

teacher of dentistry, and the organizer of the dental department of the DC Crippled Children's Society. But dentistry was only Dr. Katzen's first career. He also pursued an interest in banking by organizing and directing three separate financial institutions; he still serves on the board of directors for the Community Bank of Northern Virginia. As founder of the Culmore Realty Co. and president of the Mozal Development Corp. in Baileys Crossroads, VA, Dr. Katzen provided strong and continuous support for the revitalization of Baileys Crossroads and brokered real estate projects that transformed Tyson's Corner, Crystal City, and Rosslyn into the thriving commercial centers they are today.

Throughout the years, Dr. Katzen and his wife, Myrtle, have been avid collectors of art works by Picasso, Modigliani, and Sam Gilliam. They have generously supported the development of the arts at the American University, among others, and recently provided the school with a naming gift for a gallery and terrace in the university's new arts center.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues will join me in saluting the imaginative vision and commitment that Dr. Katzen has given to the arts and to the economic development of our community. He is indeed well-deserving of this distinguished award.

IN PURSUIT OF FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING IN THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, JUNE 1994-JUNE 1995

HON. DOUGLAS "PETE" PETERSON
OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, May 23, 1996

Mr. PETERSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, today I want to enter into the RECORD a very valuable, insightful personal experience monograph, titled, "In Pursuit of Fullest Possible Accounting in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, June 1994-June 1995," prepared by Lt. Col. Melvin E. Richmond, Jr. This paper captures Colonel Richmond's unique experience while assigned as commander of Detachment 2, Joint Task Force—Full Accounting [JTF-FA], in Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Colonel Richmond's account of his year of duty in Vietnam not only contains a factual record of the activities of his command, but also takes the reader on a historical review of America's efforts to reach fullest possible accounting of our missing servicemen in Vietnam. Woven throughout his monograph is an authentic description of the level of cooperation his unit experienced while working with the Vietnamese on a daily basis.

A sensitive review of this impressive paper will help many to better understand America's commitment to fullest possible accounting and to see first hand the rigors associated with our efforts to reach that goal.

ABSTRACT

Author: Melvin E. Richmond, Jr. (LTC), USA

Title: In Pursuit of the Fullest Possible Accounting in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, June 1994-June 1995

Format: Personal Experience Monograph

Date: 5 April 1996

Pages: 118

Classification: Unclassified

Some 2,157 Americans remain unaccounted-for as a result of the United States's

involvement in the war in Indochina; 1,610 in Vietnam. In January 1992, the Department of Defense organized Joint Task Force—Full Accounting and began an intensive effort unprecedented in the history of warfare to account for its missing warriors. I was privileged to participate in this effort as the Commander of Detachment 2, JTF-FA from 10 June 1994 until 28 June 1995. The purpose of this paper is to describe the full accounting effort in Vietnam and my experiences during my tenure as Commander. The monograph provides sufficient background and historical information to acquaint readers with the issue. Most importantly though, it describes the progress the U.S. Government made in resolving the issue while I was there. Finally, I presented a number of lessons I learned as the Commander of Detachment 2, especially regarding hosting high level delegations, dealing with the media, cooperating with U.S. veteran organizations, interacting with the Department of State, and working with the Vietnamese Government and people.

When a soldier was injured and could not get back to safety, his buddy went out to get him, against his officer's orders. He returned mortally wounded and his friend, who he had carried back, was dead. The officer was angry. "I told you not to go," he said. "Now I've lost both of you. It was not worth it." The dying man replied, "But it was, Sir, because when I got to him he said, 'Jim, I knew you'd come.'"¹

"I knew you'd come." If I were to summarize the efforts of the United States to recover, identify and repatriate to the United States its missing servicemen, these four words describe them best. Today there remain more than 78,000 Americans still unaccounted-for from World War II and over 8,100 from the Korean War. As of February 27, 1996, there were 2,157 Americans still unaccounted-for as a result of the United States involvement in the war in Indochina. Quite naturally, most of those losses are in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, but there are also Americans unaccounted-for in the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic, the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the People's Republic of China.^{2,3}

