

POW/MIA COMMITTEE REPORT VVA NJSC

FOLLOWING IS ASSEMBLED FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES

Report Submitted By Fred Urban POW/MIA Committee Chairperson



NUMBER OF AMERICANS STILL MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED-FOR BY STATE:

MARCH 15, 2017 (Corrected)

Alabama	30	Nevada	6
Alaska	2	New Hampshire	6
Arizona	15	New Jersey	41
Arkansas	15	New Mexico	12
California	166	New York	105
Colorado	24	North Carolina	39
Connecticut	25	North Dakota	8
Delaware	4	Ohio	75
District of Columbia	8	Oklahoma	32
Florida	56	Oregon	35
Georgia	29	Pennsylvania	90
Hawaii	7	Rhode Island	7
Idaho	8	South Carolina	27
Illinois	65	South Dakota	7
Indiana	51	Tennessee	27
Iowa	24	Texas	101
Kansas	24	Utah	4
Kentucky	14	Vermont	5
Louisiana	24	Virginia	45
Maine	11	Washington	38
Maryland	23	West Virginia	17
Massachusetts	39	Wisconsin	26
Michigan	49	Wyoming	5
Minnesota	33	Canada	2
Mississippi	12	Panama	1
Missouri	35	Philippines	4
Montana	17	Puerto Rico	1
Nebraska	16	Civilians*	7

TOTAL MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED FOR 1609

*These 7 civilians do not have a listed home of record

VIETNAM'S ABILITY TO ACCOUNT FOR AMERICAN'S MISSING FROM THE VIETNAM WAR

June 17, 2017

Family members, veteran organizations and other POW/MIA supporters throughout the country consistently opposed steps to improve economic and political relations with Vietnam until their leadership decided to cooperate fully to resolve the POW/MIA issue. The League supported a policy of reciprocity – steps by the US to respond to efforts by Vietnam to locate and return remains and provide issue-related archival documents. During the initial stages of the normalization process, important leverage was lost without commensurate results; however, there has since been greater responsiveness.

One way of viewing what the US knows concerning Vietnam's ability to respond more fully is to look at what US intelligence and other data confirmed at the end of the war. At that time, roughly 200 missing Americans were last known alive in captivity or reported alive in close proximity to capture. Vietnam knows that these highest priority cases are directly related to the live prisoner issue and has improved responsiveness, but thus far has accounted for fewer than expected of these Americans by returning identifiable remains. Also, archival documentation is as yet incomplete. In all but roughly 30 of these cases, joint field investigations have reportedly been sufficient to confirm death. Logically, if deceased, remains of these Americans should be recoverable, as they were in captivity or on the ground in proximity to Vietnamese forces (other than those who died in captivity in South Vietnam). Also, logically, Vietnam should possess and be able to provide helpful records; thus, recent initiatives by Vietnam to increase working level archival research and records access are encouraging and most welcome.

US wartime and post-war reporting on specific cases, captured Vietnamese documents concerning the handling of US prisoners and casualties, and wartime debriefs of communist Vietnamese captives, reinforced by US-monitored directives and other reporting, form a clear picture of a comprehensive Vietnamese system for collection of information and remains, dating back to the French-Indochina War. Specific sources, such as the mortician in 1979, substantiated by others in the 1980s, highlighted remains collection and storage as a key aspect of Vietnam's policy leading to eventual discussions with the US. Indeed, through arduous and sustained negotiations, the US and Vietnam reached agreement to return remains of Americans that had been stored for years, though the number repatriated to date does not meet well-publicized US Government expectations.

Community-wide intelligence assessments served as the basis for long-standing US estimates that Vietnam could account for hundreds of Americans by unilaterally locating and returning remains. In 1986/87, the entire intelligence community maintained much higher predictions, but the numbers were subsequently further screened to establish the most realistic targets for Vietnam's government to meet.

During the war and since, the Vietnamese government placed great value on the recovery and/or recording of burial locations of US remains. In wartime, if jeopardized by imminent discovery or recovery by US forces, burial was immediate in order to hide remains. Subsequently, the remains were disinterred, photographed when possible, then reburied or, when feasible, transferred to Hanoi. Evidence of this process is confirmed by US intelligence.

