



DPAA Family/VSO Quarterly Call and Update
July 29, 2025, 3:00-4:00 PM EDT
Fulfilling Our Nation's Promise



Summary: Keeping the families of our missing personnel and veterans informed is a key component of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's (DPAA) mission. This update summarizes our efforts from the last quarter to account for our missing personnel.

Family Group/Veterans Service Organization Participants:

- Coalition of Families of Korea/Cold War POW/MIAs: Rick Downes
- Mission: POW-MIA: Dave Huffman
- National League of POW/MIA Families: Aaron Ahlstrom
- Sons and Daughters in Touch: Colleen Shine
- American Legion: Hanna Begun
- Disabled American Veterans: Justin Hart
- Jewish War Veterans: Ken Greenberg
- Korean War Veterans Association: Rocky Harder
- National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum: Pam Cain
- Special Operations Association/Special Forces Association: Wade Ishimoto
- Veterans of Foreign Wars: Brad Hazell
- Vietnam Veterans of America: Grant Coates

Director's Update (Mr. Kelly McKeague)

FY 2025 Resourcing. This year, our \$185.5 million (M) appropriation represents the second year of the 5-year budget increase that the Department of Defense (DoD) provided us in Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. You'll recall that our justification for this increase was expanded research, field work, and laboratory operations. Toward those ends, by the end of the FY, we will have deployed a total of 53 teams to the Indo-Pacific Region and 14 to Europe, and fielded 56 private partner missions.

FY 2026 Budget. Our share of the President's Budget Request to Congress, which is currently under review by the congressional committees, is \$171.3M for Operation and Maintenance. This is an 11% reduction from the planned \$191.4M. The reduction (which also included the loss of 26 civilian billets) was the result of budget adjustments that were made DoD-wide.

FY 2026 Impacts. The "must pay" expenses of labor, facilities, utilities, and services forced us to apply most of the reductions to our field operation activities. Instead of \$79.5M being planned for field work, \$57.5M is budgeted (a 38% decrease), and instead of 105 planned field missions, only 66 (59% reduction) can be funded; there will be 14 less Investigation Teams (ITs) in the Indo-Pacific Region and 14 less partner RTs. Vietnam War accounting is still the operational priority in FY 2026, so 70% of the Indo-Pacific budget remains allocated toward it.

DepMin Visit. We were privileged that during his trade negotiations visit to the US, Vietnam's Deputy Foreign Minister requested to meet with us; he had visited a Recovery Team (RT) a few

months prior. The Principal Deputy Director hosted the delegation which also included Vietnam's Ambassador to the US, 5 Vietnam War family members, and representatives from VFW, VVA, and Mission: POW-MIA. The families were able to share their personal stories and presented artifacts (including location information of a mass grave of Vietnamese soldiers). The Vietnamese officials reaffirmed Vietnam's long-standing commitment to the mission.

Europe Trip. I spoke at Ardennes American Cemetery (Belgium) for their Memorial Day Ceremony. They have been a great partner as we disinter the most Europe Unknowns from there (44 last year). Among the key engagements in Italy was a signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Culture that facilitates our activities in Italy (it was a 5-year effort); thanking the 31st Fighter Wing at Aviano AB who expediently generated 20 Airmen to augment the Recovery Team (RT) whose mission in Croatia doubled in size and time to excavate a P-38 crash site that was threatened by a road construction project; and visiting a partner RT working the complex recovery of 9 crewmen of a B-24 from a protected wetlands area.

SE Asia Trip. Among the successful outcomes from the June trip were these: commemorating significant anniversaries in Laos and Vietnam (for the latter, the 40th anniversary of the first RT in Vietnam predated the normalization of US-Vietnam diplomatic relations by 10 years); US Embassy partners in all 4 countries (Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand) reiterating continued advocacy for our mission; commitments from the host nations to fully support our pace and scope of operations; wider access to archives in Vietnam; and increased access to veterans there and in Laos.

