our wounded warriors and their caregivers. I have been blessed with a lifetime of responding to where I am needed, and have decided to accept their offer to lead their important mission during a period of significant transition. As I depart DPAA in early July, I will do so most grateful for the dedication of all those that assist our accounting mission, and for those that perform it on behalf of our grateful nation: the families of our missing/unaccounted for, our work force, and supporters of our mission worldwide.

DPAA and its mission benefits from the superb leadership of two highly-skilled, and capable deputies (Mrs. Fern Winbush and BG Mark Spindler), and they will maintain the focus and direction of the agency until a new director is chosen. In early July, Mrs. Fern Winbush will assume duties as Acting Director in the interim period. As I transition to supporting our military and veteran community through the hard work of a nonprofit, please know my family and I have been truly blessed to get to know each of you, and work together on such an important mission. My time with you will remain with me for the rest of my life. For the Veterans and Military Service organizations, I look forward to engaging with many of you (and your organizations) as I learn more about the work of leading a national nonprofit.

All of us owe our every effort in supporting the entire military community; active duty, Reserve, Guard, Coast Guard, their families, and their survivors. It is not just an issue of national security, but a moral obligation. Thanks for what you do each and every day, and thanks for your efforts on behalf of the families of our missing and unaccounted for.

Sincerely, and with great respect and appreciation,

Michael S. Linnington

Director, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency Arlington, VA 22204 (703) 699-1101