In January 1992, the Department of Defense (DOD) organized Joint Task Force—Full Accounting (JTF-FA) and assigned it the mission to "resolve the cases of Americans still unaccounted-for as a result of the Southeast Asian conflict through investigation, archival research and remains-recovery operations."⁴ Thus began an intensive effort unprecedented in the history of warfare to account for a nation's unaccounted-for warriors.⁵

I was privileged to participate in this effort as the Commander of Detachment 2, JTF-FA from June 10, 1994 until June 28, 1995. The purpose of this paper is to describe the full accounting effort in Vietnam during my tenure as Commander. I have begun with a very brief history of the United States Government's (USG) effort to resolve this issue and a description of how the USG officially accounts for its missing. I will then outline the preparations I undertook to assume my duties, and describe the organization of JTF-FA in general, and Detachment 2 in detail. The final two sections of the body of the paper, contain an examination of the aspects of progress we made in resolving the unaccounted-for issue, and close with lessons I learned during my tenure that may be of use to other military officers as they prepare for duties in similar circumstances. The lessons concentrate on issues involving hosting high level delegations, dealing with the

media, cooperating with U.S. veterans organizations, interacting with the Department of State, and working with the Vietnamese Government and people. For those who are unfamiliar with this issue, the annexes and the glossary contain information that explains the terminology associated with this issue.

To set the stage for the remainder of this paper, it is important to emphasize that as the Commander of Detachment 2, I was an operator, not a policy-maker. President Clinton "normalized" diplomatic relations with Vietnam in July 1995, because Vietnam had cooperated sufficiently in resolving the issue of Americans still missing in Vietnam. There are still many steps yet to be taken, however, before relations will be "normal." These steps are contingent upon continued progress by the Vietnamese toward resolving the issue of unaccounted-for Americans. The President and Congress will determine when the Vietnamese have progressed sufficiently to continue to move forward in our relations with Vietnam.

Any inferences you may draw regarding policy issues as you read this monograph are your own. I will lay out the developments as I saw them, but will try not to draw any conclusions regarding the level of progress. Where I state something as my opinion, it is exactly that. It does not reflect the official or unofficial positions of the United States Government, Joint Task Force—Full Accounting, the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO), or any other agency or individual.

Finally, participating in this effort is a tremendously emotional experience. Never before have I had such a strong sense of contributing to something so important. To a person, every member of JTF-FA has a single-minded purpose; to get the families the answers they so richly deserve. I cannot even begin to describe the flood of emotion we felt whenever we found a tooth during an excavation, because we knew that it would, in all likelihood, lead to an identification. I cannot explain the sense of satisfaction we got when we unearthed two gold wedding bands and human remains when excavating an aircraft crash site thought to be that of two missing Americans.

I believe Leslie Weatherhead's passage at the opening of this paper best describes why those of us in JTF-FA felt our mission was so important. I normally recited her quote privately to our participants before every repatriation ceremony to remind everyone of why we were there. Being in Hanoi and working this issue day in and day out, it was easy to become somewhat hardened to the importance of our mission. I believe the repatriation ceremonies were the heart and soul of what we did, and thought it was a good time to reflect on our mission. Each ceremony culminated years of work to find and recover each set of remains. And now, more than 20 years after making the ultimate sacrifice for their country, these soldiers, airmen, marines, and sailors—some of God's noblest people—were going home.

"War is always and will ever be obscene, but faced with a greater obscenity—slavery, I would fight. While war is obscene, those who go forward, who charge the machine guns, who bleed, who go down to the aid stations and are put in body bags—they are not obscene, their sacrifices have no measure—theirs has a purity where mankind shines and is beyond corruption. I am not blasphemous when I say that in the brutality and evil of war, soldiers who have offered themselves up so that their buddies may live, have in them the likeness and image of God. And damn those who debunk courage, valor, fidelity, love of country, love of home, family, hopes and dreams for a better tomorrow. Our soldiers give up much—that others

¹Footnotes at end.

may live, not only in freedom but even luxury. They deserve our great, great gratitude and affection because they are willing to serve. They are some of God's noblest people."

—General Cavazos.