New SEA. Our new Senior Enlisted Advisor, SGM Lauren Flores, is a career Mortuary Affairs Specialist who has served at multiple echelons of the US Army. This is her third posting in this mission, having previously served as a Team Sergeant (on 12 recoveries) and the NCO-in-Charge establishing our Worldwide Operations Center. Interestingly, her bachelor's from Penn State is in Anthropology, and post college, she was an archeological field and lab technician for two companies before enlisting.

Deputy Director for Operations Update (Captain Meghan L. Bodnar, USN)

Introduction. I have been here in HI at DPAA since the beginning of June, and I could not be more honored to be part of this team and mission. A 2003 Naval Academy graduate and career nuclear-trained surface warfare officer, I have spent my career mainly on warships, going back and forth between conventionally powered ships and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. I had command of the guided missile destroyer, USS *Gridley*, and most recently, served as the Reactor Officer of USS *Nimitz*. Ashore, I served on the Chief of Naval Operations' staff for multiple tours.

Operations Outlook. To date in FY 2025, we deployed 26 ITs and 30 RTs; these numbers do not include the 9 teams currently in the field across China, Germany, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands.

Cambodia BDD. Last week, I attended the US-Cambodia Bilateral Defense Dialogue at US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) where I expressed appreciation for Cambodia's longstanding cooperation. I also discussed our use of partners for Cambodian field operations and the progress of the program to train Cambodian archeologists. The US Defense Attaché advocated for Cambodia's

assistance in the recovery mission that has been delayed for over 10 years due to a border dispute with Laos. The senior Cambodian official shared that his father is still missing from their war with Vietnam.

Key Leader Engagements. Although I've only been here for two months, I was privileged to host visits by the family members of Navy CDR Edward Jacobs and Army SFC Anthony Brassfield. Since the last call, we hosted the US Ambassador to China, the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, and the INDOPACOM J5. These visits provide an opportunity to highlight and build support for our mission.

Regional Teams Overview

Europe-Mediterranean (EM) Region (LTC Joseph Smith, USA)

Field Operations. In Austria, an IT completed site surveys of 3 loss incidents, recovering evidence during the investigations. An IT in Bulgaria investigated a single complex incident involving the loss of an entire B-17 crew at multiple potential locations. In Slovenia, an IT conducted field-based research for 2 loss incidents. Recovery activities concluded at a C-47 site near Normandy, France, and at a P-38 site in Croatia. The Croatia mission, both larger and longer than a usual mission, successfully completed the excavation in advance of the site being lost to a road building project. Two RTs are operating in Germany through August.

Disinterment Operations. Our disinterment operations for FY 2025 kicked off in June as planned. To date, we have disinterred 38 Unknowns from 7 American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) Cemeteries in Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

Research and Analysis. In addition to leading or participating in the investigation missions discussed above, researchers provided Case Summaries Reviews (CSRs) at the Bellevue Family Member Update (FMU); supported future investigations through the creation of Investigation Proposals and participated in our planning process for upcoming investigations; prepared Historical Reports for recently announced or upcoming identifications; and conducted routine archival research and analysis in support of case progression.

Planned Operations. The conclusion of the above-mentioned Germany excavations will represent the last of the recovery operations by DPAA-led teams in the region for this FY. Three more DPAA-led ITs in France, Germany, and Italy will commence next month as well as 13 more disinterments of Unknowns from cemeteries in Belgium and France.

Some USRJC Progress. The US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs, to which DPAA provides direct support, has recently shown some progress. The Russian Side of the USRJC has agreed to restore access to the Russian Ministry of Defense's Central Archives in Moscow for one DPAA-funded contractor. This person will resume conducting research for us for the first time since December 2023. In addition, this contractor and two others will continue to conduct research in online databases, Russian language libraries, and other Russian language sources.

