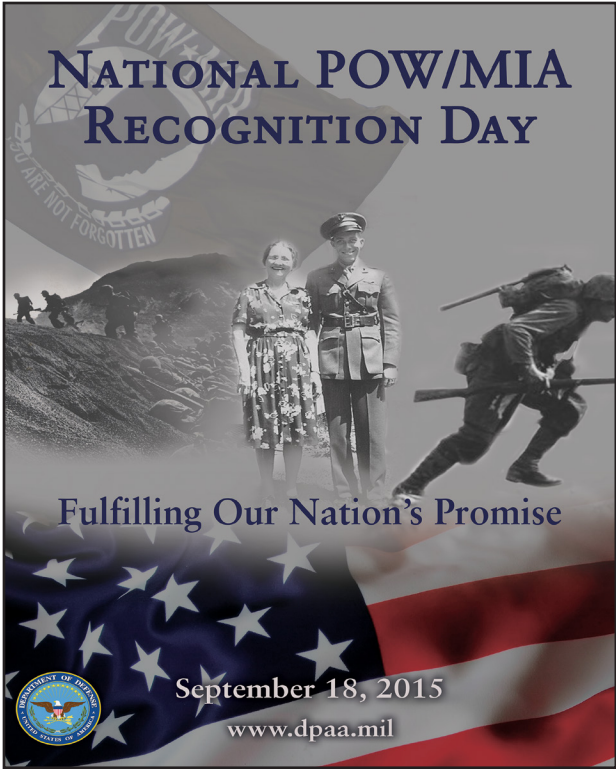




Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Accounting Agency
2300 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-2300

National POW/Recognition Day



National POW/MIA Recognition Day observances are annually held on the third Friday of September on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, schools and veterans' facilities. This observance is one of six days throughout the year that Congress has mandated the flying of the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag. This day is set aside to honor those who remain missing and those who suffered starvation, isolation, fear, and uncertainty, during captivity.

Since World War II more than 116,000 Americans were held captive. The Department of Defense is committed to keeping families of the missing and the public apprised of the efforts being made to account for our missing service members.

To order 2015 National POW/MIA Recognition Day posters please go to <http://www.dpaa.mil/Families/Posters.aspx>

For your information

Family members seeking more information about missing loved ones may call their respective Service Casualty Office:

- U.S. Air Force

(800) 531-5501
- U.S. Marine Corps

(800) 847-1597
- U.S. Army

(800) 892-2490
- U.S. Navy

(800) 443-9298
- U.S. Department of State

(202) 647-5470

SUBSCRIPTION UPDATE:

To "Go Green" and reduce cost, DPMO is focusing on digital distribution of The Quest instead of hardcopy mailings. Please send your email address to: dpaa.ncr.ec.mbx.outreach@mail.mil

Director Michael Linnington Meets with Agency Team



Michael S. Linnington, director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) addresses the DPAA team in Arlington, Va., June 24, 2015.

On June 24, 2015, Army retired Lt. Gen. Michael Linnington, the newly appointed director for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, met with the D.C. based staff to discuss his philosophy and his vision for the way forward for the organization. He opened by saying that he was here to lead the Agency for the long haul and his immediate goal is to move from the current transition environment to a steady state with an eye toward constant process improvement. He said, "The Army has been my family for over 35 years and to continue to serve in this new capacity fulfills an important part of the soldier's creed, 'To leave no soldier behind.' I am proud to be here and to be a part of this mission that fulfills that obligation to those who served and paid the ultimate price with their lives."

He outlined his top four near-term priorities. First, he stressed the importance of continuing the mission and recovering our fallen from the fields of battle. Second, he is focused on completing the reorganization and clearing any sense of uncertainty that the current transition has created. Third, he wants the organization to explore cloud-based case management solutions. Lastly, he wants to foster an environment that elicits positive and constructive communications.

Linnington said his three guiding principles, training, trust and teamwork, are paramount to an individual's and an organization's success. He believes our focus on these principles will successfully guide the organization in its mission to provide the fullest possible accounting for those from past conflicts.

Linnington visited with personnel in Hawaii the following week to also share his vision and to learn more about the mission and Agency.

The Director's Vision



As you know, last year Secretary of Defense Hagel announced a series of decisions associated with the Department's efforts to reorganize how we account for missing personnel from our nation's past conflicts, and in doing so, created a single, integrated Defense Agency.