Forensic evidence serves as another basis for establishing expectations. Scientific evidence of above or below ground storage, or both, exists on less than 200 of the 663 identified remains returned from Vietnam since the end of the war in 1975. The count, confirmed by DPAA forensic scientists, is far below US expectations, based on reliable intelligence indicating that 200+ more were stored by the Vietnamese government at one time and, if Vietnam's leaders would so authorize, could be repatriated.

After two years of no results from the Vietnamese in 1979-80, during a September 1982 ABC "Nightline" program, the late Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach denied that Vietnam was holding any US remains, as did other senior

officials throughout the Carter Administration.

Vietnam later admitted storage of remains. In 1985, following up an initiative through a regional government, a US National Security Council (NSC) official met privately with a Vietnamese Politburo member during an NSC-led US delegation to Hanoi, in which the League Executive Director participated. The carefully drawn plan was for negotiations on live prisoners and remains, but the minister indicated live prisoners were not on the table for discussion. Rather, as discussed through a third party, the subject was large numbers of remains.

In 1983, Vietnam returned eight remains with clear evidence of storage. Negotiations for a two-year plan in 1985 brought the largest number of remains obtained to that point; nearly all showed evidence of storage. In order to confirm the scope of Vietnam's knowledge, two specific cases were officially presented to officials in Hanoi in 1985-86 with a request for their unilateral assistance. Both losses were judged by the US Government to have occurred inside Laos, in areas under Vietnamese control during the war. One was returned unilaterally in 1988, 98% complete and stored above ground since his 1972 incident along the border between Vietnam and Laos; the other is still missing. From 1985 -1989, 168 remains were repatriated, the vast majority showing clear evidence of long-term storage. Vietnam has unilaterally repatriated stored remains from Cambodia and very remote locations, not just highly populated areas, relating to incidents spanning the entire war.

There is continuity. In 1991 and 1993, the Vietnamese provided graves registration lists with names of unaccounted-for Americans. Inclusion of these names appears to have been an intentional signal, as was filtering through private channels photographs of dead, unaccounted-for Americans, some of whose remains have yet to be returned. The Government of Vietnam directed combat photography; their soldiers did not own personal cameras, much less carry them. Regardless of mixed or conflicting assessments, these and other actions by Vietnamese officials were apparently intended to signal the US Government of remains availability for diplomatic and/or economic purposes. At the time, remains fragments in Vietnam's possession were not repatriated, believed not to be identifiable, but significant improvements in DPAA's ability to identify very fragmentary remains has dramatically increased.

Information obtained from post-war US field operations reveals that central Vietnamese authorities systematically recovered American remains. Eyewitnesses reported central-level supervision of remains recoveries of US personnel not yet repatriated. Vietnam's leaders have repeatedly pledged to renew and increase their own efforts to locate and return remains and provide relevant documents and have moved incrementally. In recent years, responsiveness has continued to increase, but more needs to be done. Establishment of comprehensive bilateral relations, plus ever-expanding military strategic dialogue and military cooperation bodes well for Vietnam to accelerate unilateral efforts to close these historic gaps.

President George W. Bush formalized criteria for steps Vietnam should take unilaterally to be fully responsive on the accounting effort. His March 20, 2002, Certification to Congress was followed and further defined by Secretaries of State Powell and Rice three additional times and, on March 7, 2008, the Bush Administration issued its Determination to Congress stating in part, "...we urge Vietnam to work aggressively to improve tangibly its unilateral provision of POW/MIA-related documents and records, focused initially on archival data pertaining to Americans captured, missing or killed in areas of Laos and Cambodia under wartime Vietnamese control. Vietnam should also focus greater attention on locating and providing information on discrepancy cases with priority on those last known alive in captivity or in immediate proximity to capture, and to locating and repatriating the remains of those who died while in Vietnamese control that have not yet been returned. The United States also calls upon Vietnam to continue permitting our recovery teams to have access to restricted areas for the sole purpose of conducting our humanitarian accounting operations." Vietnam's cooperation has continued to improve, including provision of archival documents and, reportedly, all sensitive areas previously closed to US officials are no longer off-limits and Vietnamese investigators are locating and making available witnesses on a regular basis.