Indo-Pacific (IP) Region (Mr. Chris Phelps)

Field Operations. Over the last quarter, we executed a Joint Field Activity (JFA) in Laos consisting of 3 RTs. In Vietnam, we executed 4 RTs, one being an underwater one; 2 ITs that investigated 8 incidents; and 4 Pre-Deployment Site Surveys (PDSS). In the South Korea, we completed 1 recovery and was also able to execute an unscheduled IT by extending the mission for an additional 10 days. For World War II (WWII), we are currently executing 1 RT and 1 IT in the Solomon Islands and 2 RTs and 1 IT in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

Disinterment Operations. We conducted 5 disinterment missions at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP) totaling 32 Korean War Unknowns (part of Phase 6 of the Korean War Disinterment Project) and 8 WWII Unknowns (7 associated with the Makassar Cemetery/POW Camp in Indonesia and 1 associated with the Battle of Formosa).

Research and Analysis. Vietnam War: The team prepared and conducted 9 CSRs for the Bellevue FMU and 130 for the Vietnam War Annual Government Briefings (AGB). Researchers coordinated next steps on 570 individual cases at the Case Coordination Conference held prior to the AGB. Korean War: The team continued to build on foundational geographic and thematic research projects and field documentation relating to losses in South Korea, the DMZ, North Korea, and China. Researchers conducted 20 CSRs at the Bellevue FMU. Currently preparing for the Korean/Cold War AGB, they are writing and updating more than 170 Case Summaries. WWII: Researchers' engagement in Malaysia discussed collaboration with Malaysian academia and they completed a successful investigation in Indonesia. In addition to continuing foundational research projects throughout the Pacific, the team is preparing for the next WWII Case Coordination Conference.

Planned Field Operations. Next quarter, we have 1 JFA in Vietnam that is composed of 2 RTs, 1 RT-Light, 1 Underwater RT, 1 Partner Underwater IT, 1 PDSS, 1 IT-Light, and 1 IT-Host Nation (HN). For the JFA in Laos, there will be 3 RTs.

Planned Disinterments. Next quarter, we have 6 disinterment operations scheduled (weather dependent) at NMCP that will disinter 48 Korean War Unknowns from Phase 6 which is scheduled to be completed in November 2025.

China Investigation Mission and Archival Exchange. The first China mission of FY 2025 departed HI on July 9. Upon arrival, the team commenced surveys and interviews associated with 3 Korean War cases, then began dry screening and recovered possible osseous material at one site. They are investigating several areas in Liaoning Province. We are hopeful that the postponed Archival Exchange can be rescheduled for later this calendar year.

DNI Visit: During a several hours visit to Vietnam in June, the Director of National Intelligence spent almost 2 hours with our Detachment Team in Hanoi that consisted of an overview discussion of our mission, a tour of the Heritage Area and Ops Center, and commemoration at the memorial honoring the victims of the 2001 Mi-17 crash. She expressed appreciation for our mission and acknowledged having a better understanding all we are doing in Vietnam.

Partnerships and Innovation (Dr. Jesse Stephen)

Field Activities. Last quarter, we successfully completed 15 partner field missions in 8 countries: Austria, France, Philippines, Italy, Palau, PNG, Solomon Islands, and Denmark. At the B-24 crash site in Denmark, past recovery efforts resulted in 3 identifications, and we expect additional ones from our ongoing work. Currently, partner teams are active in Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Marshall Islands, Palau, PNG, and Poland. The PNG mission is a collaborative RT between the University of Wisconsin (their first in the region) and the University of PNG involving a PBJ crash site. During the remainder of this FY, we're deploying partners to 10 sites in Europe and 2 in the Indo Pacific Region. For the RT in Poland, the partner is being augmented by Army ROTC cadets, their professor, and an archaeology student from the University of Arizona.

Research. This past quarter, we increased the number of active research projects to 94. A new project was established with Project Recover to develop more research on losses on Chuuk Island. Additionally, we collaborated with IP researchers, Texas Tech University, Temple University, and the Henry Jackson Foundation on helicopter loss data collected by the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA). This project required computer science techniques to extract relevant data from the VHPA database and to organize it to help IP researchers progress cases.

Innovation. We currently have 12 active innovation studies, most of which are multi-year efforts. Our latest additions explore building capability and capacity to accomplish missions in the borderlands of India and automated georeferencing of historic aerial imagery to create finding aids. We are also wrapping up the FY 2025 Think Ticket cycle during which subject matter experts from across the Agency evaluated 30 submissions and identified the top 6 for potential action.

