

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

TO: NATIONAL OFFICERS, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
ADMINISTRATION, PAST COMMANDERS-IN-CHIEF,
DEPARTMENT COMMANDERS, DEPARTMENT ADJUTANTS AND
QUARTERMASTERS, NATIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN AND
VICE CHAIRMEN AND MEMBERS

FROM: PAUL A. SPERA, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF *Paul A. Spera*
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE U.S.

DATE: 28 DECEMBER 1995

Dear VFW Officer:

With this year's motto "CALL TO DUTY", I am announcing a new VFW program to help recover our POW/MIAs from Southeast Asia. The program could have a profound and long lasting impact on the POW/MIA issue in Southeast Asia. We want to show the Vietnamese how important the POW/MIAs are to all Americans by collecting and returning to them any information about their MIAs.

I am enclosing a copy of an open letter to our members which explains the VFW POW/MIA Initiative and what we want to accomplish. I am asking for your help to get this program off to a great start. I'd like your ideas on how to make it a successful program that will help us reach our goal of the fullest possible accounting. The program depends a lot on publicity and I would like to begin by asking you to read the open letter at all VFW meetings such as Department Conferences, District and Council meetings and, of course most importantly, at Post Meetings.

I would like Department Commanders, Adjutants, Quartermasters and POW/MIA Chairmen to send each of your Posts a copy of the open letter and ask that it be read at all Post meetings.

Also, I have enclosed a copy of a poster which can be locally reproduced and distributed. I also would like to ask you for your feedback to help make this a successful effort.

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Lastly, reassure our members from World War II and the Korean War that we will intensify our efforts to recover our missing men from those conflicts. I have already urged the North Koreans and U.S. Secretary of State to consider new opportunities to pursue our Korean War POW/MIAs. We will continue to pursue our World War II and Cold War losses with equal determination.

Thanks for all your help and remember this is our "CALL TO DUTY."

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

AN OPEN LETTER TO:

ALL VIETNAM VETERANS

FROM:

PAUL A. SFERA, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF *PAS*
VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE US

SUBJECT:

VFW POW/MIA INITIATIVE

At our 96th National Convention, the delegates adopted Resolution No. 435 to assist Vietnam in locating its MIAs. This will help us recover our own POW/MIAs by generating good will and even greater assistance and support for our POW/MIA effort from the Vietnamese.

The success of our effort depends upon getting the word out to all Vietnam veterans that they can make a positive contribution to help locate and to recover our POW/MIAs from Vietnam. Our positive effort can generate good will, a cooperative attitude and an equally positive effort from the Vietnamese which will help U.S. investigators in the search for our missing men.

Vietnam now cooperates with the U.S. teams in a joint effort to recover Americans still listed as Missing in Action in Vietnam. U.S. investigators have told us that some of the cases of our missing men can only be resolved by Vietnamese citizens or war veterans coming forward with information or artifacts that help lead us to a crash site or grave site or provide an additional investigative lead in our effort to account for our missing men.

In turn, the Vietnamese, who have 300,000 MIAs, have asked for any information or artifacts which might help them resolve the fate of their missing and locate their grave sites. They are interested in any information about battlefield grave sites, names of locations and approximate dates of battles, spot reports, diary entries, photos and documents which recall the location and date of the battle or any other sources of information.

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★

VFW MEMORIAL BUILDING ● 200 MARYLAND AVENUE, N.E. ● WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002-5799
AREA CODE 202-543-2239 ● FAX 202-543-6719

They are also interested in any artifacts such as battlefield souvenirs, captured diaries, letters, photos or material with Vietnamese names which might be useful in identifying their casualties.

We need to let all our Vietnam veterans know they can help our POW/MIAs by contributing what they know of Vietnamese casualties. I am asking all Departments, Districts, County Councils and Posts to get the word out about the VFW POW/MIA Initiative. The more Vietnam veterans we contact and ask to participate, the bigger the response and, the bigger the response, the greater will be the impact of our VFW effort on the Vietnamese. Please help get the word out.

I have designated the VFW Washington Office as the collection point and repository of the information and material sent by our members. At a suitable time, the information and material will be turned over to the Vietnamese. We will preserve the anonymity of the source and not identify the source of the information and material to the Vietnamese.

We owe it to those left behind to help bring them home. The VFW's POW/MIA Initiative is a positive way each of us can do his part to help recover our missing comrades. I am also asking our Department, District, County Council and Post Commanders and Adjutants to read this open letter at their meetings, publish it in local newspapers and newsletters, and to reproduce and distribute flyers similar to the sample that is attached. We need every veterans support to make this a successful effort.

Thank you and remember this is our 'CALL TO DUTY.'

VFW POW/MIA INITIATIVE

WHAT IS IT?

The VFW POW/MIA Initiative is an effort to influence the Vietnamese and obtain their good will and help in accounting for our POW/MIAs.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

By providing the Vietnamese with information about their MIAs, we show them how important are our POW/MIAs. We generate good will and cooperation from the Vietnamese in helping to recover our missing men.

WHAT DO WE NEED?

INFORMATION on battle sites, dates and possible grave sites. Also, reports, maps, sketches, diary entries, photos or documents that identify the location of possible grave sites.

PLEASE
DO NOT SEND
CAPTURED WEAPONS,
AMMUNITION, OR
EXPLOSIVES

MATERIAL such as battlefield souvenirs or the information from the material that could help identify a Vietnamese casualty. Also captured diaries, letters, documents and photos (legible copies are acceptable).

WHERE DO WE SEND IT?

YOUR ANONYMITY WILL
BE PROTECTED

VFW POW/MIA Initiative
VFW Memorial Building
200 Maryland Avenue, N. E.
Washington, D. C. 20002

ANY QUESTIONS

WRITE TO THE VFW: WE ARE READY TO
HELP.

REMEMBER:

YOUR BATTLEFIELD EXPERIENCES AND
SOUVENIRS CAN HELP US REACH THE
FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING OF OUR
POW/MIAS.