



DPAA Families/VSO Quarterly Call and Update Notes
Thursday January 28, 2021, 2:00 PM
'Fulfilling Our Nation's Promise'



Summary: Keeping the families of our missing as well as veterans informed is a primary objective of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency's (DPAA) mission. This update is intended to provide an overview of efforts during the previous quarter to account for our missing.

Family Group-Veterans Service Organization Participants:

- American Legion: Mr. Jason Keller
- Coalition of Families: Mr. Rick Downes
- Disabled American Veterans: Mr. Vincent Darcangelo
- Honor Release Return, Inc.: Mr. Moe Moyer
- Korea-Cold War Families of the Missing: Ms. Sherra Basham
- Korean War POW/MIA Network: Mr. John Zimmerlee
- Korean War Veterans Association: Mr. Rocky Harder
- National League of POW/MIA Families: Mrs. Ann Mills Griffiths
- Special Operations Association: Mr. Mike Taylor
- Vietnam Veterans of America: Mr. Grant Coates
- World War II Families for the Return of the Missing: Ms. Mary Ann Reitano

The agenda includes:

- Director Update (Mr. Kelly McKeague)
- Deputy Director for Operations Update (RDML Darius Banaji); Operational Update (Euro-Med, COL Jon Lust/Indo-Pac, Col Brian Peterson)
- Partnerships and Innovations Update (Dr. Tom Holland)
- Scientific Analysis Update (Dr. John Byrd)
- Armed Forces Medical Examiner System (AFMES) Update (Dr. Tim McMahon)
- Outreach and Communications Update (Mr. Todd Livick)
- Questions & Answers

Also on the call were Mrs. Jennifer Nasarenko, Policy & Plans Deputy Director, and Mr. Johnie Webb, Outreach & Communications Deputy Director.

Director's Update

Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Budget. Congress passed, and the President signed into law, the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021. In addition to our budget request of \$130 million (M), we received two Congressional Program Increases - a department reduction restoration of \$20M and an unspecified increase of \$5M, bringing this year's budget to a little under \$155M.

COVID-19 Impacts. Much like this pandemic continues to adversely affect aspects of your organization, DPAA and our noble mission have not been spared. While local conditions have not enabled us to increase our in-office numbers from about 20%, we continue to utilize work scheduling alternatives and virtual technologies to stay connected. Despite adhering to strict health and safety protocols, we have had several members contract COVID-19, but fortunately all recovered. DPAA personnel who are assigned to future planned missions have been appropriately prioritized for the vaccine and most have been administered the first shot.

Virtual Archival Exchange. Earlier this week, DPAA researchers conducted a first-ever Virtual Archival Exchange with their Chinese counterparts at the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Archives Department. Considering recent geopolitical tension, this event across two half-days, was a rare opportunity to seek new information, discuss previous requests, and to raise possible field investigations in the coming year. There were 15 cases specifically discussed, covering World War II (WWII), the Korean War, Cold War, and the Vietnam War. We will continue to engage at every opportunity and look forward to executing activities in China once COVID restrictions have been relaxed.

Annual Accounting Community Meeting. At the end of February, DPAA will virtually host the Annual Accounting Community meeting. Stakeholders from across the Department of Defense (DoD) and non-DoD partners like the Department of Veterans Affairs meet to review Past Conflict Personnel Accounting policies, initiatives, projects, and other topics of interest that affect the mission and community as a whole.

DPAA Academy. Last week, we started our second virtual DPAA Academy, which provides us the means with which to comprehensively and efficiently familiarize and educate private partners on our mission and practices. Eight individuals from six partner organizations will hear from DPAA subject matter experts throughout the 2-week session.

DPAA Members Recognized. Marine Captain Matthew Ward, former Team Leader and Military Assistant, was selected as the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Policy) Action Officer of the Year, after competing against both military and civilian peers. Two of our Army Mortuary Affairs NCOs – Master Sergeant Anthony Worsley and previously assigned Master Sergeant Jose NunezGomez – were selected for promotion to Sergeant Major. Dr. John Byrd, our Lab Director, received a medal from the Republic of Korea (ROK) President in recognition for his contributions to the US-ROK alliance.