New Arrangements. We established new partnerships through signed Memoranda of Understanding with the German Association for the Recovery of Fallen in Eastern Europe (VBGO), IntelliMetrics Inc. Major Projects Foundation; American University in Rome; and the University of Arizona. Our total number of active partners is 116.

Scientific Analysis Update (Dr. John Byrd)

FY 2025 Identifications to Date

Total IDs = 171 newly-accounted-for (15 others are additional portions from previous IDs)

WWII = 119

|Korean War = 45

Vietnam War = 7

Accessions. Through the current quarter, 300 batches of evidence have been accessioned into our laboratory system, consisting of skeletal, dental, material evidence, and/or life support. The evidence originated from disinterments (213), DPAA field activities (36), partner activities (16), and unilateral turnovers (35). The distribution of evidence received by conflict is WWII (63%), Korean War (22%), and Vietnam War (15%).

Laboratory Assessment. The Laboratory underwent a reaccreditation assessment by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) National Accreditation Board (ANAB). The assessment

evaluated the competence of our laboratory and conformance with applicable accreditation requirements. Upon completion of the assessment activity, the Laboratory was found to be in compliance with more than 400 accreditation and internal requirements.

Vietnam War Identification Project. The VWIP Team is continuing its data audit to validate records, which includes quantifying identification metrics to better understand the quantity and quality of remains recovered from SE Asia to develop a predictive model of remains recovery from future field operations. Preliminary data analysis is complete. Field Forensic Reviews and a Joint Forensic Review (JFR) were performed at the conclusion of the last JFA, with another JFR conducted last week for significant evidence recovered from the underwater RT. The Laboratory has received 18 new accessions from Vietnam and 21 new accessions from Laos, including 12 unilateral turnovers from Stony Beach. Among the 7 IDs made this past quarter, 3 were from the Phou Pha Thi site in Laos.

Okinawa JFR. Earlier this month in Okinawa, we participated in a JFR with our Japanese counterparts who recovered remains along with American military artifacts. Stable isotope testing determined them to be more likely American, so they were accessioned into the Laboratory for further testing. This is the third set of remains turned over by the Japanese through this testing program; one was identified last year as a Marine Sgt Harold Weaver, missing from there.

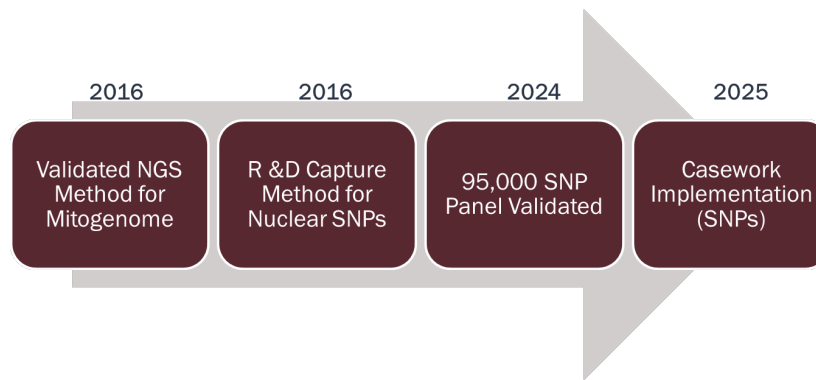
VNOSMP Training. Archaeological field methods training was provided to personnel from the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons RT-HN. Topics included excavation grid emplacement, excavation and screening techniques, site documentation, and reporting. The laboratory will continue to work with the VNOSMP to enhance their capabilities.

Korean War Identification Project. In the last quarter, KWIP made 19 IDs, including the 100th newly accounted for from the 2018 55-box turnover, Army 1LT William Hott. Six of these were made possible using AFDIL's new SNPs technology. To date, 750 unaccounted-for Service members have been identified from the project, with 275 coming from disinterments. The team is currently conducting analysis of Phase 6 disinterments, which commenced in late April.