EVOLUTION OF ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS

The United States Government (USG) efforts to account for Americans still missing as a result of its participation in the conflict in Southeast Asia have changed dramatically since initial operations began under the auspices of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC). JCRC and its subsequent field activities came to being as a result of a joint agreement between President Reagan's Presidential Emissary for Humanitarian Affairs, General John Vessey (USA Retired), and SRV Acting Foreign Minister Tran Quang Co. General Vessey helped establish the ground rules for joint investigations, surveys, and excavations with the Vietnamese.

Joint field activities (JFAs) began rather humbly.⁶ JFA 1 lasted ten days, from September 25, 1988 until October 4, 1988. The Vietnamese permitted only enough American personnel in-country to man two very small teams and restricted the duration of operations to only ten days. The team arrived at Noi Bai Airfield outside Hanoi aboard a single USAF C-141 and brought all their equipment with them, including four Jeep Cherokees. The conditions were spartan to say the least. With no helicopter support and only four Jeeps, travel overland was agonizingly slow, and travel time was included in the ten-day operations plan. The roads were poor, there were virtually no telephones and the teams were not allowed to bring radios into country. Each team included a Team Leader (civilian linguist), a team analyst (Military Intelligence specialist), and a Search and Rescue specialist. They had no permanent base of operations in Vietnam, limited non-temporary storage (one small room in the basement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MFA] Reception Hall), and they carried everything with them. The first JFA required approximately three days' travel just to reach the first investigation sites north and northwest of Hanoi. The teams had only about four days of intensive investigations for a total of six cases. They then needed three days to return to Hanoi where they prepared to redeploy on Day 10. Needless to say, compared to today's JFAs, not much investigating took place.

Gradually, JCRC expanded the amount and type of equipment they maintained in Vietnam. On July 7, 1991, JCRC and the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI), opened what was known as the U.S. MIA Office on the third floor of the Boss Hotel in downtown Hanoi. After the 15th JFA in January 1992, JCRC stood down. JTF-FA, the parent organization of Detachment 2 in Hanoi, replaced it. JTF-FA, under the direction of its initial commander, Major General Thomas H. Needham, expanded investigative and recovery operations exponentially.

By April 1993, teams were operating in numerous provinces simultaneously with virtually unrestricted access to travel between provinces as necessary. By the time of my arrival in June 1994, we were deploying well over 100 personnel into the country for each JFA using multiple military and civilian aircraft sorties into three airports: Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi (northern operations), the Da Nang International Airport in Da Nang (central operations), and Tan Son Nhut in Ho Chi Minh City (southern operations). JTF-FA had expanded operations from JCRC's initial two teams in country for ten days, to up to eight teams in-country for 30 or more days. We had over 100 Mitsubishi

Pajero 4-wheel-drive vehicles pre-positioned throughout the country, three helicopters (2 MI-8s and 1 MI-17) available for movement of personnel and equipment to sites inaccessible by vehicle, and had built three storage buildings in the Ranch for team equipment.

During the period 1988-1991, both the U.S. and SRV sides went through a mutual and rapid education on the capabilities and intentions of the other. The "learning curve" was steep. In the beginning, investigations and excavations proceeded at a crawl. Today, Vietnamese team leaders are active participants in planning and preparing for each JFA. During my tenure, at the suggestion of the VNOSMP, my specialists and Operations Officer met with the Vietnamese team leaders prior to each JFA to fully coordinate every aspect of the operation. Instead of halting operations in the middle of a JFA because an unexpected problem arose, the Vietnamese were now trying to anticipate problems and resolve them prior to the onset of operations.

Some have been critical of the rapid tempo of operations of JTF-FA, characterizing it as "steam-rolling through Vietnam." They described the investigations as rushed and incomplete, with IEs concentrating on the number of cases they could close rather than the quality of their investigations. This is an unfair description of early JTF operations and current operations verify this. During its existence, JCRC-CILHI teams completed as few as 13 JFAs, 200 investigations, and 37 excavations. By the end of my tenure as Commander, Detachment 2, in approximately the same amount of time as JCRC had operated, JTF-FA had completed nearly 1,400 investigations and approximately 200 excavations. We did find that some of the early investigations could have been performed better, and we reinvestigated them; some numerous times.