In January 2015, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) established with the responsibility for accounting for our missing from past conflicts. The effort combined the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, select functions of the Air Force Life Science Equipment Laboratory, and the Defense POW/MIA Personnel Office to form DPAA.

On June 22, I accepted this mission and am honored to be the Director of DPAA. I expect to continue making progress towards the fullest possible accounting mission. We will be at full operating capability by the end of the year.

Recovering and identifying the remains of missing Americans is an undeniably honorable mission, but we can do better. My job as I get settled into this new position is to continue the staff actions that will provide more

productivity, accounting, transparency, and responsiveness to our families and the public. My emphasis is along four lines of effort. First, the staff needs to be organized properly; second, we need to use cloud-based technologies so that case files can be shared both throughout the staff and with the public; third, we need to tap the public – NGOs, academe, other national organizations and contractors – to boost productivity; and lastly, we need to be responsive the families of our missing, provide them with answers where we can, and a way ahead where we cannot.

I am honored and wholly committed to the humbling responsibility of leading this important mission. It is crucial that we contribute to build on the strengths of our current work while innovating to find new and better solutions. I value open communications, forthrightness, solemnity, and collaborative working environments. My intent is to develop a working environment in DPAA which reflects the efforts and ideas of its staff in executing a complex mission effectively and efficiently, while providing answers to families who have loved ones still missing. I intend to solidify the foundation that will make DPAA a top ten employer both in the National Capital Region and in Honolulu.

I share with each of you my solemn obligation to provide the fullest possible accounting of our missing personnel to their families and to our nation. Thank you for being on the same team...I am immensely privileged to be here.

Lead investigator Andrew Speelhoffer and research analyst Anthony Hewitt, interview a landowner about an engine located on his property in Madang Province, Papua New Guinea, January 2014. With the help of a translator and National Museum representative, Augustine Wak, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency team interviewed witnesses that were children who had information about World War II crash sites. The investigation provided information which will be used in further research of the cases which will hopefully lead to identifications. *(Photo by DPAA)*



Family Updates

The FMU program continues to successfully inform family members of the work being done to bring home their missing loved ones. Invitations are sent to family members within a 350 -mile radius around the city where the event takes place.

2015 updates for families with loved ones missing in action are tentatively scheduled for:

August 13-14 – Korean/Cold War Annual, Washington D.C.

September 12 – Norfolk, Va.

November 14 – Portland, Maine

To register or find more information, see our webpage: www.dpaa.mil.



SON LA PROVINCE, Vietnam (Nov. 10, 2014) - Members from the Department of Defense (DoD) and Vietnamese workers explore the suspected area of an F-105D airplane crash. The team began the search and recovery operations to retrieve a Vietnam War missing Air Force member that went down with the aircraft on Sept. 17, 1965. (DoD photo by Staff Sgt. Erik Cardenas, U.S. Air Force)

My Journey as a PO3

Article by PO3 Clifford Bailey

“You’ve got to hit it at an angle; look at how they’re doing it,” said Master Sgt. Kevin Gallemore. Short of breath, I stop my fruitless chopping and watched how the professionals were doing it. Sweat has already soaked through my clothes and blisters were forming on my thumb and fingers.

With two swift strokes from a more experienced man, the bamboo tree falls and the Lao man laughs at my shocked, fatigued expression.

“You do realize this is the first time I’ve ever wielded a machete,” I said. The Lao lumberjack just smiles, not understanding, but, I think, comprehending my sentiment.

That was in October 2012, my first mission with the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, now the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). I had just transferred there that summer from Fort Meade, Md. Prior to joining the Navy in 2011, I was working at a call center for a natural gas company in Ohio; the Navy promised I could see the world; I never figured it would be like this.

My rate in the Navy is Mass Communication Specialist. As such I’ve been trained in most everything related to the mass media: broadcasting, photography, journalism, public affairs, book-binding, and more. At DPAA, my initial assignment was to serve as a forensic photographer in the forensic imaging center.

From the summer of 2012 to 2014, I deployed on eight missions. From the jungles of Southeast Asia to the ice cap of Greenland, I’ve seen a lot of the world and had the honor and privilege to photograph the noble mission of bringing home America’s fallen.

