



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

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**AMERICANS ACCOUNTED FOR:** There still has been no published change to the number unaccounted-for since the April 10<sup>th</sup> Update. For various reasons, including wishes of the family, DoD announcements are often delayed far beyond the ID dates, meaning other IDs are likely pending. Several of those named this year were examples of how remains repatriated many years ago can now be identified using contemporary science that wasn't available in earlier years. The number of Americans now listed by DoD as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is 956. 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 1,019. Of the **1,627** still unaccounted-for, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,269 (VN-467, VS-802); Laos-302; Cambodia-49; PRC territorial waters-7. These country-specific numbers can and do fluctuate due to investigations resulting in changed locations of loss. 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.

**NEW DPAA DIRECTOR NAMED & NOW MOVING FORWARD!** LTG (Ret) Mike Linnington, USA, was named Director, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), and sworn in just before the League's 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. While always cautious to not overstate support for people named to positions of responsibility in the POW/MIA accounting mission, it is no overstatement to recognize his outstanding, varied background.

Important now are the several steps he has already taken that clearly reveal he is moving energetically, though thoughtfully, to follow the directive issued by former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel to "completely reorganize" the POW/MIA accounting community. While structural change is always rife with turmoil and uncertainty, Mr. Linnington is moving out smartly. His restructure plans, though still evolving, appear to be dramatically moving the mission forward and, importantly, are adhering to Secretary Hagel's directive to "build on the existing strengths" of the accounting process. As a result, he is moving beyond the recommendations he received from Vice Admiral Michael Franken, USN, whose vision for DPAA related more to a concept for production of "products" than to a viable plan to pursue accounting objectives for missing US personnel and their families.

Already confirmed is that former JPAC Detachments in Thailand, Vietnam and Laos will continue to be Detachments 1, 2 and 3, respectively, reporting to incoming Deputy Director, BG Mark Spindler, USA. Long-serving civilian specialists in the Detachments, recognized as indispensable, are expected to be extended indefinitely. The small contingent of personnel deployed to support operations in Europe will also continue as a Liaison Office, possibly reporting to a European Regional Director. Placement in the new structure of the Joint Commission Support Directorate (JCSD) is not yet known, but has unique status due to supporting the US-Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) on POW/MIA Affairs, with a presidentially named Chairman, General Robert "Doc" Foglesong, USAF (Ret).

There is also a very high priority being placed on success of the Public Private Partnership (P3) initiative, viewing the broad areas in which potential partnerships (public/private, public/public, tri-party, etc.) could be formed as a means to augment the experienced field assets and resources that have focused primarily on Vietnam War accounting. P3 offers significant opportunities to expand the overall accounting efforts to produce results more rapidly through applying some contractors' efforts to archival research, investigations and recoveries that pertain mostly to WWII, Korean War (disinterment and IDs) and Cold War loss incidents.

A symposium was held in Hawaii, immediately following the "Blessing & Dedication Ceremony" on July 27<sup>th</sup>. League Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths represented the POW/MIA families by helping to cut the traditional lei. Following the formal raising and permanently-lighted posting of the US, POW/MIA and State of Hawaii flags and an invocation by a Navy Chaplain, Director Linnington gave remarks, followed by the late Senator Daniel Inouye's long-time Chief of Staff, Jennifer Sabas, whose remarks were inspirational. Prayers and blessings by a native Hawaiian clergyman concluded with the PACOM Band playing the Military Service Songs, after which a reception was held in the front foyer of the new, incredible DPAA building. The League sincerely thanks dedicated civilian Johnnie E. Webb, Jr., retired Army LTC, former Commander of the Central Identification Laboratory, Deputy to the Commander of JPAC, and currently Interim Deputy Director of External Communications for DPAA. His long battle, fully supported by the League, to see completion of the new DPAA building has finally ended in success. We can only hope that his historic dedication to the accounting mission will be rightfully rewarded in the new DPAA structure.