The fast pace in the early days of JTF-FA allowed investigators and analysts to gather as much information as possible, about as many cases as possible, as quickly as possible. This is not testament to an ineffective JCRC. Rather, it clearly demonstrates the increased priority this issue had accrued with both the U.S. and SRV governments. Time is one of the JTF-FA's greatest enemies; witnesses get older and many pass away, and the effects of the environment continue to degrade the evidence it possesses. The fast pace allowed us to complete the less difficult cases, assess our position, and then concentrate on other more difficult cases.

ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

The USG accounts for missing Americans in one of three ways. The first, and most obvious method is to discover a live American. A live unaccounted-for-American has surfaced since Operations Homecoming in 1973.⁷ The second method is through positive and legally sufficient identification of remains. The last method of accounting for missing Americans is by presenting compelling evidence that indicates the USG will not be able to meet either of the first two criteria.

CILHI is responsible for identifying the remains returned to its facility. Today, its primary means of identifying remains is by matching dental remains to the dental records of unaccounted-for Americans. CILHI also has the capability to identify remains through DNA matching. It is currently doing this through the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory in Maryland. DNA matching also has some practical difficulties in that it usually requires a piece of bone (approximately five grams) larger than the fragments teams normally recover at the excavation sites.

The third means of accounting for missing Americans is much less conclusive than the

first two methods and to date, the USG has not used it to account for unaccounted-for Americans. Over-water losses are the classic example of cases that might fall into this category. In Vietnam alone, there are 449 unaccounted-for Americans believed to be lost over-water. The likelihood of finding a live American or identifiable remains (or even aircraft wreckage for that matter) in these over-water cases is extremely small. They would be prohibitively expensive to pursue as a matter of policy.

There are also numerous cases where identifiable remains are unlikely to be found. Today there are numerous sets of remains stored at CILHI that are associated with specific cases (i.e., teams excavated these remains from sites positively correlated to a specific loss, or the remains came to CILHI through unilateral refugee/turnovers that associated them with a specific individual), but the remains are insufficient for legal identification. At some point, the USG must determine whether further efforts, either joint or unilateral, to resolve the cases correlated to these sets of remains are likely to bear fruit. If not, accounting for these individuals using the third means of accounting may be the only reasonable option.

On November 13, 1995, the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO) published the results of its comprehensive review of cases. The purpose of the study was to review all unresolved cases so as to: "(1) focus our (the USG) understanding on individual cases, (2) provide the basis for a sound investigations strategy, and (3) define next steps for achieving the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing in Southeast Asia."⁸ DPMO assessed "each case, weighing all related information, including data collected through recent on-site American investigation and research in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. We (DPMO) found that for any case it is exceedingly difficult to predict the extent to which evidence of knowledgeability by Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia about some aspect of a U.S. loss could lead to an accounting of the individual."⁹ The report recommends the "next steps" for the remaining cases as listed below.¹⁰

1. Further Pursuit—The review identified further leads requiring investigation for 1,476 individuals still unaccounted-for. 942 of these individuals were lost in Vietnam.

2. Deferred—The review identified 159 individuals for whom the USG has exhausted all investigative leads, "and no further avenues of pursuit can be identified. Although the investigation of these cases is not complete; we (the USG) require additional information to develop new leads."¹¹

3. No Further Pursuit—The review identified 567 individuals still unaccounted-for whom, "regardless of any future effort by the U.S. Government and the governments of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, their cases cannot be resolved through the repatriation of remains."¹²

PREPARATION FOR ASSUMING COMMAND

At the time of my selection for JTF-FA, I was commanding 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, a basic combat training battalion at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Detachment 2 had two previous commanders prior to me, Jack Donovan and John Cray. All three of us were coming out of battalion command at the time of our selection. Additionally, each had been selected to attend Senior Service College which we had to defer for one year to command Detachment 2. I was not scheduled to give up command of 1-26 Infantry until June 10, 1994, but because John had to return to CONUS to attend the United States Army War College, I had my change of command on May 10, 1994. Since command of the Detachment is like no other job I had ever had,

time was of essence to assure a good overlap between John and me. I changed command at 0900 on May 10 and flew to Washington, D.C. at 1900 that evening. Luckily, my wife and I were able to spend some time together during two weeks of leave a couple of weeks before my change of command.

