



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF POW/MIA FAMILIES

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www.pow-miafamilies.org

UPDATE: July 20, 2020

AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR: The number missing (POW/MIA) and otherwise unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR) from the Vietnam War is now **1,586**. In a July 14th release, DPAA announced that 1st Lt. Alva R. Krogman, USAF, KIA/BNR, was accounted for on July 7th. 1st Lt. Krogman was flying an O1-F Birdog aircraft on a visual reconnaissance mission over Savannakhet Province, Laos, on January 17, 1967, when his aircraft was hit and went down. Search and Rescue (SAR) operations were initiated immediately, but were shut down within a few hours after one of the SAR aircraft was also shot down. In February of this year, a US team of unexploded ordnance removal specialists initially recovered remains while clearing the site in preparation for an April joint recovery mission. **This is the first identification of a previously unaccounted-for Vietnam War Veteran to be announced since July 26, 2019.**

Of the 1,586, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,246 (VN-443, VS-803); Laos-285; 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 **997**. A breakdown by country of these 997 Americans is: Vietnam – 672, Laos – 280, 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 1,060. These 63 Americans, were accounted for by US-only efforts in accessible areas, not due to cooperation by post-war governments in Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia. A total of 288 have been accounted for from Laos, 727 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS/EVENTS CANCELLED; UNILATERAL SRV RECOVERIES ONGOING: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Defense Department ordered a ban on all DoD travel, initially until May 15th, extended until June 30th and now beginning to be lifted incrementally. DPAA pulled teams from the field to return them to the US and cancelled all field operations until further notice; however, the SRV agreed to conduct unilateral recoveries in Quang Binh Province, North Central Vietnam. DPAA also canceled Family Member Updates (FMUs) previously scheduled for March, April and May, and likely will cancel the FMU scheduled for October in Colorado Springs, CO.

IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY ALSO LOST DUE TO COVID-19 CORONA VIRUS: In addition to field operations in Laos and Vietnam being put on hold, the **US-ASEAN Special Summit**, scheduled to be held in Las Vegas on March 14th, was cancelled. League Chairman/CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths was scheduled to meet with **Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen** on March 13th, and was awaiting confirmation from the Lao and Vietnamese Prime Ministers, when the cancellation was announced.

LEAGUE 51ST ANNUAL MEETING NOT HELD: As previously announced, the 51st Annual Meeting did not take place June 24-28th, as previously scheduled. Never before in the League's history has an annual meeting been cancelled; however, it is unlikely that a date will be rescheduled before the end of this year. That is due to uncertainty over options available, including the previously contracted venue at the Hilton Crystal City Hotel which is one of the few hotels in the area still open; most are closed. Of course, **DPAA also cancelled annual briefings that are provided during the League's annual meeting, as well as the DPAA-hosted Annual Government Briefings for Korean War/Cold War Families.** This is all due to the COVID 19 virus and resulting pandemic, DoD travel restrictions, plus DoD, DIA, State Department and other US agencies being under strict orders to telework to the extent possible. It is also due to concerns over endangering the health of League members, as well as US and foreign officials who customarily attend and participate.

POW/MIA FLAG TO BE DISPLAYED YEAR-ROUND: On November 7th, President Trump signed into law the National POW/MIA Flag Act. The League-originated POW/MIA flag is now to be displayed whenever the US flag is posted on federal properties, including the White House, the US Capitol and all Senate and House Buildings, World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial and the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, every national VA cemetery, buildings containing the official offices of the Secretaries of State, Defense and Veterans Affairs, the Director of the Selective Service system, all major military installations, as directed by the Secretary of Defense, all VA medical centers and all offices of the US Postal Service. The League is grateful for this tremendous support, a meaningful signal to all nations that America stands behind and with those who serve – past, present and future – and if captured or missing, all possible efforts will be made to recover and bring home our UNRETURNED Veterans.

FLAG DAY CONFUSION: Flag Day is one of the six days each year when the POW/MIA flag was previously directed to be flown, as well as Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day and Veterans Day. This year, on Flag Day and for unknown reasons, our POW/MIA Flag was taken down from on top of the White House and placed on a separate flag pole, under the US flag, but scarcely visible in a small cluster of trees just outside the circular driveway around the South Lawn. Strangely, this occurred only seven months after the President had signed into law the bills passed by the House and Senate requiring display of the POW/MIA flag on “all days on which the flag of the United States is displayed.”

Comment: When this occurred, DPAA and the League were notified within minutes of each other and given no reason, nor any information concerning who had ordered construction of a new flagpole near the South Lawn and removal of the POW/MIA flag from atop the White House, especially on Flag Day, June 14th, where it had proudly flown for decades. The way this was handled was truly bizarre and, to date, neither DPAA Director Kelly McKeague nor League Chairman/CEO Ann Mills-Griffiths has been provided the rationale. Removing the POW/MIA flag from atop the White House sends conflicting signals to counterpart countries which figure prominently in US efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting, in particular on Vietnam War POW/MIAs. Unless corrected, such will likely be viewed as reducing the priority and seriousness of US determination to obtain answers, including from the DPRK. Accounting for unreturned Korean War Veterans was the 4th element of the Singapore Agreement of June 12, 2018.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE INCLUDES POW/MIA FLAG IN AUTHORIZATION MEMO: On July 16th, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper issued a memorandum that specified which flags are legally authorized for official display on or depiction by any/all US military-related installations/facilities/personnel. As a result, the Army, Navy and Air Force issued Service-wide instructions for implementation on July 17th. **All include our POW/MIA flag.** The League deeply appreciates, is honored, pleased and relieved that this action was taken to reinforce our nation’s commitment to accounting for those who served our country during the Vietnam War, as well as wars and conflicts further past.

SUPPORT THE LEAGUE: A longstanding League Associate Member recently contacted the League office and volunteered to match a fundraising goal on Facebook for \$2,000. That single concept translated into a donation total of \$5,290 for the League. Others, have initiated similar efforts, such as donating funds that would have been spent on attending the 51st Annual Meeting or the amount planned for a family vacation that couldn’t be enjoyed in this year of COVID-19. Whatever the reason, please remember the League at this critical time!

You, too, can initiate a fundraiser on Facebook, challenging others in your family or circle of friends to help you reach a set goal to honor your missing loved one or friend on his/her birthday, or focus on a specific veteran-related day, Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, National POW/MIA Recognition Day, September 18, 2020, and Veterans Day. All such individual efforts can and will help. The pandemic has adversely impacted donations, especially from younger workers now furloughed and struggling, but older Americans are on set incomes, have earned, invested and saved.....so think of donating a small amount each month. The League must continue pressing for answers to end uncertainty, holding the US Government accountable! Time is running out.....if we don’t stick with it, who will?

You and your family, friends and colleagues can also support the League by shopping at **AmazonSmile**. It is simple and automatic, **at no extra cost to you**. Just visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/23-7071242>, and you will find the exact same prices, vast selection and convenient shopping to which you are accustomed. The added bonus? The **Amazon Smile Foundation** automatically donates 0.5% of the cost of your eligible purchases to the League.

THE LEAGUE OFFICE IS CLOSED; ALL ARE TELEWORKING UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.



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