Deputy Director for Operations (DDO) Update

Contingency Operations Planning. As we kick off 2021 and are into our second quarter of the FY, we remain optimistic by the tremendous efforts of our team in planning, resourcing, and training which have enabled “the start” of some missions. Since our last update, teams from our Regional Directorates, partners, and counterpart nations conducted terrestrial and underwater investigation and recovery missions, and disinterments. Looking forward, we will continue with the same level of rigor and determination to safely conduct missions, as every opportunity arises with the lifting of partner nation access restrictions. Three of our Staff Directors will highlight these active and upcoming missions.

Force Health Protection Plan. In our last two updates, we highlighted the Force Health Protection (FHP) Plan we developed to support the resumption of organic and partner field missions during the global pandemic. We have effectively put this plan into action and will continue to learn and adapt. A few points to note: prior to any missions, all our personnel are tested for and can only depart if they receive a negative COVID-19 test; in addition, upon arrival to our partner nations, our teams will quarantine for 14 days and take another COVID test prior to start of the mission: in addition, we have just started vaccinating volunteering DPAA personnel who plan to go on field missions.

Virtual Technical Talks. To follow up my discussion at our last VSO call, on November 6, we conducted an extremely productive and engaging virtual Tech Talk with the Kingdom of Cambodia (KOC) POW/MIA Committee, led by Mr. Lapresse; U.S. Ambassador Murphy also participated. Our discussions focused on country access, our FHP guidance, and the feasibility of resuming Joint Field Activities (JFAs). Both Mr. Lapresse and AMB Murphy were optimistic conditions will support our 2021 operations and emphasized their willingness to assist us in our efforts.

Air Carrier Safety Assessments. In Southeast Asia countries where our teams' movement via commercial helicopters is critical, it is important that we meet requirements that ensure US passenger and cargo safety. Fulfilling entry and health protocols, our team successfully assessed the quality control, compliance, and safety methods of companies in Laos and Vietnam. We are now processing the approvals for which these helicopters can be utilized.

Vietnam Unilateral Activity. As we look back at 2020 and the extent of not being able to execute organic and partner activities, our counterparts with the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP) have over the past year conducted three unilateral JFAs, excavating 10 sites and investigating 78 cases. Their efforts have resulted in the recovery of possible osseous remains, material evidence, and life support equipment. The VNOSMP efforts highlight the strong bilateral cooperation on this mission, and the trust and collaboration between our governments.

Collaboration with MAKRI. On December 16, I spoke with Director Heo of the ROK's Ministry of National Defense's Killed in Action Recovery and Identification (MAKRI), to discuss how DPAA and MAKRI should continue to improve our collective efforts to recover and repatriate the remains of our fallen service members from the Korean War. Topics included how best to enable DPAA historians to collaborate in MAKRI's operational planning processes, and the possibility of conducting a tailored "Partner Academy" for members of MAKRI. Of note, we are requesting MAKRI send a scientist in early 2021 to conduct DNA sampling to support the future repatriation of ROK remains.

Cabanatuan Interment. Lastly, tomorrow, January 29, Navy Chief Machinist's Mate Lada Smisek will be interred in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP). Captured on Corregidor Island following the American surrender of May 6, 1942, Chief Smisek was interned at the Cabanatuan Prisoner of War Camp in the Philippines, where he died on September 28, 1942. His remains were disinterred from the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial (MACM) in 2016, and identified by DPAA on August 19, 2019. It will be my distinct honor to serve as the senior Department of the Navy representative at this ceremony.

Regional Teams Overview

Europe-Mediterranean (EM) Region

Field Operations. We conducted no field operations since the October update due to the normal reduction in activities during the winter months in Europe, and in response to the increase in COVID numbers both here in the U.S. and in Europe.

Disinterment Operations. We conducted no additional disinterment operations in the first quarter after completing the 11 disinterments from Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Italy 22-29 October, due to the normal pause in operations during the winter months at our primary cemeteries.

Planned Field Operations. We continue deliberate planning to conduct operations in late March, with recoveries in Austria and Belgium, an investigation of a potential mass burial site in Germany, and research at the Army War College in Carlisle, PA. Despite the significant challenges, we remain poised to execute a total of three recovery missions and six robust investigation missions from March to September, if conditions allow.