Listed below are only returned MIA's of the Vietnam War:

VFW POW/MIA Update beginning 3 24 17

3/24/17 – None from Vietnam

3/31/17 - Air Force Capt. Robert R. Barnett, 32, of Gladewater, Texas, will be buried April 7 in Austin, Texas. Barnett was a B-57B pilot with the 8th Bomb Squadron. While on a strike mission over Laos, Barnett's aircraft reportedly crashed with no parachutes seen. The hostile threat in the area prevented a search and rescue mission and Barnett was declared killed in action on April 7, 1966.

4/13/17 - -- Marine Corps Capt. John A. House, II, was assigned to HHM-265 Marine Aircraft Group 16. On June 30, 1967, House's CH-46A Sea Knight helicopter crashed after being hit by enemy fire while attempting to insert a Marine reconnaissance team into hostile territory in Thua Thien-Hue Province, Vietnam. While most of the reconnaissance team survived, House and four others were killed. Interment services are pending.

-- **Lance Cpl. John D. Killen, III**, was assigned to Company A, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. On June 30, 1967, Killen was onboard a CH-46A Sea Knight helicopter attempting to insert his Marine reconnaissance team into hostile territory in Thua Thien-Hue Province, Vietnam, when it was struck by enemy fire and crashed. While most of the reconnaissance team survived, Killen and four others were killed. Interment services are pending.

-- **Cpl. Glyn L. Runnels, Jr.** was assigned to Company A, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. On June 30, 1967, Runnels was onboard a CH-46A Sea Knight helicopter attempting to insert his Marine reconnaissance team into hostile territory in Thua Thien-Hue Province, Vietnam, when it was struck by enemy fire and crashed. While most of the reconnaissance team survived, Runnels and four others were killed. Interment services are pending.

4/21/17 - -- Air Force Col. William E. Campbell was assigned to the 497th Tactical Fighter Squadron. Campbell was reported missing in action on Jan. 29, 1969, while operating in Laos. Interment services are pending. **4/28/17** – None from Vietnam reported.

5/5/17 - -- Marine Corps Reserve 1st Lt. William C. Ryan, Jr., 25, of Hoboken, New Jersey, will be buried May 10 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Ryan was an F-4B radar intercept officer, assigned to Marine Fighter Attack Force 115, Marine Aircraft Group 13, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force Pacific. Ryan was on a bombing mission over Savannakhet Province, Laos, when his aircraft was hit by enemy fire. Ryan was unresponsive after the attack and the pilot lost control of the aircraft and was forced to eject. The crash site location prevented a recovery search and Ryan was declared deceased as of May 11, 1969.

5/12/17-- Air Force Col. William E. Campbell, 37, of McAllen, Texas, will be buried May 18 in Arlington National Cemetery, near Washington, D.C. Campbell was assigned to the 497th Tactical Fighter Squadron. Campbell was reported missing in action on Jan. 29, 1969, when his F-4D disappeared while on an armed reconnaissance mission over southern Laos.

5/19/17 - None from Vietnam reported.

5/28/17 - None from Vietnam reported.

6/2/17 - None from Vietnam reported.

6/9/17 - -- Navy Cmdr. Charles B. Goodwin was an RF-8A pilot, assigned to Detachment D, VPF-63, CVW-15. On Sept. 8, 1965, Goodwin took off from the USS Coral Sea on a combat photo mission over North Vietnam. Fifteen minutes later, Goodwin radioed that he had encountered thunderstorms in route to the target area. No other transmissions were received from Goodwin and, after unsuccessful searches over the target area and adjacent coastal waters, Goodwin was declared missing in action. Interment services are pending.

Air Force Reserve Capt. Joseph Smith was an F-100D pilot. During a combat mission over Cambodia, Smith's wingman noticed a stream of white vapor coming from the left wing of Smith's aircraft. Smith crashed a half-mile from the target. An aerial search was conducted the following day, but a recovery operation was ruled out due to intense enemy activity in the area. Smith was listed as missing in action as of April 4, 1971. Interment services are pending.

6/16/17 –None from Vietnam Reported

From the VVA.org web site:

HISTORY OF THE POW/MIA BRACELETS

Over the years, people have contacted the League looking for information on the history and background of the POW/MIA bracelets, originated and worn extensively in the 1970s, and continuously since by POW/MIA family members, veterans and other interested Americans. The following historical information was written by Carol Bates Brown, one of the originators:

I was the National Chairman of the POW/MIA Bracelet Campaign for VIVA (Voices In Vital America), the Los Angeles based student organization that produced and distributed the bracelets during the Vietnam War. Entertainers Bob Hope and Martha Raye served with me as honorary co-chairmen.