My primary role was to support the archaeologists and anthropologists by documenting the recovery process. When we first arrived at a site, my job was to get survey shots of the terrain showing how it looked before breaking ground. As operations commenced, I photographed the daily operations, visually recording the progress and documenting any possible evidence or remains that are found. At the conclusion of our time on-site, I took the final photos, documenting how we left the area. On my first mission I got to hang out the side of a Mi-17 helicopter. My guts were in my throat because before that mission I had never ridden in a helicopter, let alone hung out the door of one to photograph a remote hillside in Southeast Asia.

One of the most memorable missions I was a part of was to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. We were actually recovering the remains of Maj. Peyton S. Mathis, a U.S. Army Air Forces pilot who died when his P-38 fighter plane crashed in a swamp in 1944. Much of the plane was intact. We were able to drain most of the water from the bog, and with the help of some local villagers, recovered most of Mathis’ remains, which were returned to his family in Alabama and buried with military honors.

Late one afternoon, I stood on the wing of the P-38, snapping pictures, and marveled at the wonder of the scene. It is really easy to get caught up in the notion of being able to travel to such interesting and exotic locations. But then you remember you’re attempting to recover the remains of someone who gave his life for our country; you’re attempting to bring answers to the families who still miss that person. Standing on the wing, just behind the cockpit, I suddenly wondered, what if I was standing right where the last person who saw him alive stood? What if the last person he saw was his crew chief, securing the canopy, before taking off on his last mission? I imagined Mathis looking back up at me, giving me the thumbs-up, preparing to lead a bombing mission against Japanese gun positions.

I was moved to tears. Recalling the experience now, being able to see his portrait, I am moved once more. Every mission I deployed with had at least a handful of moments like that. Whether it was a site in Southeast Asia where a Marine gave his life on a hillside while trying to rescue troops pinned down by gunfire, or in the German forests where a bomber was shot down and five individuals lost their lives for the sake of freedom. I, along with my teammates, have the unique opportunity to honor their sacrifices by actively and directly participating in the search for them.

After eight missions in two years, I now have the chance to tell the stories of those who travel to remote locations and austere conditions to recover our fallen heroes. My name is Clifford Bailey and I’m a petty officer third class in the U.S. Navy. It is an honor and privilege to serve with DPAA.

Recently Accounted For

as of July 16, 2015

WWII

2nd Lt. Barker, Edward F., USAAF
2nd Lt. Beethe, Alvin, USAAF
2nd Lt. Biezis, Stephen V., USAAF
2nd Lt. Collins, Jimmie D. III, USAAF
1st Lt. Gatlin, James F., USAAF
2nd Lt. Herb, John W., USAAF
Staff Sgt. Jones, Charles J., USAAF
Pvt. Kelder, Arthur H., USA
Staff Sgt. Lane, Frank G., USAAF
Flight Officer LeFavre, Arthur J., USAAF
Maj. Mathis, Peyton S., USAAF
2nd Lt. McGuire, Harry B., USAAF
1st Lt. Pile, William O., USAAF
Pvt. Redman, Jack M., USMC
Staff Sgt. Swalwell, Ward C. Jr., USAAF
Capt. Vincent, Richard W., USMC
2nd Lt. Ward, Robert W., USAAF

KOREA

Sgt. Andring, Arnold V., USA
Cpl. Apodaca, Abie L., USA
1st Lt. Ball, Raymond O., USMC
Sgt. Barra, Michael J., USA
Pfc. Bowers, John R., USA
Cpl. Bolden, C.G., USA
Cpl. Brown, Ben L., USA
Cpl. Darden, Kenneth P., USA
Sgt. Dawson, Wallace J., USA
Pfc. Erickson, Eugene L., USA
Sgt. Flack, Cameron M., USA
Sgt. 1st Class Hannah, Gordon L., USA
Cpl. Higgins, Robert, USA

Sgt. 1st Class Hilgenberg, Earl E., USA
Master Sgt. Holt, James W., USA
Cpl. Hurt, Norbert G., USA
Sgt. Jackson, Floyd J.R., USA
Pfc. Jones, Lotchie J.R., USA
Cpl. Knobel, Francis D., USA
Pfc. LaRossa, Anthony R., USA
Cpl. Lockett, Lindsey C., USA
Pfc. Massey, Anthony Jr., USA
Sgt. McLaughlin, John, USMC
Sgt. Pitman, Arnold, USA
Cpl. Richard, Elmer P., USA
Sgt. Sanchez, Gilberto L., USA
Cpl. Skeens, Lonal D., USA
Cpl. Smith, Leland F., USA
Sgt. Snock, Joseph M. Jr., USA
Master Sgt. Stamer, Francis H., USA
Sgt. 1st Class Strum, Donald R., USA
Cpl. Therkelsen, Donald A., USA
Pfc. Tingle, Paul L., USA
Pfc. Wilcher, Charlie Jr., USA
Cpl. Wing, Richard L., USA

