



Defense POW/MIA Weekly Update

June 26, 1995

Remains of American Servicemen Identified

The group remains of two United States Air Force servicemen, unaccounted for from Southeast Asia, have been identified as Captain Leo T. Thomas, Jr., and Captain Daniel R. Poynor. Their remains were repatriated on June 3, 1994, as the result of a joint United States-Lao excavation. Captain Thomas and Captain Poynor were the crew of an F-4D aircraft lost during a strike mission on a heavy artillery site in Laos on December 19, 1971.

Captain Thomas was born December 24, 1940, and his home of record is Georgetown, Kentucky. Captain Poynor was born June 12, 1946, and his home of record is Enid, Oklahoma.

The remains of a third United States Air Force officer, an unresolved casualty of the Cold War, were identified as Captain John Robertson Dunham. His remains were recovered from a former Japanese cemetery on Yuri Island in the Kuril Island chain by a joint United States-Russian team on September 16, 1994. Captain Dunham was the navigator of an RB-29 aircraft shot down over water by a Soviet fighter on October 7, 1952. The RB-29 had been conducting a routine reconnaissance mission off of the eastern coast of Hokkaido, the northern most island of Japan. Soviet officials later admitted to shooting down the aircraft and in 1955, Captain Dunham and the seven other crew members of the aircraft were declared presumed dead, bodies not recovered.

In 1992 the Russian side of the United States-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIAs passed a declassified memorandum to the United States. The document, addressed to Josef Stalin and dated October 8, 1952, revealed that a body was found in the water at the crash site and that papers identified the remains as those of Captain Dunham. Subsequent interviews and archival searches led joint commission members to Yuri Island where Captain Dunham's grave was found.

Captain Dunham was born October 25, 1927 and his home of record is Easton, Maryland

House Subcommittee to Hold Hearing on Southeast Asia

The House National Security Committee, Military Personnel Subcommittee, chaired by Congressman Robert Dornan, is scheduled to hold a hearing on POW/MIA efforts in Southeast Asia with a focus on Laos, Wednesday, June 28, 1995. Family members, representatives from family and veterans organizations, and government officials are slated to appear on four separate panels to address the subcommittee and respond to questions.

Joint Field Activities in Southeast Asia

- Vietnam: The 36th Joint Field Activity (JFA) began operations June 22 with the deployment of teams and supplies into Vietnam via Bangkok. Joint United States-Vietnamese teams plan to investigate as many as 37 cases and excavate as many as 14 sites.
- Laos: JFA 95-6L (the 39th in Laos) is tentatively planned for July 20 through mid-August.

Indianapolis Family Update Planned for August 26

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/MIA Jim Wold will host a Family Update meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, on Saturday, August 26, 1995. These Updates are informal meetings for family members with Mr. Wold and other Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Office officials. Primary next of kin in Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ohio will be notified of the meeting by their casualty offices. Other interested family members (non-PNOK) in the area also are welcome to attend. A no-host luncheon will be available. Please contact your service casualty office for additional details and to register.

Live Sighting Investigation Conducted

A live sighting investigation initiated in response to information provided by Mr. Billy Hendon was completed on June 18. No evidence of captive Americans, prison facilities, caves, tunnels, or underground facilities was found. The United States Government (Stony Beach) live sighting investigator traveled to the precise coordinates given by Mr. Hendon, as well as the Hung Hoa military depot and the villages of Huong Non and Hung Hoa. The investigator was accompanied throughout his trip by representatives from Joint Task Force Full Accounting and the United States Liaison Office, the Deputy Director of the Vietnamese Office for Seeking Missing Persons, and an Associated Press media representative. The team had complete and unrestricted access throughout the investigation and talked with a diverse group of local residents.