The idea for the bracelets was started by a fellow college student, Kay Hunter, and me, as a way to remember American prisoners of war suffering in captivity in Southeast Asia. In late 1969, television personality Bob Dornan (who several years later was elected to the US Congress) introduced us and several other members of VIVA to three wives of missing pilots. They thought our student group could assist them in drawing public attention to the prisoners and missing in Vietnam. The idea of circulating petitions and letters to Hanoi demanding humane treatment for the POWs was appealing, as we were looking for ways college students could become involved in positive programs to support US soldiers without becoming embroiled in the controversy of the war itself. The relatives of the men were beginning to organize locally, but the National League of POW/MIA Families had yet to be formed.

During that time, Bob Dornan wore a bracelet he had obtained in Vietnam from hill tribesmen, which he said always reminded him of the suffering the war had brought to so many. We wanted to get similar bracelets to wear to remember US POWs, so rather naively, we tried to figure out a way to go to Vietnam. Since no one wanted to fund two sorority-girl types on a tour to Vietnam during the height of the war, and our parents were livid at the idea, we gave up and Kay Hunter began to check out ways to make bracelets. Soon other activities drew her attention and she dropped out of VIVA, leaving me, another student Steve Frank, and our adult advisor, Gloria Coppin, to pursue the POW/MIA awareness program.

The major problem was that VIVA had no money to make bracelets, although our advisor was able to find a small shop in Santa Monica that did engraving on silver used to decorate horses. The owner agreed to make 10 sample bracelets. I can remember us sitting around in Gloria Coppin's kitchen with the engraver on the telephone, as we tried to figure out what we would put on the bracelets. This is why they carried only name, rank and date of loss, since we didn't have time to think of anything else.

Armed with sample bracelets, we set out to find someone who would donate money to make bracelets for distribution to college students. It had not yet occurred to us that adults would want to wear them, as they

weren't very attractive. Several approaches to Ross Perot were rebuffed, including a proposal that he loan us \$10,000 at 10% interest. We even visited Howard Hughes' senior aides in Las Vegas. They were sympathetic but not willing to help fund our project. Finally in late summer of 1970, Gloria Coppin's husband donated enough brass and copper to make 1,200 bracelets. The Santa Monica engraver agreed to make them and we could pay him from any proceeds we might realize.

Although the initial bracelets were going to cost about 75 cents to make, we were unsure about how much we should ask people to donate to receive a bracelet. In 1970, a student admission to the local movie theater was \$2.50. We decided this seemed like a fair price to ask from a student for one of the nickel-plated bracelets. We also made copper ones for adults who believed they helped their "tennis elbow". Again, according to our logic, adults could pay more, so we would request \$3.00 for the copper bracelets.

At the suggestion of local POW/MIA relatives, we attended the National League of Families annual meeting in Washington, DC in late September. We were amazed at the interest from the wives and parents in having their man's name put on bracelets and in obtaining them for distribution. Bob Dornan, who was always a champion of the POW/MIAs and their families, continued to publicize the issue on his Los Angeles television talk show and promoted the bracelets.

On Veterans Day, November 11, 1970, we officially kicked off the bracelet program with a news conference at the Universal Sheraton Hotel. Public response quickly grew and we eventually got to the point we were receiving over 12,000 requests a day. This also brought money in to pay for brochures, bumper stickers, buttons, advertising and whatever else we could do to publicize the POW/MIA issue. We formed a close alliance with the relatives of missing men – they got bracelets from us on consignment and could keep some of the money they raised to fund their local organizations. We also tried to furnish these groups with all the stickers and other literature they could give away.

While Steve Frank and I ended up dropping out of college to work for VIVA full time to administer the bracelet and other POW/MIA programs, none of us got rich off the bracelets. VIVA's adult advisory group, headed by Gloria Coppin, was adamant that we would not have a highly paid professional staff. As I recall the highest salary was \$15,000 a year and we were able to keep administrative costs to less than 20 percent of income.

In all, VIVA distributed nearly five million bracelets and raised enough money to produce untold millions of bumper stickers, buttons, brochures, matchbooks, newspaper ads, etc., to draw attention to the missing men. In 1976, VIVA closed its doors. By then the American public was tired of hearing about Vietnam and showed no interest in the POW/MIA issue.