Planned Disinterment Operations. Although no disinterments are scheduled through March, we anticipate resuming disinterments in late April with planned operations at 11 different cemeteries in the U.S. and Europe. Our research efforts also continue to produce more proposals linked to cemeteries such as Sicily-Rome, Florence, Rhône, and North Africa, where milder climates will enable us to conduct year-round disinterment operations.

US–Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) Update. In November, Russian President Putin signed Presidential Decree 723 and filled long-standing vacancies on the Russian Side of the Commission. The newly appointed Russian commissioners consist of currently serving officials within Russian security services and the Armed Forces General Staff, as well as legislators from the Duma and Federation Council. This important action highlights the Russian Government’s continuing commitment to the USRJC, and sets the stage for the two Sides to renew its work in earnest, once pandemic-related conditions permit. Earlier this month, we also received permission and have resumed research in the Russian Ministry of Defense Archives, after a nine-month suspension due to COVID-related restrictions at the facility. Regular calls between the U.S. and Russian Co-chairmen continue to maintain communication between the Sides; support ongoing archival research and planning for the previously postponed recovery mission at a cemetery near Vladivostok, Russia, which may correlate to a 1951 US Navy aircraft Cold War loss; and developing options for virtual Working Group Technical Talks and conducting the 23rd Plenum as soon as conditions allow.

Indo-Pacific (IP) Region

Field Operations. Despite last-minute access restrictions that prevented a joint DPAA-US Navy team from executing Underwater Recovery and Site Survey missions off the north coast of Guadalcanal, the team successfully shifted to their alternate underwater investigation sites off the coast of Guam 28 October–5 December. Surveying a number of sites associated with B-29 losses, the team was able to rule out a number of possible locations to narrow future search areas, gather

valuable hydrographic data to aid future Guam mission planning, and perform a terrestrial aircraft loss survey with local National Park Service assistance.

From 16 October to 5 December, the Government of Vietnam once again deployed U.S.-trained unilateral teams for a third consecutive JFA. Three Vietnamese Recovery Teams (RT) and one Advanced Work Investigation Team (IT) excavated four incidents and investigated 17 incidents, respectively.

In Laos, DPAA's Detachment and DIA Stony Beach conducted investigation efforts in late September and early November. The Lao Office of the Prime Minister has restricted access to the country by suspending all charter flights and visa approvals for countries with active COVID transmissions through January 2021. This caused the cancellation of the second quarter JFA, originally planned for mid-January to mid-February. The detachment is working with the Lao Government in an effort to resume operations in February and possibly reschedule cancelled RTs/ITs toward the end of the FY.

In Cambodia, a DPAA RT is in the middle of their 14-day quarantine and is scheduled to conduct field operations 9 February-23 March, after receiving support from the US Embassy and permissions from the Cambodian Government.

Research and Analysis. IP conducted a virtual Korea Case Coordination Conference in October. This conference focused on field operations planning for 2021-2023, reviewing ground and air cases for investigation and recovery in South Korea and the Demilitarized Zone. The conference participants also generated research products provided to MAKRI for their planned operations at US loss sites.

In November, WWII researchers conducted a Case Coordination Conference to establish research and investigation goals for the next few years. They also began preparing briefing videos to support virtual Family Member Updates (FMU) during FY 2021, and to post on the DPAA websites.

IP conducted its annual coordination meeting with MAKRI virtually on 1 December. We exchanged case information, coordinated for 2021 missions, and established research and operational priorities. They wrapped up their Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) operations in November and plan to resume operations in April. IP will join MAKRI for joint IT work 29 March–15 May in the DMZ vicinity of Arrowhead Hill followed by the first joint RT operation 13-31 May.

Southeast Asia researchers conducted a virtual Case Coordination Conference in late January. This event – the first time we have ever executed a Southeast Asia Case Coordination Conference virtually – included analysts and researchers from DPAA locations in VA, HI, OH, Vietnam, and Laos, as well those from Stony Beach. The conference focused on field operations and investigation planning for 2021-2023, and reviewed the next steps for over 100 ground and air cases.

Disinterment Operations. IP conducted 81 disinterments since October - 36 Unknowns were disinterred from NMCP as part of the Korean War Identification Project Phase 3, and 45 Unknowns were disinterred from MACM. The December Manila disinterment mission was the largest ever conducted by DPAA in the Philippines.