SEA

Staff Sgt. Price, Bunyan D. Jr., USA
Capt. Chorlins, Richard D., USAF
Lt. Clark, Richard C., USN
Col. Cooper, William E., USAF
Sgt. Griffin, Rodney L., USA
Chief Master Sgt. Morgan, Edwin E., USAF
Maj. Richardson, Dale W., USA
Lt. j.g. Taylor, Neil B., USN
Staff Sgt. Van Bendegom, James L., USA
Capt. Whitesides, Richard L., USAF



SON LA PROVINCE, Vietnam (Nov. 4, 2014) - Vietnamese workers, part of the Black Thai ethnic group, prepare to cut bamboo during an effort to locate a missing airman from the Vietnam War. (DoD Photo by Staff Sgt. Erik Cardenas, U.S. Air Force)

The Quest

USS Oklahoma

Story by DoD News, Defense Media Activity - April 14, 2015

The remains of up to 388 unaccounted-for sailors and Marines associated with the USS Oklahoma will be exhumed later this year for analysis that could lead to identifying most of them, Defense Department officials announced today.

On Dec. 7, 1941, 429 sailors and Marines were killed when Japanese torpedoes sank the ship during the attacks on Pearl Harbor.

Upon disinterment, the remains will be transferred to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency laboratory in Hawaii for examination, officials said in a news release, noting that analysis of all available evidence indicates that most USS Oklahoma crew members can be identified upon disinterment.

Deputy Defense Secretary Bob Work approved the disinterment and established a broader DoD policy that defines threshold criteria for disinterment of unknowns.

“The secretary of defense and I will work tirelessly to ensure your loved one’s remains will be recovered, identified, and returned to you as expeditiously as possible, and we will do so with dignity, respect and care,” Work said. “While not all families will receive an individual identification, we will strive to provide resolution to as many families as possible.”

The disinterment policy applies to all unidentified remains from the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific and other permanent American military cemeteries. However, this policy does not extend to sailors and Marines lost at sea or to remains entombed in U.S. Navy vessels serving as national memorials, officials said.

Threshold Criteria

The threshold criteria include research, family reference samples for DNA comparison, medical and dental records of the missing service members, and the scientific capacity to identify the remains in a timely manner, officials said. To disinter cases of commingled remains, they added, the department must estimate the ability to identify at least 60 percent of the individuals associated with a group. A likelihood of at least 50 percent identification must be attained for individual unknowns.

“The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is prepared to begin this solemn undertaking in concert with ongoing worldwide recovery missions,” Navy Rear Adm. Mike Franken, DPAA’s acting director, said. “Personally, I am most privileged to be part of this honorable mission, and I very much appreciate the efforts of many people who saw this revised disinterment policy come to fruition.”

Salvage Operations

In the years immediately following the attacks, 35 crew members were positively identified and buried.

During salvage operations from June 1942 to May 1944, the remaining service members’ remains were removed from the ship and initially interred as unknowns in Hawaii’s Nuuanu and Halawa cemeteries. In 1947, all remains in those cemeteries were disinterred for attempted identification. Twenty-seven unknowns from the USS Oklahoma were proposed for identification based on dental comparisons, but all proposed identifications were disapproved.

By 1950, all unidentified remains associated with the ship were re-interred as unknowns at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, commonly known as the Punchbowl.

In 2003, the DoD laboratory in Hawaii disinterred one casket containing USS Oklahoma remains based on historical evidence provided by Ray Emory, a Pearl Harbor survivor. The evidence helped to establish the identification of five servicemen; however, the casket contained the remains of up to 100 men who have not yet been identified.

Analysis of remains will begin immediately after their arrival into the DPAA laboratory and will use current forensic tools and techniques, including DNA testing, Pentagon officials said.

Service members who are identified will be returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

Navy and Marine Corps casualty offices began notifying the next-of-kin this morning, officials said.