New NE Lab. DPAA and US Army Corps of Engineers Omaha District are completing the Architect-Engineer selection process which will commence the full design effort for the replacement construction of the Nebraska Laboratory. The new lab will remain at Offutt AFB on property adjacent to a new Nebraska National Guard Readiness Center.

Armed Forces Medical Examiner System-Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory Update (Dr. Tim McMahon)

NGS Modern DNA Testing. Since the last update, there have been reports and discussions about Next Generation Sequencing methods and Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy (FIGG) and their ability to solve missing person or unsolved criminal cases. There have also been comments that the government is not using cutting-edge sciences to help bring our fallen heroes home.



The figure above shows that starting in 2016, AFDIL brought on the first NGS method for chemically treated and highly degraded samples. AFDIL is still the only accredited forensic laboratory with a NGS whole mitochondrial sequencing method that works with DPAA samples.

2016-2024 AFDIL working with Parabon, developed a Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) NGS method that will work well with chemically treated/highly damaged and non-chemically treated samples.

2025 - AFDIL became the first accredited forensic lab to have a SNP identification method online. This is a nuclear identification method as it provides an identification statistic that the DPAA can use to make an ID.

1. In 6 months, AFDIL tested 151 samples with a 95% success rate
2. Success rate is driven by the fact that we can now use the mtDNA results as a predictor. If a sample generates an mtDNA profile, it will work in SNPs.
3. Has supported 62 new IDs.

FIGG uses SNPs from an unknown sample to compare to SNPs contained in an ancestry database (i.e. GEDmatch, Family tree) that allows for law enforcement or humanitarian searches. In the news, these searches do not lead to an ID but provide an investigative lead to find an anchor individual by which to ultimately identify a viable reference for unknown human remains or the perpetrator of an unsolved crime. The reference still needs to collect and test using an accredited identification test (i.e. short tandem repeat).

1. AFDIL has tried commercial FIGG kits and they do not work with DPAA samples Because there is no pristine human DNA. DPAA samples are a combination of degraded human DNA, bacterial, fungal and parasitic DNA, which inhibits results. AFDIL uses a method to capture the human DNA.
2. AFDIL is working on a functional FIGG workflow that will work with DPAA samples
3. AFDIL has FRS database and capabilities to utilize mtDNA, auSTR, YSTR, and SNP testing so FIGG may not be needed.
4. FIGG for DPAA samples – maybe needed in specific instances (i.e. adoptions, paternity issues, or cannot find a living relative).

AFDIL is constantly assessing scientific breakthroughs in all fields related to DNA (i.e. viral, medical, archaeological) to see what new methods can be adopted to aid in bringing our fallen service members home.

Through 3rd Quarter (October-June)* Capitalizing on the FY 2024 growth, we continued to sustain a 20% increase in the total number of samples reported to DPAA over FY 2024. This increase equates to reporting out over 400 DNA analyses per month. We are looking to sustain this throughput for the remainder of the FY.

FY 2025 DNA testing summary as of 30 June 2025.

1. DNA Profile Results Reported: 3,733 (averaged 415 analysis per month)
2. Total casework NGS results (SNP and mtDNA): 1,451 samples (145 samples per month)
 - i. NGS casework mtDNA Genome: 1,179 (October -July)
 - ii. NGS SNP results: 151 samples (January-July)
 - iii. Currently supporting 62 new IDs
3. First-time Named Believed-to-Be (BTB) supporting new IDs: 199 (October -July)
 - i. Total BTB Reports (first time + additional samples): 343 (October -July)
4. Autosomal Short Tandem Repeat (auSTR) profiles – 862 (October -July)
5. Y Chromosome STR testing (YSTR) – 552 (October -July)

* We close monthly metrics on the last working day of each month and collate them all by the 15th of the next month.

