



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

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**UPDATE: August 23, 2018**

**AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR:** DPAA announced 8/22/18 that **Col Richard A. Kibbey, USAF**, NY, was accounted for on 8/6/18. List as MIA ON 2/6/67, NVN, his remains were noted as returned on April 13, 2017. The accounting for Col Kibbey brings the number still missing from the Vietnam War down to **1,595**. Prior to that, and dated 7/17/18, DPAA released the name of **Col Frederick M. Mellor, USAF**, listed as MIA over North Vietnam on August 13, 1965. Prior to this posting, the most recent Vietnam War accounted-related release was on May 31<sup>st</sup> when DPAA posted the name of **LCDR Larry R. Kilpatrick, USN**, of GA, though he actually was accounted for on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Listed as MIA on 6/18/72 in North Vietnam, remains were recovered 12/14/2015. Nearly a month earlier, on April 5<sup>th</sup>, DPAA posted the names of two Vietnam War personnel as accounted for. **Col Peter J. Stewart, USAF**, of FL, listed MIA 3/15/66, was recovered 12/12/15 and ID'd on 2/1/18. **Army SSGT Marshall F. Kipina**, of MI, listed MIA 7/14/66 in Laos, was recovered 2/17/16 and ID'd 2/1/18. Prior to that, DPAA posted the news that **LTC Robert G. Nopp, USA**, of OR, listed as MIA 7/14/66, was recovered 2/17/16 and ID'd 2/1/18. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, DPAA released notice that **Col Edgar F. Davis, USAF**, of NC, listed MIA in Laos on 9/17/68, recovered 4/29/15 and ID'd 12/22/17, is now accounted for, the first such announcement since September 11<sup>th</sup> of last year. At that time, DPAA reported the accounting for **CAPT James. R. Bauder, USN**, of CA, listed as MIA 9/21/66 in North Vietnam, recovered 6/11/17, and ID'd 8-28-17. **The number still missing (POW/MIA) and otherwise unaccounted-for (KIA/BNR) from the Vietnam War is 1,595.** Of that number, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia or Laos under ,

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 **988**. A breakdown by country of these 988 Americans is: Vietnam – 669, Laos – 274, 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 1,051. These 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 282 have been accounted for from Laos, 724 from Vietnam, 42 from Cambodia and 3 from the PRC.

**REPATRIATION CEREMONY HELD IN DA NANG, VIETNAM:** On July 7<sup>th</sup>, remains that were reviewed by Vietnamese and US forensic specialists and found likely to be those of American servicemen previously unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War were turned over to US officials at Da Nang International Airport. The remains were recovered by joint and unilateral excavation teams during the recently concluded 131<sup>st</sup> Joint Field Activities (JFAs) from mid-May to early July, 2018. Field operations resumed in mid-August.

**Chairman's Comment:** The League deeply appreciates the efforts by the government and people of Vietnam to work constructively and effectively to achieve the fullest possible accounting for Americans still missing from the Vietnam War. Vietnam's initially halting, difficult and frustrating cooperation has expanded steadily over the last 4000000 years and today can be commended as leaning forward and providing increased opportunities for success.

**FIELD OPERATIONS RESUME IN LAOS:** Just as field operations were ending in Vietnam, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) personnel, augmented by POW/MIA specialists from the Defense Intelligence Agency's (DIA's) Stony Beach Team, began recovery and investigation operations on several cases of US personnel missing in Laos. Those field recoveries recently concluded with a repatriation ceremony conducted at the Luang Prabang Airport on August 14<sup>th</sup>. Joint Field Activities are scheduled to resume soon.

**Chairman's Comment:** The League looks forward to positive results from these efforts, fully recognizing several significant developments in POW/MIA cooperation that the Lao leadership has authorized in recent months, including base camping at remote locations, increasing the number of US personnel participating, and extensions of time on field recovery sites when justified. Despite often difficult conditions, including advance destruction of unexploded ordnance, conditions for humanitarian cooperation to account as fully as possible for US personnel continue to improve, for which all Americans are grateful. Hopefully, imminent **Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sanctions against Laos** for failing to accept Lao immigrants to the US, convicted of criminal behavior and scheduled for legal deportation, will not negatively impact humanitarian POW/MIA cooperation.