Sgt. Hai’s family attend ceremony



Republic of Vietnam Air Force Sgt. Nguyen Van Hai’s name was added to the Memorial in the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, near Washington D.C., April 23, 2015. Hai’s aviation unit, the Republic of Vietnam Air Force 231st Helicopter Squadron, was tasked to support a U.S. Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) investigation mission when they were ambushed by communist forces Dec. 15, 1973. *(Photo by DPAA)*

On Thursday, April 23, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) Director, Rear Adm. Michael Franken hosted a ceremony in the DPAA Washington D.C. office, adding the name of Republic of Vietnam Air Force Sgt. Nguyen Van Hai to the Memorial in the Washington D.C. office’s main conference room. The memorial honors those Americans and host nation partners who have died supporting our pursuit of the fullest possible accounting for Americans lost in our nation’s wars.

On Dec. 15, 1973, Hai’s aviation unit, the Republic of Vietnam Air Force 231st Helicopter Squadron, was tasked to support a U.S. Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) investigation mission outside of Saigon when the team was ambushed by communist forces. U.S. Army Capt. Richard Rees and Hai were killed in the attack. Rees was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. When the Memorial in the Washington D.C. office was developed several years ago, the name of the South Vietnamese airman who died with Rees had been lost to history.

Through the efforts of DPAA staff and with assistance provided by a Defense Language Institute Vietnamese instructor, Hai was confirmed as the South Vietnamese airman killed during the ambush in Saigon. In the course of confirming his identity, it was also discovered that in April 1975, Hai was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star with “V” device for his actions on Dec. 15, 1973, but his family never received the medal due to the fall of Saigon. With assistance from the Department of the Army’s Awards Branch, Hai’s Bronze Star with “V” device was also presented to his family during the ceremony.

Hai’s sister, her children and grandchildren, attended and participated in the event.



SON LA PROVINCE, Vietnam (Nov. 10, 2014) - Dr. Joshua Peck, forensic anthropologist, Department of Defense (DoD), records data during an effort to locate a missing airman from the Vietnam War. (DoD Photo by Staff Sgt. Erik Cardenas, U.S. Air Force)



SON LA PROVINCE, Vietnam (Nov. 4, 2014) – Dr. Josh Peck surveys a recovery site as part of the effort to locate a missing airman from the Vietnam War. (DoD Photo by Staff Sgt. Erik Cardenas, U.S. Air Force)

25 Years of Service

Article by PO2 Vladimir Potapenko

On Feb. 8, 2015, U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Steve Barsalou quietly ushered in 25 years of service surrounded by his Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) recovery team in a small dining hall in Xepon, Laos.

“I had no idea what I was getting into when I enlisted; I certainly would have never guessed I would serve 25 years,” said Barsalou. But while he never expected to serve so long, time has proven that sometimes expectations are pleasantly unmet.

Barsalou is a life support investigator responsible for aircraft wreckage analysis. While in Xepon, the recovery team searched for an unaccounted for American from the Vietnam War. Far removed from the wide-eyed wonderment of early youth and service, he stopped to reflect on the path his life and career took to bring him to Laos, bringing him to a job, he says, is the most rewarding of his career.

Barsalou started as a life support apprentice at Pope Air Force Base, N.C., eventually leaving life support to be a first sergeant. When his time was complete as a first sergeant, there was an opening to work in the mission to account for Americans missing from past conflicts.

Barsalou’s favorite mission was to Germany where he and his team recovered the remains of two Americans who had been missing for 68 years. The spouse of one of the recovered members was in her 90s, never having remarried.

“She waited for her only love, and we brought him home to her,” said Barsalou. “There is not a more fulfilling, rewarding or noble mission in the Department of Defense than what we do.”

According to Barsalou, in 2012 he was faced with the choice of returning to the Air Force and increasing his chances for promotion to chief master sergeant, or staying with the accounting community and passing up the promotion opportunity.

“To me that was an easy choice, said Barsalou. “I chose job satisfaction and how proud I am of what we do over one more stripe...looking back I would make that same choice again.” “I have been on 18 missions now and should retire with 22. I wish I could do more.”

While others may praise Barsalou for his loyalty to service, his character, and his leadership, he deflects such lofty talk.

“I, like all my team, am just someone who wants to do the best he can at any given task. And for me, that is bringing someone home. I just do my job,” said Barsalou.