Planned Field Operations. In Vietnam, after close coordination with Vietnamese officials and the US Embassy, DPAA is poised to resume field operations during the month of February and has received permissions from the Vietnamese government to conduct a full JFA with three terrestrial and one underwater recovery teams, and investigative operations. The teams will fulfill all required health and safety protocols.

In Laos, DPAA is planning to resume field operations during the month of February. We are currently awaiting permission from the Lao Government to conduct a full JFA in February with three RTs and an IT.

IP is also planning an IT mission in Thailand 21 April–5 May.

Planned Disinterment Operations. Disinterment of 55 WWII Unknowns from the MACM is planned as soon as DPAA personnel are authorized access to the Philippines due to COVID restrictions. This mission will complete operations in Manila for this year. NMCP will continue disinterments averaging 16 per month to complete Phase 3 of the Korean War Identification Project this year; WWII disinterments will occur as they are approved and will be interspersed with the Korea project.

Partnerships and Innovation (PI) Update

PI continues to find work-arounds in this strange time. We are working with US and foreign institutions to push partner teams to the field, whenever we can do so safely and when it's permitted by the host nation. Despite the pandemic, the agency was able to conduct both of the partner missions that we had planned this past fall. In both instances, DPAA partnered with foreign-based organizations that were able to travel in-country or in the region despite stringent COVID-19 protocols (underwater recovery off the coast of Croatia conducted by the University of Lund [Sweden] and an underwater survey of a lake in Germany by a German archaeological association). Our intent is to expand our growing list of foreign-based partnerships in FY21. It is worth also noting that one of these partners also submitted documentation offering progression for several losses, as a result of independently conducted field activities without any costs charged to DPAA.

In addition to the partner field missions, PI, worked with the partners on 24 research projects during the first quarter. These projects were conducted through our Hub & Spoke Program that involves major military history programs around the country. As of the end of last year, we've expanded from 8 to 13 institutions. These consist of Ohio State, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, University of Southern Mississippi, George Mason University, University of Wisconsin, East Carolina University, Brigham Young University, University of Nebraska, Temple, University of Delaware, John Brown University, and the National WWII Museum. The research results that are coming out of these partnerships include information and analysis that DPAA staff can then use in further developing of cases from WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Other partner institutions, not necessarily in the Hub & Spoke program, also produced unilateral research and analytical products that will assist the agency.

PI continued to develop several major, multi-year projects that look to explore new technologies, techniques—such as underwater autonomous vehicles and the use of artificial intelligence/machine learning—as well as procedures for both desk-based research and field activities related to our mission. These initiatives will provide for multiple field missions in FY21, travel permitting, as well as research on losses and possible new-to-DPAA equipment for future use.

Scientific Analysis (SA) Update

The DPAA Laboratory System continued its balanced lab work/telework plan to maintain progress on identifications while mitigating risks due to COVID-19.

Accreditation. In November, the laboratory hosted ANAB for an accreditation surveillance visit, which included a scope expansion for isotope testing. The DPAA Laboratory performed successfully and has added isotope testing to our accreditation scope. We are the only laboratory in the world to be accredited for forensic applications of isotope testing. All other aspects of isotope testing were completed in FY20 under the new accreditation discipline called Human Geographic Profiling.

USS *Oklahoma* Project Update. In January 2021, 297 USS *Oklahoma* service members have been identified from the 394 unaccounted-for when the first disinterment occurred in 2003. To date, DPAA has accounted for 75% of the total missing population. In the first quarter of FY21, we had 26 new identifications, 12 of which were due to new DNA Family Reference Samples (FRS) obtained by the Navy, and 33 new cases have been added to the Cases for Identification list (14 are from new FRS). Additionally, the project has completed the last Reports of Segregation and the final Forensic Anthropology Reports have been assigned, marking the final stages of the USS *Oklahoma* Project.

FY2021 Identifications

Total IDs = 41 of newly-accounted-for (plus 88 of additional portions—all WWII)

WWII = 38 newly-accounted-for

Korean War = 3 newly accounted-for

Vietnam War = 0

AFMES-AFDIL Update

Budget. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of Congressman Chris Pappas and others who were instrumental in getting a \$4M program increase for AFMES-AFDIL included in the recently passed Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021. The 4M is single year money and will be used in the purchase of reagents and to replace end of life equipment supporting the past accounting mission.