Outreach and Communications (Mrs. Jennifer Nasarenko)

Family Member Updates. On May 3, we held an in-person FMU in Bellevue, WA, which included 254 family members (representing 132 cases) of whom 189 were first-time attendees (74%). The event was livestreamed on our DPAA Website as well as our social media sites; the archived videos can be found at www.dpaa.mil/Livestreams. The led outreach engagements prior to the FMU which included office calls with staffers from both Senator Cantwell and Senator Murray offices. She also met with the Director of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, briefings were presented to Alaska Air employees and Airmen from the 62nd Airlift Wing at Joint Base Lewis McChord. The next FMU will be on November 15 in Dover, DE.

Memorial Day Engagements: This year, 23 DPAA personnel fanned out across 18 states to provide remarks at 29 Memorial Day commemorations. Each one represented the Agency with professionalism and educated new audiences about our mission to bring home the Nation's missing heroes and provide answers to their families.

2025 Vietnam War AGB. The Vietnam War AGB was held in Omaha, NE, June 26-27, the first time it has been held outside of the Washington, DC metro area. It was a resounding success with 223 family members (representing 114 cases) attending of whom 55 (25%) were first-time attendees. The format was modified to be a conversation with the families rather than formal briefings and more than 200 families took tours of the DPAA Lab at Offutt AFB. They also attended a dinner followed by a beautiful sunset tour of Nebraska's new Vietnam War Memorial.

VSO Summer Conferences. The Agency was privileged to support the Military Order of the Purple Heart conference in Reno earlier this month, and will likewise do so for the Vietnam Veterans of America in New Orleans, August 5-9; Disabled American Veterans in Las Vegas, August 9-12; Veterans of Foreign Wars in Columbus, OH, August 9-13; Vietnam War Helicopters Association in St. Louis, August 20-23; and American Legion in Tampa, August 22-28. At each convention, a small team of DPAA personnel man booths to discuss the mission, answer questions, and hand out informational material to the attending VSO members.

Korean/Cold War AGB. The Korean/Cold War AGB will be held in Arlington, VA, August 7-8, with 408 Gold Star family members, representing 213 cases, registered to attend. Additionally, 48 families have signed up to receive an updated case summary for their respective loved one, but they will not be attending.

Public Affairs. We continue to improve our coverage of the DPAA mission, publishing 15 articles since our last update. These stories highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperation with the countries we operate in; the families and their connections to the mission; and our DPAA personnel and their dedication to the mission and the families. We continued to push DPAA messaging through a multitude of media engagements at local, national, and international levels. We published more than 320 photos and videos; pushed 79 press releases of IDs; and answered 30 media queries. Also, we have improved our social media presence, posting across multiple platforms nearly 300 times, amplifying DPAA messaging and reaching hundreds of thousands of people with millions of views.

News Articles of Note.

Washington Times - [Letter to the editor: U.S. still committed to bringing home Vietnam War servicemen remains](#)

Stars and Stripes - [DOD agency IDs remains of 3 airmen killed at secret Laos radar site in 1968](#)

DPAA - [Keeping the flame of hope burning; WWII lighter reunited with MIA Family](#)

Indiana Gazette - [Defense Department agency credits IUP class with finding remains of WWII pilot](#)

DPAA - [A Room for Closure: Inside DPAA's Sacred Space](#)

Q&A Session

Coalition of Families of Korea/Cold War POW/MIAs: *We would like to request reinstatement of the old Korean War Fact Sheet with an easy drop-down format.*

Answer: This Fact Sheet was converted from a PDF to enable automated updates. We acknowledge it's not as convenient and will request our webmaster develop a single drop-down that compiles the key Korean War information.

Does DPAA possess site data on Chinese mass-loss locations in the DPRK that can be used to encourage multinational recovery efforts?

Answer: The locations of Chinese losses in North Korea are known to us and likely known to the Chinese. Whether or not this information would sway DPRK to cooperate and resume joint recovery operations is unlikely.

Is it true that original records of the Chinese POW Camp archives were transferred to the DPRK?

Answer: We are not aware of the disposition of these camp records, but during our next Archival Exchange with the PRC, we will pose this question as well as any interest in trilateral cooperation with ROK, as an initial step.