Barsalou woke up the day after his celebratory dinner and got back to work digging, screening, and searching for someone who paid the price in blood that war often demands. And he is just as happy as he was the night before.

“I try not to get personally connected to each mission but it’s hard not to think about the member, his family and friends that need [answers]...and that want to have the ability to pay final respects,” said Barsalou. “It is certainly an interesting turn of events to be able to celebrate my 25 years, while in Xepon.”



Dr. Jeffrey Johnson, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) historian, Pfc. Eugene E. Gilbreath, Ms. Christine Cohn, DPAA historian, and Dr. Edward Burton DPAA historian, (from left to right) pose for a photo after interviewing Gilbreath at the Netherlands American Cemetery, Margraten, Netherlands Sept. 22, 2014. Gilbreath was previously assigned to the Headquarters Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, during World War II. DPAA conducts interviews with veterans of past conflicts dating back to World War II, to help locate missing Americans from past wars. (Photo by Gilbreath Family)

DPAA Participates in U.S. - Laos Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue

Senior DPAA policy representatives participated in the annual U.S. - Laos Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue (CBD) June 19, 2015 in Washington, D.C. This year’s CBD was the 6th CBD, a forum to discuss respective global, regional, and bilateral issues of concern between the two countries.

Lao Vice Foreign Minister Dr. Sounthone Xayachack led the Lao delegation. Mr. Danny Russel, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, led the U.S. delegation.

In addition to the U.S. Ambassador to Laos, Honorable Dan Clune, Brigadier General Loretta Reynolds, Principal Director, Department of Defense Asia and Pacific Security Affairs (South/Southeast Asia), joined the DPAA representatives for the POW/MIA portion of the dialogue. Among the topics discussed were the status of the Department of Defense’s reorganization of its POW/MIA accounting community and plans for operations in Laos in Fiscal Year 2015. The Lao reaffirmed their support to the accounting mission and extended an invitation to the new DPAA director to visit Laos.”



SON LA PROVINCE, Vietnam (Nov. 5, 2014) - Members from the Department of Defense (DoD) and Vietnamese workers screen through dirt during an effort to locate a missing airman from the Vietnam War. (DoD Photo by Staff Sgt. Erik Cardenas, U.S. Air Force)

Technical talks with China

A Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) delegation traveled to Beijing, China, April 10-16, for working level bilateral talks with Chinese officials. The DPAA team was led by the Northeast Asia policy officers with representatives from DPAA operations and DPAA Research and Analysis and also, the U.S. Embassy’s Defense Attaché’s Office (USDAO). DPAA and USDAO conducted talks with the China Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) office, the China Ministry of National Defense (MND) office and the People Liberation Army (PLA) Archives Department. The purpose of the talks was to propose personnel accounting related field activities in China and to discuss the upcoming annual meeting [which is slated for June 2015 in Washington, D.C.], and the signing of a new three-year technical arrangement between DPAA and the PLA Archives Department DPAA proposed two investigative field activities in China. The first one is scheduled to take place in Yunnan province this summer and involves three aircraft losses from World War II. The second investigative field activity will take place in Liaoning province and involves four Korean War aircraft loss incidents, involving a total of six unaccounted for U.S. servicemen. The proposal was well received by China MFA and MND/PLA Archives, and they would make the arrangements for the DPAA teams to enter China and conduct the proposed activities. DPAA is now working the detailed planning requirements to execute the field activities as scheduled in coordination with the USDAO Beijing and China MFA.

DPAA traveled to Belgium



Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's historian Christine Cohn interviews Mr. Richard Lockhardt, a veteran of the 106th Infantry Division, who was captured during the Battle of the Bulge and held as a prisoner of war in Stalag IXB until April 1945.

Battle Monuments Commission cemeteries. Information from these meetings advances the accounting community's collection of circumstantial and incident-specific information for unaccounted for service members from World War II.

In December 2014, a two-person team from the Directorate of Operations/World War II Branch traveled to Belgium to conduct personal meetings and oral history interviews with Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and third-party contacts to gather information in an ongoing effort to resolve more than 200 outstanding ground loss cases in the Belgium/Luxembourg region from World War II. The historians conducted formal interviews with 28 World War II veterans, as well as three Korean War veterans, and two Vietnam War veterans. The team also shared and gathered information with family members of 10 World War II service members, eight local historians and contacts, three active and retired U.S. military personnel, including the command sergeant major of U.S. Army Europe, and three representatives of the American

Iwo Jima Symposium

On Feb. 21, 2015, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) historian, Dr. Ian Spurgeon, attended the Iwo Jima Association of America's (IJAA) 70th Anniversary Symposium in Arlington, Va., to interview Iwo Jima veterans for information related to unaccounted for service members.

