



DPAA Families/VSO Quarterly Call and Update Notes
Thursday October 29, 2020, 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:

- Coalition of Families
- Disabled American Veterans
- Honor Release Return, Inc.
- Jewish War Veterans of America
- Korea-Cold War Families of the Missing
- National League of POW/MIA Families
- Special Operations Association
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Vietnam Veterans of America

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 McMahan)
- Outreach and Communications Update (Mr. Todd Livick)
- Questions & Answers

Also on the call were Mr. Brian Pearl and Mrs. Jennifer Nasarenko from Policy & Plans and Mr. Johnie Webb from Outreach & Communications.

Director's Update

COVID-19 Impacts. The pandemic continues to affect every aspect of our enterprise and our noble mission. While our average in-office posture is about 20%, we continue to improve our use of technology to collaborate remotely. Most recently, we conducted our second virtual All-Hands, connecting with over 350 DPAA members worldwide. In adhering to strict health and safety protocols, we have been fortunate to have had only one military member and two contractors test positive for COVID-19, and all recovered.

Budget Matters. We also obligated 99.75% of our Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 funding, which amounted to \$159.9M. We began the new FY without an appropriation; a Continuing Resolution

provides funding through December 11.

DPAA-Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). *[I neglected to mention this during the call, however it is an important update to share.]* In September, I signed an MOA with Lieutenant General Ashley, DIA Director, which will institutionalize several objectives. Among these are to better integrate and further leverage the capabilities of DIA's STONY BEACH analysts in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia and to improve our collaboration on Vietnam War cases. Established in 1986, the STONY BEACH Program has provided language specialists trained to conduct interviews, leverage relationships, and pursue case leads in Southeast Asia.

Work in Indonesia. For the past few years, DPAA personnel have worked doggedly to secure a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Indonesia to allow us to operate there. In mid-October, their Defense Minister and our Secretary of Defense signed a Memorandum of Intent that paves the way for this long-sought MOU. Prior to the signing, the Minister and the Indonesian Ambassador to the US stopped at the POW/MIA Corridor during their Pentagon tour and met with our Principal Deputy Director; both expressed their unequivocal support for the DPAA mission and pledged an MOU will be completed.

Case Management System (CMS). Over the last quarter, DPAA allocated \$7.2M in contracts toward data analytics, Information & Document Control Management, and digitization -- essentially our CMS. These contracts support DPAA's knowledge and records management efforts and are critical to our continuing endeavor to expand CMS capabilities. The congressionally-directed modernization continues to improve and streamline access to and utilization of Agency records.

Artifacts Turnover. The VFW has had an active campaign encouraging their membership to turn in foreign artifacts from past wars. This morning, their Executive Director, BJ Lawrence, turned over to us several items, of which two will likely be of great interest to the Vietnamese. After we analyze the items for anything actionable for the US, we will provide these for Secretary Esper to pass to his counterpart during an upcoming trip to the region.

Arlington Interments. The number of daily interments at Arlington National Cemetery have resumed to pre-COVID levels, and for families of accounted-for Service Members, DPAA leaders are honored to present a collage which pays tribute to their loved one's sacrifice and the national commitment to account for them.

Deputy Director for Operations (DDO) Update

Contingency Operations Planning. Looking back on FY2020, the global COVID-19 crisis severely impacted our ability to conduct field operations. Of the 145 planned partner and organic investigation, recovery and disinterment missions, we were forced to cancel or postpone roughly half due to partner nation restrictions and other limitations.

Planning has continued apace for FY2021, during which we have planned 85 partner and organic investigation, recovery, and disinterment missions in 40 countries. Partner organizations and host nation counterparts are conducting operations on the ground, while our Policy & Plans and Regional Directorates are coordinating the start of DPAA-led Joint Field Activities (JFAs), where

the first mission departed earlier this week.

We meet monthly across DPAA to assess all the factors and evolving conditions which allow us assess when and how to safely resume field missions. Realistically, even though access and conditions are starting to improve, we will see COVID-19 impacts this FY.