In Cambodia, long-serving Prime Minister Hun Sen issued a “temporary suspension” to all POW/MIA cooperation with DPAA when **DHS sanctions were levied against Cambodia** several months ago and has since declined appeals to lift the suspension. All are hoping, now that his predictable re-election has occurred, that Prime Minister Hun Sen will decide to remove the suspension. Notable, however, was anti-US rhetoric almost non-stop through the election run-up, and the Prime Minister has declared the suspension will end when the sanctions do.

**BREAKTHROUGH ON AMERICANS UNACCOUNTED-FOR FROM KOREAN WAR:** In a formal statement signed by President Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un, the United States and North Korea agreed to the recovery and repatriation of Americans still unaccounted-for from the Korean War. This stunning agreement, a potential win-win-win scenario, affords the affected families from the US, South Korea and Japan, in particular, an unprecedented opportunity to obtain long awaited answers.

As a first step, and as pledged, on July 27<sup>th</sup>, North Korea turned over 55 transfer cases, draped with the United Nations flag under which they served during the Korean War. To quote an announcement issued late that night by Director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Mr. Kelly McKeague:

*“We are pleased that a few hours ago the DPRK turned over 55 boxes containing the possible remains of missing DoD personnel to the United Nations Command. Four anthropologists and one forensic photographer from DPAA conducted a preliminary review of the remains at Wonsan Airport prior to being transported to joint US-RoK air base at Osan on an USAF aircraft.*

*During the next few days, those scientists will perform a more detailed field forensic review, and on Aug 1, the remains will be honorably carried onto two USAF aircraft for their return to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii. After the dignified ceremony, the remains will be accessioned into our laboratory where in-depth forensic analyses will begin.*

*We have not yet reached an agreement with the DPRK regarding future field recoveries; however, we are working closely with our DoD, State Department, and National Security Council partners on this matter. Our collective goal is to commence field operations in the DPRK next Spring.*

*Of the 400+ U.S. remains either unilaterally turned over by the DPRK in the early 1990s or recovered during DoD's 1996-2005 operations in North Korea, over 337 individuals have been identified, accounted-for and returned to their families for burial with full military honors. The most recent of these occurred this past April.*

*We are guardedly optimistic about the weeks and months ahead, as we endeavor to bring long-awaited answers to more families who lost loved ones in the Korean War.”*

**Chairman’s Comment:** Having sought the fullest possible accounting for decades, the League and all POW/MIA families welcome this encouraging development. The League can take pride in having led the way and laid the groundwork for all that is evolving nearly 50 years since officially formed on May 28, 1970.

In the early 1980s, the Reagan Administration, backed by the POW/MIA Interagency Group on which then League Executive Director Ann Mills-Griffiths served, took the initiative to raise intelligence priorities and obtain the evidence that is now publicly known and forms the basis for accounting expectations, not only for the Vietnam War, but also the Korean War. As the demand for expanding the accounting mission raised to a higher level in the early 1990s and the Korean War/Cold War POW/MIA families began organizing, the League fully supported efforts to recover and account for US personnel who didn’t return from wars and conflicts further past, so long as the priority on Vietnam War POW/MIAs was not adversely impacted.

DPAA Director Kelly McKeague has pledged to sustain operational priority on accounting for as many as possible of our 1,596 unreturned veterans from the Vietnam War. The reality is that uncertainty is greater for Vietnam War families, and there are more immediate family members impacted by US accounting efforts. Worldwide efforts are already ongoing, both operationally and from disinterring remains known to be American, buried as unknowns in US cemeteries around the world. These families have known their loved ones died decades ago, but their reaction to honoring and remembering their long-lost relatives is evident, even when the individual was relatively unknown to the family impacted today. The necessity now is for Congress and DoD to sustain funding levels necessary to expand operations into North Korea as both nations have now agreed. There should be no doubt that additional funding will be available, but taking nothing for granted, and determined to ensure that priority on Vietnam War accounting is sustained, all are encouraged to urge Members of Congress to recognize this need.