Approximately 150 people attended the all-day symposium, including 19 Iwo Jima veterans. Attendees also included family members of surviving and deceased veterans of World War II, 20 active duty Marines, media reporters, and several members of the public. At the beginning of the symposium, the organizers introduced Spurgeon, who then briefly described the efforts by DPAA to recover and identify the fallen of World War II and explained that he was on hand to interview the Iwo Jima veterans regarding unaccounted for members from their units.

Spurgeon gathered information from several veterans who witnessed the loss of their fellow Marines on Iwo Jima and at other locations. During the event, several family members of World War II veterans and casualties, as well as active and retired U.S. military personnel, approached Spurgeon for additional information about DPAA's personnel accounting mission and for recommendations for research related to their relative's service and loss.

Veterans' association officers also volunteered to provide information to DPAA and notify their members of the Department of Defense's (DoD) mission.

This oral history project conducted by DPAA, and others like it, provided excellent opportunities for DPAA researchers to gather priceless historical information from veterans, and to meet with families of missing service members, active military members, and the public, who may gain a better understanding of the DoD's mission to account for missing Americans from past conflicts.

DPAA Meets With Families of MIAs

Until They Are Home.
Keeping the Promise.

These are the stirring mottos of two former government POW/MIA recovery and accounting organizations now merged into the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). They are charged with the mission to provide the fullest possible accounting for our missing personnel to their families and the nation.

Vital to that mission is keeping the families up to date on the progress of finding their loved ones' remains and this is accomplished by facilitating periodic Family Member Update (FMU) events across the nation.

These events are conducted by DPAA up to eight times a year in major metropolitan areas across the country. At these events, family members of MIAs have an opportunity to hear from government officials – in group settings or one-on-one discussions – to learn how the search is going.

Sacramento was where first FMU of calendar year 2015 was hosted.

On February 21, more than 250 people attended the event at the Crowne Plaza Sacramento Northeast. In addition to gaining new information regarding their respective cases, the families are also able to connect with one another and share their personal stories.

"It makes me feel not quite alone," says Vera Bigham. She represents her husband, Capt. Donald G. Bigham, who went missing during a combat operation in the Korean War. "These other people, especially the wives, are in the same situation."

"You hear the others, and you're with other people who feel the same," Jacqueline Kurtz-Biggs said, who attended on behalf of her uncle, Capt. David C. Bryant, Jr., an MIA from World War II. "You're not alone."

Loneliness; a missing piece; having someone significant from one's life ripped away without any answers is a common theme among the families at the FMU. Among those family members interviewed, all ten expressed how their families' lives have been profoundly changed by the loss.

"She spent most of her adulthood depressed," said MaryAnn Haberle of her mother. MaryAnn attended the FMU with her brother, Robert, and they're representing their father, Lt. William Joseph Haberle, a radar operator on a B-29 bomber that was shot down during the Korean War. "The fact that he was missing, declared dead but never found, I think she never gave up hope," MaryAnn said.

There is solace in community, and though there may not be closure, at least there can be answers.

"It would feel good that he's brought home," said Robert. "We do have a place next to my mother where he would be interred...but it's obviously not going to change what happened."

When assured by a DPAA employee that the effort will continue, Jacqueline said, "That means so much."

It is for Jacqueline, Robert and MaryAnn, for Vera and all the families in attendance and all who have family members who never made it back that the DPAA soldiers on tirelessly, to keep the promise until they are home.

Annual Meeting

From June 25-26, more than 200 family members of service members missing from the Vietnam War came to Washington D.C., from around the country for the 45th Annual Meeting of The National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. At this meeting, representatives from the U.S. government's personnel accounting community briefed family members on the government's efforts to account for their loved ones, to include briefings on government policy, remains recovery operations and methods of identifying remains. During the annual meeting, family members also were provided the opportunity to discuss their specific case with analysts. Mr. Michael Linnington, who had just been appointed the first Director of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, addressed the league and the attending family members and briefed them on his priorities and vision for the new agency. Also, Mr. Scot Marciel, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, addressed the league to update them on policy efforts in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.