Force Health Protection Plan. During our last update, we stressed the deliberate planning we were conducting in support of resuming organic and partner field missions in the midst of the pandemic. One of the key tasks we undertook was the development of a Force Health Protection (FHP) Plan. This plan focuses on health and preventative measures through all phases: from pre-mission, in transit, on site, and post-mission transit home. These additional measures and training will ensure we maximize the safety of all personnel for field missions and disinterments. We have also shared our plan with our U.S. Embassies and partner nation counterparts in the support of FY2021 field operations.

Key Leader Engagements (KLE). A critical step in resuming field operations is our strong and positive relations with our partner nations. Even as COVID-19 forced us to cancel our formal Southeast Asia Technical Talks, we were able to leverage technology to hold virtual KLEs with the US Ambassadors to Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in August and September.

These conversations paved the way to hold virtual Technical Talks with our counterparts in the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons and the Lao POW/MIA Team; consultations with the Kingdom of Cambodia POW/MIA Committee will occur on November 5. Our discussions focused on country access, our FHP guidance, planned Commercial Air Review Board assessments, and the feasibility of resuming JFAs. All these meetings were extremely productive and reinforced the strong relationships between DPAA, U.S. Ambassadors, and our partner nation counterparts.

Korean War Disinterment Project. This week, the Director officially notified the Office of the Secretary of Defense that we plan to proceed with Phase 3 of the project. This phase consists of disinterring 101 Korean War Unknowns recovered from both the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK), and interred at the National Memorial Ceremony of the Pacific (NMCP). We are in coordination with the cemetery and expect to commence disinterments this calendar year.

USS Oklahoma Interment. On November 6, Navy Seaman 2nd Class James Flanagan, 22, of Jacksonville, FL, will be interred in the NMCP. It will be my high honor to serve as the senior Department of the Navy representative at this funeral. S2C Flanagan's family will not be able to attend the service, so to best honor this Sailor's sacrifice and service, we have coordinated with the Navy Casualty Office for us to video the service and for me to make a few remarks to the family. I also want to highlight the Department of Veterans Affairs and the US Navy for their superb support in properly honoring the Sailors and Marines of the *USS Oklahoma* we have accounted for.

Regional Teams Overview

Europe-Mediterranean (EM) Region

Field Operations. As the Director and DDO talked about, impacts of COVID-19 necessitated

postponing the planned recovery missions in Belgium and the United Kingdom as well as investigation missions in Poland, Germany, and Italy, resulting in the execution of no organic field operations in the EM region August-October.

Disinterment Operations. From 11 to 27 August, DPAA disinterred 24 Unknowns from Ardennes American Cemetery in Belgium, which represent the last of 71 Unknowns associated with our Operation TIDAL WAVE disinterment project, the 1 August 1943 air raid against oil refineries at Ploesti, Romania. With all 71 Unknowns now in the DPAA Laboratory at Offutt AFB, scientific staff can begin the forensic analyses to identify the Airmen still unaccounted for from the raid. Additionally, this week, DPAA disinterred 11 Unknowns from Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy. The remains represent casualties of Soldiers and Airmen who participated in the invasion of Sicily and the Battle of Anzio. The Sicily-Rome effort was made possible only through support from the American Battle Monuments Commission as well as significant personnel support from Naval Support Activity Naples and Naval Station Rota.

Research and Analysis. The EM team has made maximum use of the time made available from the cancellation of planned field operations to focus on research and proposals to progress cases. Over the last 8 months, our team of analysts and archaeologists have added 13 sites associated with 41 unaccounted-for personnel to the Master Investigation List and 13 sites associated with 26 personnel to the Master Excavation List. We have also submitted 81 disinterment proposals for approval, and initiated requests for the collection of 1,412 Family Reference Samples (FRS) by the Service Casualty Offices. All represent marked increases over FY2019 and establish the conditions for field operations when allowed to resume.

Planned Field Operations. The EM team does not have any organic investigation or recovery missions planned for the November-January period due to the impacts of weather on mission execution in Europe.

Planned Disinterment Operations. Although no disinterments are planned November-January, the Rome-Sicily mission marks significant progress towards our goal of conducting fall and winter disinterments as it validated our plan to recover a significant number of Unknowns during this period.