**THE PRESIDENT'S STRONG MEMORIAL DAY COMMITMENT TO ACCOUNTING MISSION:** The League was very pleased to see the President include language strongly committing the United States to *"remember the American servicemen and women who remain missing from wars and conflicts fought over the past century. We will never stop searching for them...and whenever possible, we will bring them home. We pledge to remember not just on Memorial Day. We will always remember them. We will remember them every day."*

**DPAA DIRECTOR McKEAGUE VISITS SOUTHEAST ASIA:** In March, DPAA Director Kelly McKeague visited Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, holding discussions with senior Vietnamese and Lao officials, as well as US Ambassadors and their senior staff, DIA Stony Beach personnel and DPAA Detachment staff. This was Director McKeague's first official visit to these critical countries since being named DPAA Director on September 5, 2017. His delegation was a crucial step in advancing the mission as the US seeks to maximize the favorable environment that has created a unique opportunity to expand the pace and scope of accounting efforts, as advocated by Vietnam since first proposed to a League Delegation in 2009. Mr. McKeague was supported by Policy & Plans Director John Hamilton, Vietnam War policy specialist Jack Kull and Lt Col Bernard Smith, USAF, the Director's Senior Military Assistant,

**LEAGUE & SOA/SFA DELEGATIONS RETURN FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA:** A National League of POW/MIA Families Delegation, led by Chairman of the Board/CEO Ms. Ann Mills-Griffiths, traveled to Southeast Asia (Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, & Thailand) January 11<sup>th</sup>, and returned January 30<sup>th</sup>. She was joined once again by the League's Senior Policy Advisor since 1989, Richard Childress, Director for Asian Affairs in the Reagan National Security Council, 1981-1989, and, for the first time, MIA daughter Cindy Stonebraker, elected member of the League's Board of Directors. Parallel to the League Delegation, and representing the Special Operations Association (SOA) and Special Forces Association (SFA) was Mike Taylor, LTC, USA/SF (Ret), Vice President of SOA and Chairman of the joint SOA/SFA POW/MIA Committee. Mrs. Elli Childress and Mrs. Laura Taylor accompanied their respective husbands and participated in social events and cultural activities.

Both delegations met in each country with US Ambassadors and Embassy officials, Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Stony Beach specialists and DPAA Detachment personnel. While in Hanoi, the League Delegation met briefly with **US Secretary of Defense James Mattis** who was in-country for meetings with Vietnam's Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense, as well as other senior Vietnamese officials. The League Delegation also met with senior Lao, Vietnamese and Cambodian officials to discuss concepts to advance the accounting mission. In addition to meeting with US officials, SOA/SFA's Mike Taylor met with American and foreign veterans, some of whom fought as enemies during the war. While in Laos, Stonebraker, M. Taylor and L. Taylor visited a remote recovery site to thank US and Lao personnel for their often dangerous efforts during field operations.

**HOUSE PASSES H. RES. 129:** On February 12<sup>th</sup>, the House of Representatives passed this important resolution by a vote of 411 – 0, sending a unified message to the American people – including our Armed Forces serving today and our veterans, as well as foreign nations. Introduced by **Representative Sam Johnson (R-TX)**, former Vietnam War POW, his strong message on the Floor of the House occurred almost precisely 45 years after he and his fellow POWs were released from many years of captivity. Passage of this resolution reflects true bipartisan, non-political support for the humanitarian accounting mission.

It is the US Senate's turn to act. The identical measure was simultaneously introduced in the US Senate by **Senator John S. McCain (R-AZ)** as **S. RES. 61**. Senate passage would further reinforce our country's support for achieving the fullest possible accounting for those who serve our nation – past, present and future. To date, there are only 11 co-sponsors in the Senate, the most recent being July 17, 2018. Members of the US Senate should be ashamed. **CONTACT YOUR SENATORS TO URGE IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF S. RES. 61**

**DPAA-HOSTED FAMILY UPDATES:** DPAA-hosted Family Member Updates (FMUs) are no longer restricted solely to family members. Responsible Veteran Service Organization (VSO) representatives are now included, as are League and other Non-Government Organization (NGO) officials. Following are upcoming dates and locations: September 8<sup>th</sup>, Philadelphia, PA; November 17<sup>th</sup>, Greensboro, NC, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019, San Antonio, TX; February 23<sup>rd</sup>, San Jose, CA; March 23<sup>rd</sup>, Birmingham, AL; April 20<sup>th</sup>, Salt Lake City, UT, and May 18<sup>th</sup>, Omaha, NE, and though NOT a DPAA-hosted Family Update, the **National League of POW/MIA Families 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Annual Meeting June 19-23, 2019.**

**NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY – SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>:** Make plans now to attend a ceremony in your city, state or at the Pentagon in Washington, DC, for the national ceremony, hosted by Secretary of Defense General James Mattis, late afternoon. Details to follow.

**Donate today, 501(C)3, #23-7071242, at [www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)**