Mission: POW-MIA: *We do not have a specific question but would like to compliment DPAA on the format of the Vietnam War AGB this year and the two-person limit on third-party attendees during CSRs. We would like to point out the Veterans Day parade in Virginia Beach this year with an expected 10,000 attendees.*

Comment: Thank you to Mission: POW-MIA for your well-received Operation H.E.A.R.T. presentation at the AGB.

National League of POW/MIA Families: *We would like to inquire further on the issue of expanded access to Vietnamese federal archives and whether provincial collections are included in this effort?*

Answer: A new Vietnamese law mandates much improved transparency across all federal archives. We are not sure how it applies to provincial collections but will ask. We were encouraged by this and the willingness of senior archives leaders in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City who committed to providing DPAA personnel with on-demand access.

Sons and Daughters in Touch: *We too would like to compliment the format of the Vietnam War AGB this year, but we would like to request the third-party limit on CSRs have exceptions.*

Answer: We believe policy on the third-party limits in CSRs is important to sustain.

Regarding the 26 civilian billets that will be cut, how many will be from the Vietnam War effort?

Answer: This reduction is not tied to specific billets or missions and will occur via normal attrition (as civilians retire, depart, etc.)

Who makes up the contractor team that works in Russia?

Answer: Three DPAA contract researchers in Russia have been working there since 2017. Prior to that, these same individuals were locally employed staff at the U.S. Embassy performing research for us. One of them works in the Russian Ministry of Defense Archives, the others work remotely.

How much does the VNOSMP training cost and who covers that cost?

Answer: The weeklong training that three DPAA staff members recently provided costs only a few thousand dollars (their travel and per diem) and is funded by DPAA.

Disabled American Veterans: *We do not have any questions but echo the positive comments on this year's Vietnam War AGB and thank you for letting us support it.*

Answer: Thank you to DAV for your sponsorship at the AGB, participation in the VSO panel, and the presence of State DAV leaders throughout the two-day event.

Korean War Veterans Association: *We applaud the recent Korean War identifications, but we want to emphasize the need for renewed access to the DPRK to bring home the 5,300 remains still there, specifically those remains already held by the DPRK. We echo the request to restoring the Korean War Fact Sheet.*

Answer: We could not agree more with the need to regain access to North Korea, but they remain singularly uncooperative. Evident with the 2018 turnover of 55 boxes of remains, DPRK has been storing remains of U.S. Service members. We continue to promote this mission being humanitarian in nature, opening a channel of communications, and serving as a tool of engagement.

National POW/MIA Memorial & Museum: *Regarding the 26 civilian billets, can these losses be made up with military personnel, interns, or volunteers?*

Answer: DoD rules prohibit using alternatives to replace civilian reductions. Again, the cuts will be from attrition, and we will mitigate, to the fullest extent possible, operational impacts of the losses

Special Operations Association / Special Forces Association: *I would like to inquire on the status of a proposal we sent regarding UXO-detection technology?*

Answer: We will review this proposal and provide feedback.

Do you have details yet on the Pentagon's ceremony for POW/MIA Recognition Day?

Answer: We do not yet have details on the Pentagon Ceremony, other than it being on Friday, September 19. We are meeting with DoD Protocol next week to begin planning.

Does DPAA have the linguistic capability to take advantage of the expanded Vietnamese archival research?

Answer: We believe we have sufficient language capability both in-house as well as other translation resources that we already use (e.g., short-term augmentees and Air Force linguists that already assist us on specific projects). We will also assess establishing partnerships with universities in Vietnam to assist these efforts.

Veterans of Foreign Wars: *Does DPAA have full access to a commercial ancestry service?*

Answer: We have had an active arrangement with Ancestry.com and are discussing ways to increase collaboration.

Vietnam Veterans of America: *We would like to suggest better clarifying the differences between the press releases on new identifications.*

Answer: We agree the two-part (initial identification and after the family notification) press releases are confusing. We are revamping the process and the releases to make them clearer.

Also, can the VVA be added to DPAA's public affairs distribution list?

Answer: Absolutely.