US–Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) Update. The recent sharp spike of COVID-19 infection rates in Russia led the Russian Side to cancel the Technical Talks planned for November. While the two Sides explored the possibility of conducting virtual talks, the Russian Side could not support this due to their health protection guidance for the Moscow region. However, monthly calls between the US and Russian Co-chairmen will continue to maintain communication and cooperation between the Sides, and work to achieve progress on research projects; the previously postponed recovery mission at a cemetery near Vladivostok, which may correlate to the loss of a US Navy aircraft during a 1950 Cold War incident; and executing the 23rd Plenum in May 2021.

Indo-Pacific (IP) Region

Field Operations. Although limitations on partner nation access imposed by COVID-19 continued to restrict organic field operations during the August-October time period, there were some successful activities.

Vietnam. The Government of Vietnam agreed to deploy U.S.-trained unilateral teams for the second consecutive JFA, which took place July 4-September 6. It was comprised of three Recovery Teams (RT) and one advanced work Investigation Team (IT).

Laos. While no recovery or investigation efforts were permitted in Laos during this period, the five US members of Detachment 3 (DET 3) returned to Laos from their late March 2020 departure, which was directed by the US Ambassador due to COVID-19 concerns. They are working with the Lao POW/MIA Team to set conditions for FY 2021 JFAs to occur during the second quarter.

South Korea. Despite having to postpone organic Investigation operations there, in August, DPAA's counterpart, the RoK's Ministry of National Defense Agency for KIA Recovery and Identification (also known as MAKRI) was able to continue recovery operations on their side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Their September operations were hampered by catastrophic regional flooding as well as recent COVID19 outbreaks, but they plan to resume operations soon and are eager to conduct excavations in areas where US service members were lost. Planning continues for joint DPAA-MAKRI operations in the DMZ and South Korea in later FY 2021.

Disinterment Operations. Restricted since late March due to Hawaii COVID-19 policies, disinterments from NMCP resumed in October with the exhumation of 12 World War II (WWII) Unknowns.

Research and Analysis. Focusing on foundational case research, researchers are using the current field operations slowdown to conduct long-term research projects, review Unknown files, and propose cases for future field operations. Areas of focus include: losses in the DMZ in Korea; China-Burma-India Theater air losses; ongoing operations in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Solomon Islands; implementation of a multi-disciplinary approach to case progression for complex underwater and battlefield losses; and review of Unknowns in the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial. The Korean War research team conducted the first virtual iteration of its biannual case coordination to review and verify research and operational priorities for 2020-2023. Providing a significant volume of Korean War US loss data to MAKRI will allow them to assess and pursue priority DPAA investigation and recovery work on our behalf to include enabling joint DPAA-MAKRI recovery operations in the DMZ at earliest opportunity.

Planned Field Operations. Our first organic mission since the onset of the pandemic departed yesterday to conduct an underwater IT/Site Survey mission on the north coast of Guadalcanal, with support from US Navy divers and the USNS Salvor. DPAA and Navy personnel will have to complete a 14-day quarantine in Guam before proceeding to the Solomon Islands. Near-term mission planning efforts in FY 2021 include an organic RT and IT for Burma, an IT for Thailand, a partnered RT and IT mission in the Philippines, and site survey work in India.

Planned Disinterment Operations. Disinterment of 30 WWII Unknowns from the MACM is planned for November 2020, after DPAA personnel complete the Philippines' required 14-day quarantine. DPAA completed Phase 2 of the Korean War Identification Project in March 2020, and as mentioned by the DDO, plans to begin Phase 3 this calendar year.

Partnerships & Innovations (PI) Update

As with the other directorates, the pandemic has impacted partnerships. Despite this however, the agency was able to successfully conduct 3 of the 17 partner missions that had been planned for the fourth quarter. These were Croatia, PNG, and Germany. The fact that we were able to conduct these missions at all demonstrates the value of working with partner institutions based abroad, who may have greater access to areas that are off-limits to US teams due to travel restrictions. For example, the Croatia mission was conducted by the Swedish University of Lund and was an underwater recovery of a B-17 that was the second site featured in the PBS Nova documentary, “The Last B-24.” Similarly, PI and IP teams were able to leverage good relations with the University of PNG to conduct the first-ever unilateral partner nation mission in that country. It was an IT operating in the Morobe and Oro Provinces near the northern coast on a few WWII cases.