FY21 Past Accounting Goals. Maintain current goal of reporting out 4,400 DNA analysis for FY21, which is approximately 366 DNA analysis per month. Increase the number of staff trained for Next Generation Sequencing (NGS). This is being driven by an increase in the number of disinterments and highly degraded samples requiring NGS testing. Increase NGS throughput:

- Current instruments can run 6 samples per run; purchased four new instruments that will allow 24 samples per run.

- Currently finished certification testing and writing up the certification report and submitted to senior staff for review.
- Working on developing the standard operating procedures, training staff, publishing the results, and modifying the computer monitoring system.

Long-term Projects. Working with a scientist in the ancient DNA field (Neanderthal era) to assist with modifications to how AFMES-AFDIL can recover more DNA from highly challenged samples. Preliminary testing using a modification of AFMES-AFDIL procedure and the Danby procedure have demonstrated a significant increase in sequencing and STR results.

Outreach and Communications

FY2020 Year in Review. In step with the commitment DoD places on the POW/MIA mission, DPAA has published its FY2020 Year in Review, which highlights a number of accomplishments despite adverse COVID-19 impacts. We are in the process of mailing out this magazine to your organizations. It can also be reviewed on our website:

<https://www.dpaa.mil/Portals/85/YiR%202020%20Web.pdf>

Virtual Family Member Update (FMU). On November 7, the Agency hosted the first-ever virtual FMU for 250 family members in a 350-mile radius of Little Rock, AR; they represented 149 cases of missing personnel. U.S. Senator Boozman submitted a pre-recorded message that opened the FMU. Throughout the day, DPAA analysts/historians and Service Casualty Officers individually met with family members and conducted 89 briefings virtually. The DPAA Facebook livestream post of the event has reached over 6,100 users with over 2,800 views, and an article highlighting the virtual FMU is at <https://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/Recent-News-Stories/Article/2409987/dpaa-conducts-first-ever-virtual-fmu/>

Future FMUs. The Miami, FL FMU, planned for January 23, was cancelled and will be rescheduled in FY2022. We will host a second virtual FMU on February 20 connecting with families of the missing and other key stakeholders within a 350-mile radius of Los Angeles as well as the state of Hawaii. Similar to Little Rock, case summary updates/one-on-ones will be provided virtually for requesting families.

WWII Video Series. As DPAA better facilitates contact and dialogue with WWII families, we are beginning to formulate and tape a set of videos of WWII battles/operations that will be posted on the Agency website. These 20-minute briefings will outline the overall historic perspective of the battle/operation and provide a progress update of efforts to account for those missing. Besides educating family members and the public, these videos will also serve as a means of outreach to highlight the necessary FRS.

Film Honoring 200th USS OK ID: The Department of Veterans Affairs produced a film honoring Navy Fireman 1st Class Billy J. Johnson of Kentucky. Accounted for in February 2019 by our Offutt Lab team, he was the 200th service member to be identified from the USS Oklahoma. The

14 minute film can viewed at [National Cemetery Administration \(NCA\) U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs - How a Sailor Got His Name Back \(Full Film\) | Facebook](#).

DOD in Photos: 2020: One of our photographers, Air Force Staff Sergeant Apryl Hall, had one of her photos selected for the "DOD in Photos: 2020" collection. Only 90 photos were chosen for this worldwide montage (SSgt Hall's is #56), which is on the DoD Website and can be viewed at: https://www.defense.gov/Experience/DOD-in-Photos-2020/fbclid/IwAR3-5NJDk_CEUxpq_1MYP6g9-j8f08Kqe0kDMMg9sbU3Wyyo8pP-aMbUsz0

Media Engagements of Note

Offutt Air Force Base lab brings closure to Pearl Harbor families
<https://news.yahoo.com/offutt-air-force-lab-brings-222455751.html>
Reach: 70M

An improved machine learning application for the integration of record systems for missing US service members
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s41060-020-00236-y>
Reach: 23M

Unidentified GIs Who Died in Philippines Returned to Hawaii (via U.S. News & World Report)
[Unidentified GIs Who Died in Philippines Returned to Hawaii | Hawaii News | US News](#)
Reach: 35M

Remains of 36 more Korean War service members identified in over a year
<https://www.breitbart.com/news/remains-of-36-more-korean-war-service-members-identified-in-over-a-year/z>
Reach: 9M

Bringing Soldiers Home (via the Cal State Fullerton Titan)
[Bringing Soldiers Home \(via the Cal State Fullerton Titan\) > Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency > In The News \(dpaa.mil\)](#)
Reach: 50K

Questions & Answers

American Legion: With the new strain of COVID that has made its way to Vietnam, will that throw a wrench into future plans?

