



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

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AMERICANS ACCOUNTED-FOR: There are Still **1,644** personnel listed by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) as missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. Recently, DPMO posted the identification of **Colonel Francis J. McGouldrick, USAF**, CT, listed as MIA in Laos on December 13, 1968, is now accounted-for. His remains were repatriated May 22, 2012 and identified August 28, 2013. The number of Americans announced by DPMO as returned and identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is now 939. Another 63 US personnel, recovered by the US and ID'd before the end of the war, bring the official total of US personnel accounted-for from the Vietnam War to 1,002. Of the 1,644 unaccounted-for personnel, 90% were lost in Vietnam or in areas of Cambodia and Laos under Vietnam's wartime control: Vietnam-1,276 (VN-469, VS-807); Laos-308; Cambodia-53; PRC territorial waters-7; over-water losses on DPMO's list of No Further Pursuit cases number well over 600.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE & CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF, PLEDGE SUPPORT: On September 20th, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, in remarks at the Pentagon's ceremony commemorating National POW/MIA Recognition day, stated in part, *"Words and promises cannot make the lingering uncertainty, the headache, and the heartache go away. But I hope it provides comfort to know that as long as members of our Armed Forces remain unaccounted for, the Department of Defense will do everything – whatever we can to find them and bring them home....we will not rest until we fulfill this pledge – no matter how long it takes.....Today, as the POW/MIA flag is raised in communities across America, we pledge to live by its creed, 'You are not Forgotten.'"*

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Martin E. Dempsey, USA, speaking at the Pentagon, stated in part, *".....a special welcome to the families of those still missing in action and all who remain dedicated to bringing them home. It's a great honor to share this day with you... I am also inspired by the efforts of the countless individuals and organizations that are dedicated to honor American prisoners of war and who continue the search for those missing in action....Their efforts reach deep into the four corners of the globe, into foreign lands far from home..... Today, as we fly the familiar black and white flag across our country, it's not only a symbol to remember the POW and MIA community, it's a charge – to keep faith with every prisoner of war, those still missing in action, their families, and our military community ... to remain undaunted by time and undeterred by challenges... wherever our missing lie, wherever a prisoner waits, we will remain committed to freeing them....to not rest... to not call our mission complete ... not until our family is whole again."*

OPERATIONS IN LAOS: US-Lao Bilateral POW/MIA Consultations, led by JPAC Commander Maj Gen Kelly McKeague, USAF, with Embassy-Vientiane and DPMO representatives participating, were held in Vientiane, Laos, on August 16th, the most productive such discussions in quite some time. At long last, the Lao Government agreed to allow the Defense Intelligence Agency's Stony Beach POW/MIA specialist to pursue field investigations year-round, on an as-needed basis, obviously accompanied by a Lao counterpart. This important step, in keeping with the improved political, economic and military relationship, was long overdue and is most welcome. Also welcome was their earlier decision to renew a business license for Helicopters New Zealand, the company JPAC previously contracted to provide smaller, certified-safe helicopter support for remote site access, and agreement-in-principle to permit base-camping at/near incident sites. This agreement will be tested during the October 16 – November 29th JFA. If current plans hold and funds are available, use of the smaller helicopters is scheduled to occur after the first of the year. The League deeply appreciates Laos' responsiveness to specific appeals for the favorable decision on Stony Beach participation, helicopter contracting and on-site base-camping and looks forward to a renewed pace of operations.

Ambassador-Designate to Laos Dan Clune (cited as "designate" until he presents his credentials in Vientiane) was recently confirmed by the US Senate. The League Chairman of the Board met with Ambassador-Designate Clune and attended his formal swearing-in ceremony at the State Department on August 27th. He is replacing Ambassador Karen Stewart, who is now serving in a new position. On her third assignment in Laos, Ambassador Stewart's knowledge of and commitment to the POW/MIA accounting was most helpful and will be sorely missed.