We were able to postpone 13 of our planned fourth-quarter partner missions, which illustrates another advantage to using partners. Because of the funding mechanisms that we use, we were able to retain those mission slots, and more importantly, the funding obligated for them, and reschedule them in FY 2021. Our assumption is that there will be a more permissive travel environment after the New Year, and so these FY 2020 missions were rolled over to add to our robust list of planned partner activities for FY 2021. This brings us to more than 50 partner missions we hope to conduct in the next year.

Switching to non-field activities, despite the many problems imposed by COVID with respect to travel and hiring personnel, the partnership research program has yielded significant results in the past quarter. PI, working with partners and with the other sections of DPAA, oversaw 13 research projects through our “Hub & Spoke” (H&S) Program. H&S institutions (generally military history programs at major universities) continued or commenced multiple research projects at our request, and welcomed new “Spoke” institutions into the program (recently expanded from 8 to 13). Two new research fellows started this past quarter (5 total as of now), with several more anticipated in the next few months. These fellows’ research results have included baseline information and analytical products for DPAA staff to use in further progressing a wide variety of cases from WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. In addition to H&S research, other partner institutions produced unilateral research and analytical products that will assist the Agency.

Under the Innovation side of PI, we were able to foster some innovative projects that will explore new technologies and procedures for both desk-based and field-based activities related to our mission. One of these is a multi-partner project coordinated by the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, which will be exploring innovations in underwater survey and recovery techniques. Many of these are multi-year projects, and while it will take some time to fully evaluate the potential in some of these areas, we should see some fairly short-term results with some others in FY 2021.

Finally, in support of future research and field activities, PI signed five separate arrangements in the fourth quarter that either modified existing, or created new, agreements for partnerships and projects. One notable example is an MOU with the National Forensic Science University of India. This university is charged by the Indian government with the advancement of forensic science within India and around the world. In conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross, it operates and hosts the International Centre for Humanitarian Forensics. Through this agreement, DPAA will have personnel—Indian scientists—who are resident at the university and who will help

facilitate future DPAA activities within the whole of India. This also will be a vehicle to assist in developing additional in-country partnerships in an area of the world that has proven difficult for us to operate effectively.

Scientific Analysis (SA) Update

Significant Policy Change from Japan. Over the last decade, the Japanese Government has increasingly been interested in DPAA's methods, as they actively search for over 600,000 of their missing throughout the Indo-Pacific Region from WWII. To date, for remains they recovered and believed to be Japanese, their practice has been to cremate on-site without any scientific analysis. Through DPAA's influence and relationships over several years, Japan has reformed its 68-year policy and will not cremate remains they find until DNA testing is conducted; they also established a center to conduct scientific analysis of the remains and related research. This is ideal given the potential of collocated US remains and inadvertent destruction.

FY 2020 Identifications. Total Accounted-for = 120

WWII = 82 (an additional 5 were made of individuals previously accounted for in the 1940s)
Korean War = 36
Vietnam War = 2

Additional Portion Identifications: Total: 18 (16 WWII; 2 Vietnam)

FY 2021 Identifications. Total Accounted-for = 3

WWII = 3
Korean War = 0
Vietnam War = 0

Additional Portion Identifications: 7 WWII

Since the end of March, the DPAA Laboratory System has implemented a lab work/telework balanced plan designed to maintain progress on identifications while also mitigating risks of spreading COVID-19. We implemented our Phase I return to work plan in July, which allows the analytical staff to access the laboratory every day during a 4-hour shift. The plan is appropriate for the current health protection levels of the three bases with laboratory facilities and has proved effective in continuing forward progress on remains in the laboratory.

K55 Project Update. We estimate there were originally about 250 individuals represented in 55 boxes turned over by the DPRK, consisting of 170 believed-to-be US and 80 believed-to-be foreign nationals. As of October 28th, 69 have been accounted for (2 in FY 2018, 38 in FY 2019, and 29 in FY 2020). Of the approximately 100 remaining US service members, approximately 50 have identification potential, if further DNA analyses succeed. Approximately 20 individuals are represented by additional portions of previously accounted for individuals from the K208 and field recovery remains. The ID potential for the other 30 or so individuals is low due to the lack of FRS and/or laboratory testing not yielding results. We have an FRS for over 90% of the Korean War missing.