Answer: We were notified today about a localized COVID outbreak near our planned underwater site. As such, we are adjusting our plan and will conduct an underwater recovery at an alternative site. We remain optimistic the terrestrial missions will remain on track and that we will be able to work around any issues that do develop. We have a robust set of protocols and mitigations in the preparatory and mission execution phases to ensure the health and safety of our personnel and those

in the host nation. We have shared our plan and received positive feedback from both partner nation counterparts and US Embassy leaders.

Collation of Families: For Korean War identifications, more families are showing interest in knowing where the IDs came from --- please designate where they come from. At one point, there was confusion on the POW Camps and who controlled them. Has it been determined who controlled them and is there any knowledge on POW Camp records?

Answer: We will specify in our releases where the accounted-for individual was lost. In terms of the question, the North Koreans controlled US POWs and administered the camps from July 1950 to October 1951 (with respect to the early part of the war, largely 24th Infantry Division POWs). That group was taken over by the Chinese in October 1951. They also controlled US POWs and POW Camps for those captured from the Chosin/Kuryong/Chongchon River areas (and the later 1951-53 US POWs) from January 1951 until the Operation BIG SWITCH releases in the summer of 1953. After capture in November and December 1950, some of the Chosin/Kuryong/Chongchon River POWs were marched on routes guarded by North Koreans.

In the 2008 DPMO/PLA Archives base Memorandum of Agreement for archival research, we included a standing request for Korean War POW Camp records collections. The PLA has stated in most of the annual meetings that those records remain classified or are subject to third party approvals with the North Koreans.

Korea-Cold War Families: Regarding the Singapore Summit agreement, is it over in terms of getting back into North Korea? When might you return to full time work in the office vice teleworking?

Answer: After the Singapore Summit, North Korea returned the 55 boxes of remains. They are still undergoing analysis and 72 US personnel have been identified to date, and we repatriated 80 to South Korea. While the Secretary of State separated us from the denuclearization negotiations, and we conducted two face-to-face meetings and two messages were passed, unfortunately, the Korean People's Army stopped talking to us in March 2019. We stopped trying to engage because it was clear that although the US separated the issues, they inextricably linked them and would not move on our issue because the US was not moving on sanctions relief. It is unknown how the new administration will handle North Korea. North Korea did sign a Comprehensive Military Agreement with the ROK, in which one element was the demining and remains recovery in the DMZ. While North Korea has done nothing, South Korea has been very active and successful at Arrowhead Ridge. When COVID conditions allow, we are prepared to join them later this FY.

DPAA's in-office posture all depends on the facility location and positivity rate in that area. We are hopeful that improving conditions and vaccinations will enable us to increase our in-office numbers. Regardless, work and results are continuing through creative scheduling and remote connectivity.

Korean War POW/MIA Network: For most who went missing during the war, we learn most from the debriefing reports; amazed they have not been copied and put on your website; that would be the most important information you could pass to the families.

Answer: The National Archives and Records Administration is the Release Authority for these debriefs, not DPAA. The majority of Korean War debriefs are available to private researchers at

the National Archives; some with sensitive information are withheld. Our researchers do have access to these debriefs, and we have been permitted to extract relevant information where missing service members were reported, and this information has been added to the corresponding Case Summary that is provided to the family.

National League of Families: For material evidence (ME)/ personal effects (PE), are those holdings re-reviewed and are the family members made aware of them? Then are they regularly re-reviewed when you get new information? Can the requested policy be published so families know the policy?

Answer: When we can attribute PE/ME to a service member we notify the Service Casualty Office, who then notify the family, and we return the item to them. There are no Vietnam War PE/ME in the Lab that can be attributed to a specific service member.

We did a 100% scrub around 2019 for both the Korean War and Vietnam War ME/PE. We are sensitive to new information and do reevaluate any association of the items.

We will work to have an overview of the process and will post it on our website.