VIETNAM OPERATIONS: Another month-long JPAC mission, involving six Recovery Teams (RTs) and two Investigation Teams (ITs), concluded on September 7th. US-Vietnam POW/MIA Consultations were held September 26th, led by JPAC Commander Maj Gen Kelly McKeague, USAF, with DPMO, DIA's Stony Beach and Embassy-Hanoi participation. A commemorative dinner was held to celebrate recent years of steadily improving POW/MIA cooperation. Although invited to attend, League Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths sent a letter to be read aloud that was well-received, according to the JPAC Commander.

In another important development, Vietnamese President Sang recently led a large delegation to Washington, during which Presidents Sang and Obama met at the White House. Senior Vietnamese leaders met with counterpart officials at the Departments of Defense, State, Commerce and Veterans Affairs, and with Members of Congress. Secretary of State John Kerry hosted a luncheon in honor of President Sang and his delegation at the State Department, and the League Chairman of the Board attended that function, as well as a meeting of Vietnamese and US veterans. Vice Foreign Minister Ngoc, former Director of the Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP), will lead an interagency delegation to Washington next week, another step in the rapidly increasing bilateral dialogue.

CAMBODIA CONSULTATIONS HELD: Consultations were held September 27th in Phnom Penh, also led by the JPAC Commander, with DPMO, DIA's Stony Beach and Embassy-Phnom Penh participating. It is hoped the legal obstacles raised by the US bureaucracy will not recur to pose further difficulties for the JPAC teams and counterpart Cambodian officials who, though puzzled, have been most patient. The long-delayed JFA in Cambodia just concluded. Hopefully, the earlier planned two RTs and one Underwater Recovery Team (URT) operations were completed. New legal requirements, never before obstacles to cooperation, were finally resolved so that the JFA could proceed.

GAO REPORTS ACCOUNTING COMMUNITY AS DYSFUNCTIONAL: The congressionally mandated study by the General Accountability Office (GAO) completed its year-long investigation into all aspects of the accounting community. The outcome was objective, with some recommendations that warrant attention and corrective action. Unfortunately, there was over-reaction at the highest levels in DoD, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who cited the accusations as "discouraging" and moving rapidly toward "disgraceful." To complicate matters, an internal draft study by a temporary ORISE (Oak Ridge Institute for Science & Education) fellow, Dr. Paul Cole, hired by JPAC's Lab leadership, was earlier leaked to House Armed Service Committee (HASC) staff, then to AP journalist Bob Burns, timed to coincide with release of the GAO report. The resulting clamor brought about hearings in the HASC Subcommittee on Military Personnel and the Senate Homeland Security & Government Affairs Subcommittee on Financial Contracting and Oversight.

On August 1st, Senators Claire McCaskill (D-MO) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) heard testimony from DPMO Director/Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (DASD) Montague Winfield, JPAC Commander Major General Kelly McKeague, USAF, and Chief of the Artifact Section, Life Science Equipment Laboratory (LSEL) John Goines. It was clear that both Senators are focused sharply on recommendations in the GAO report, chief among them reorganizing to ensure a streamlined chain of command, with one commander at the top. The Senators made clear that if the accounting community could not agree on how to proceed, the Senate would provide its own solution. There was clearly no patience for the infighting and dysfunction that has plagued the POW/MIA issue for 20+ years, preventing unified efforts. The dissension stems in large part from DPMO's inability or unwillingness since formed in 1992 to fulfill its assigned role - policy control and oversight of the POW/MIA accounting mission, opting instead to become operational. As requested by Chairman McCaskill, League Chairman Ann Mills-Griffiths provided a Statement for the Record.

The HASC Subcommittee hearing called Dr. Cole and a GAO official to testify on the results of their respective assessments, though the Cole study, entitled "Information Value Chain," was much earlier renounced in its entirety by former JPAC Commander MG Stephen Tom, USA (Ret). Just after the leak to AP, the League posted the following statement on our website: *"Months ago, Chairman of the Board Ann Mills-Griffiths, and League Policy Advisor Richard Childress reviewed the report regarding JPAC that was authored by Paul Cole. The report and the assertions made in it reflect little more than a power-play within the organization. Recommendations made by Cole, if followed, would have set back efforts of the accounting community in a drastic way. The League continues to support the efforts to achieve the fullest possible accounting and the work being done by each of the agencies in support of that mission – including JPAC."*