Other Highlights. The laboratory continues to prepare for the upcoming accreditation surveillance visit, occurring in November, which will also include a scope expansion for isotope testing. All

other aspects of isotope testing were completed earlier this year under the new accreditation discipline called Human Geographic Profiling.

AFMES Update

After adopting an AM/PM-shift model in March to allow for the continuation of critical missions in response to COVID-19, on July 27th we entered into Phase II of our Return to Work Plan, where 50% of our staff is in the building per shift. We continue to operate two shifts, thus having full staffing each day. Most important is that AFMES, utilizing computer assets, is communicating and working daily with DPAA, while both laboratories adhere to on-site work restrictions.

For FY 2020, with a fully trained staff on hand, the goal set for the number of DNA analyses reported to the DPAA was 4,400, which is a 15% increase over the previous FY. Despite the pandemic, AFMES met this goal and increased success rates for all testing performed for DPAA in support of our families and their fallen loved ones.

FY 2020 Final Numbers

DNA Analysis Reported: 4,323
DNA Comparison Reports Issued: 1,240 (of which, 145 supported new identifications)
Autosomal STR Success Rates: 80%
YSTR Success Rates: 73%
Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) (Chemically-treated) Success Rates: 68%

FY 2019 Final Numbers

DNA Analysis Reported: 3,777
DNA Comparison Reports Issued: 658 (of which, 207 supported new identifications)
Autosomal STR Success Rates: 63%
YSTR Success Rates: 66%
NGS (Chemically-treated) Success Rates: 60%

On October 21, AFMES' Director, Army Colonel (Dr.) Lou Finelli transferred directorship to Air Force Colonel (Dr.) Alice Briones; Dr. Finelli will officially retire in December. Among the accomplishments for past conflict accounting during his four-plus years tenure was the certification of the chest radiograph comparison method and increasing personnel and equipment resourcing for the laboratory. Under Dr. Finelli, the number of scientists for the past accounting mission increased from 45 to 90 scientists. Dr. Briones was most recently the AFMES Deputy Director and is also supportive of the past conflict mission; she was also a former director of DNA Operations.

Outreach and Communications Update

National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremonies. On September 18, the National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony was hosted by Deputy Secretary of Defense Norquist at the Pentagon River Parade Field. General Hyten, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, served as the keynote speaker. Due to COVID safety protocols, guests were limited to 25, but included several family members of the missing, a former POW, and representatives of key organizations. A video

may be found at this link: <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/766486/defense-officials-recognize-prisoners-war-missing-service-members-ceremony>

DPAA and RDML Banaji hosted the Recognition Day Ceremony on Heroes Green next to DPAA's Hawaii facility. Mr. Allen Hoe, a Gold Star father whose son was killed in Iraq, was the keynote speaker. In step with established COVID-19 safety protocols, attendance consisted of a small group of family members of the missing, a former POW, and representatives of Veterans Service Organizations. <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/766491/admiral-commemorates-prisoners-war-and-missing-service-members-ceremony>

To date, over 103,000 individuals have livestreamed the two ceremonies.

DET 1 (Thailand) hosted a ceremony that consisted of remarks from guest speaker, Air Chief Marshal (Retired) Sakpinit Promthep, a former director of the Royal Thai Air Force Museum in Bangkok, and remarks by the US Ambassador to Thailand DeSombre. The program concluded with the "Missing Man Table" ceremony and the playing of "Taps."

Representatives of US Embassy-Hanoi and DPAA DET 2 commemorated the day with a ceremony where US Ambassador Kritenbrink delivered the keynote.

Both American and Lao personnel at US Embassy-Vientiane attended the ceremony, the first in country since 2018. US Ambassador Haymond offered remarks.