This symposium began on July 28<sup>th</sup> and was scheduled to provide an opportunity for DPAA leaders, including interim-appointed Directors and Deputies, to utilize the newly improved restructure as the basis for helping to determine a viable sub-structure, moving tasks and numbers of personnel as required, but getting to a nearly finalized structure. Final structural decisions are expected as early as Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, but it is anticipated that full operational capacity won't be reached until the end of this year or in January, 2016. Having said that, Mr. Linnington has stated his expectation that there will be in-process reviews, assessments and, potentially, adjustments as implementation occurs.

All are anticipating the announcement soon of a senior civilian deputy to the Director whose office will be in DC and who, presumably, will have direct responsibility for managing and administering the work of the DC-based headquarters. That will likely mean several directorates, including External Communications (public affairs, public diplomacy, outreach, congressional relations/liason, educational programs, etc.), Policy and Strategy (international relations, domestic education and outreach programs and coordination), P3 (the boundaries have yet to be set, but are inclusive), an Archival Research & Analysis group, and many administrative and oversight requirements.

**Chairman's Comment:** Mike Linnington knows he has a very challenging road ahead to earn the trust of a dedicated and talented workforce, as well as add the kind of people he wants and can depend on to move DPAA forward. He is moving NOW and already has learned far more than one would expect after such a very short time in the position. He pledged at the League's 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting that he is in this for the long haul and knows it will take time, but asked for support, assistance and patience as he tackles the challenges. I'm convinced that he really IS the right guy and this IS the right time, and the best circumstances we, the POW/MIA families, have ever had to obtain the answers we seek and have worked to achieve since 1970.

Right now truly IS the accounting mission's last chance to move forward with the priority required, fully supported by State and DoD policy and resourced with funding and personnel required. There will be NO further such opportunities, precisely the reason I'm determined to ensure that Mike Linnington gets all the support and assistance he needs from the many honest, caring and determined people working in the accounting community, and not be influenced by the self-serving, insecure people who are likely doing their best to remain in positions they should not hold.

We all should be grateful to Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Christine Wormuth for selecting a person like Mike Linnington who is self-confident, but not a know-it-all, who isn't afraid to be seen as learning, which he is doing in spades. Yes, he has much to learn, and many self-serving people still surround him, so dangers persist, but many are trying in every possible way to help him gain solid, objective insights.

I attended LTG Linnington's retirement on June 17<sup>th</sup>. I had talked with him many times in his advisory role to Under Secretary Wormuth, VADM Franken and Maj Gen Kelly McKeague relating to the "complete reorganization" of the entire community. I can personally attest to the esteem in which he is held by a broad cross-section of military and civilian personnel. From the lowest level to those at the top, all seem to genuinely like and admire him. Mr. Linnington was sworn in on Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, as the civilian Senior Executive Service Level 3 Director of DPAA. It is my hope, prayer and expectation that he will work to achieve the objectives we share, and do so with honor, integrity, humility, dedication, energy and determination. That is all we can ask. All we should expect is his very best effort, and we do, but he will also need our full support and that of all POW/MIA-related personnel, especially the demoralized former JPAC, DPMO and LSEL personnel now in DPAA.

Therefore, we, the Vietnam War families and our many concerned Veteran organizations, individual Veterans and civilian supporters, ask all dedicated accounting community personnel – especially the experienced civilian core – to set aside justifiable frustrations and obstacles you have endured for far too many years and focus on what is possible with our new DPAA Director.

I sincerely believe DPAA truly can become the central accounting focus we all have sorely missed since 1992 – with cohesive, interagency US Government priority that will, with the support of all, achieve the **fullest possible accounting**. This longstanding, entirely reasonable League objective is defined as 1) the missing man returned alive; or 2) his remains recovered and identified; or 3) convincing evidence as to why neither is possible, in which case he will remain forever as unrecovered, but all information will be provided to the next-of-kin who will then have the certainty of knowing our US Government did its very best to bring him home to his family and our Nation.

**46<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING:** The June 24-27<sup>th</sup> meeting was the largest, most comprehensive and compelling annual meeting in years. The Hilton sold out, responses from senior leaders were positive, and official animosity toward the League seems to have disappeared in favor of a partnership not seen since 1992. The long-overdue League Newsletter is being finalized and will be distributed and posted on the League's web site ([www.pow-miafamilies.org](http://www.pow-miafamilies.org)) and Facebook page by the end of the week.