POW/MIA Poster. This year's poster was designed by two DPAA Sailors. It embeds photographs of key elements of our mission within the POW/MIA silhouette along with the messages "Relentless Pursuit" and "A Determined Nation". It can be viewed and ordered on the DPAA website (www.dpaa.mil).

Family Member Updates (FMU). DPAA will host the Little Rock, AR, FMU as a virtual event on November 7, connecting with families of the missing and other key stakeholders within a 350-mile radius of Little Rock. Updates will include DPAA and AFMES briefings, specific Vietnam War, Korean/Cold War, and WWII updates, and case summary updates/one-on-ones for requesting families. Further, after this virtual FMU, DPAA will send out an archived link to the FMU that will enable more families to gain awareness of the accounting mission.

DAV POW-MIA Seminar. Due to COVID-19 concerns, the Disabled American Veterans cancelled their seminar which was scheduled for August 2 in Dallas, TX.

Media Engagements of Note

Remains of USS Oklahoma sailor killed in Pearl Harbor identified, to be buried in Texas
<https://www.foxnews.com/us/uss-oklahoma-sailor-remains-pearl-harbor-world-war-two-texas>
Reach: 72M

This non-profit organization works to recover WWII MIAs still missing
<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2020/09/18/nonprofit-works-to-recover-wwii-mias-still-missing/>
Reach: 3M

Pandemic doesn't stop ceremony honoring POWs and MIAs in Hawaii

<https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/09/18/hawaii-news/pandemic-doesnt-stop-ceremony-honoring-pows-and-mias-in-hawaii/>

Reach: 2M

Army corporal's remains returned home after more than 65 years

<https://www.stripes.com/news/veterans/army-corporal-s-remains-returned-home-after-more-than-65-years-1.642843>

Reach: 2M

Questions & Answers

1. **Jewish War Veterans:** Thank you for holding this very interesting session; it was very informative. Gave a shout-out to Ann Mills Griffiths and BJ Lawrence.
2. **Disabled American Veterans:** You all demonstrated the impact of COVID-19 – it's noteworthy -- this mission is so important to everyone --- thank you for your efforts. We had to cancel our entire national convention but we'll pick it in 2021 when we go back to normal.
3. **SOA/SFA:** Thank you very much --- thank DPAA for participating in our virtual SOA convention. Kelly, Ann, and Brad from STONY BEACH were participants and I wanted to thank them very much.
4. **Korea-Cold War Families of the Missing:** Thank you guys so much for streaming the POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies; I was dropped from the one at the Pentagon, but was able to get every single minute of the HI event. How are the names being included on the Korean War memorial wall?
Answer: The foundation building the wall have bounced the names off us and our lead analyst, Dan Baughman ensured the exact names of all the unaccounted for are included. For further information, you may wish to contact Jim Fischer at the foundation.
5. **Coalition of Families:** Thank you for the nice breakdown of the K55 remains; any update since April? --- hope the same breakdown could be done for each Phase of the Korean War Disinterment project at Punchbowl. I want to echo Sherra on POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremonies. Long overdue acknowledgement for what you did on the website --- the air loss maps and the Korean War Disinterment Project were done very well. Please include the links in the notes.
Answer: <https://www.dpaa.mil/Resources/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/2152419/korean-war-air-loss-maps/>
<https://www.dpaa.mil/Resources/Fact-Sheets/Article-View/Article/1973863/korean-war-disinterment-project-phases/>

We have exhumed the remains from Phases 1 and 2 and are working diligently to identify them. To date, we have exhumed 211 remains prior to the 7-Phase Plan commencing, with 141 of them being identified. We exhumed 73 remains in Phase 1, of which 8 have been identified; for Phase 2, we exhumed 117, remains of which 2 have been identified. Work is continuing in earnest on all of these unidentified remains, to include further DNA testing and stable isotope analysis.

6. **Honor Release Return:** Thank you for the information. No questions.
7. **National League of Families:** Thanks to Herb for the shout out --- too many questions for this call.
8. **Vietnam Veterans of America:** Hope everyone is doing well --- VVA this year completed our 27th mission of the Vets initiative program, which takes Veterans back to Vietnam to connect with their counterparts. Over 2,500 of Vietnam's missing have been recovered as a result of VVA information shared.