In Washington, my orientations included briefings by the Army Service Casualty Office,¹³ the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO), and the Vietnam/Laos/Cambodia Office of the East Asia Pacific Office at the Department of State. I also spent half a day with a public affairs orientation team from the USAF at the Pentagon. My time with the USAF and USA Casualty Offices was extremely useful. The PAO orientation proved to be invaluable to me throughout my tenure.¹⁴ The other offices I visited appeared unprepared for my arrival and provided very little information about the issue or my duties.

John Cray attended about six weeks of Vietnamese language training in Washington prior to departing CONUS. Because of the limited time available, however, I did not have the same opportunity. It was not absolutely necessary that the commander receive language training, but it would have been useful. Once I had my feet on the ground in Vietnam and had achieved a sufficient level of proficiency in my duties, I hired a tutor to teach Vietnamese to me. I met with him about twice a week for an hour and a half each day. It was amazing how much my Vietnamese counterparts appreciated the fact that I was trying to learn their language. Though I never became very proficient, I believe the very fact that I tried meant a lot to the Vietnamese.

After Washington, I flew to Honolulu, Hawaii for JTF-FA in-processing at Camp Smith. This included briefings from the PACOM staff and in-depth briefings by the JTF-FA staff. At the time of my arrival, Major General Thomas H. Needham was the Commander, JTF-FA. I had served as a company commander for 30 months under then LTC Needham in the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 509th Infantry in Vicenza, Italy, so we knew each other well. His in-briefing to me was characteristically brief and easy to remember. Despite the fact that General Needham gave up command on July 27, 1994 to Brigadier General Charles Viale, I found his guidance worthwhile to heed throughout my tenure. His guidance included:

1. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
2. There can always be improvement in the quality of reports.
3. Work on the quality of chow at the Ranch.
4. Know the helicopter contract. When and what triggers increased costs?
5. Dealing with the press. Tone down the adjectives; i.e. "Continue high level of support consistent with pre-embargo lifting."
6. Read SOPs and Policy Letters, Command Letters and Trip Notes.
7. There is a folder for every past JFA—Read them.
8. Look at deficit repairs for the Ranch. See if they are really necessary.
9. Keep the boss informed.

Though I worked on all of these, there were three I tried to always keep uppermost in my mind and were instrumental in whatever success I may have had; keep the boss informed, watch my adjectives, and keep the boss informed.

After an intense schedule in Hawaii, I flew to Southeast Asia. My first stop was Bangkok, Thailand. I checked into what would become my "home away from the Ranch," the Imperial Hotel. The Imperial staff had hosted JTF-FA teams for years and treated us all very well.

While in Bangkok, I had to in-process at the embassy and then received the Detach-

ment 1 in-briefing from LTC Dave Geraldson (USAF), the Commander of Detachment 1. Because the Detachment 1 position was a three-year assignment, Dave had been with the JTF since its inception. He had a wealth of knowledge about the issue and was a good friend throughout my tour. While I was in Bangkok, the 29th JFA was redeploying out of Vietnam into Thailand. JFA report writing always occurred in Bangkok, so I was able to watch John go through the entire report writing sequence.

From Bangkok, I accompanied General Needham to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. We stayed there only three days (two nights), and Major Tony Lowe (USAF), the Detachment 4 Commander, briefed me on his operation. Things were pretty slow in Cambodia at that time. Two of our helicopters had been shot at and hit some months earlier (possibly by local bandits) and the Khmer Rouge had been active, so the CJTF-FA had suspended field operations in Cambodia out of security concerns. The last thing any of us wanted to do was to hurt or kill an American today while recovering the remains of an American who died over 20 years ago. Field operations in Cambodia did not resume until late-fall 1994.

With my in-briefings complete, I flew into Hanoi with General Needham and began 10 days of overlap with John Gray. I was able to do almost everything related to JFAs once with John prior to having to do it on my own after his departure. The only exception was deploying the teams into Vietnam from Pattaya, Thailand. I attended a Technical Talk with the VNOSMP, attended Provincial Coordination Conferences in Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang and Hanoi, observed a Joint Forensics Review and a Repatriation Ceremony, and helped plan the next JFA that I would implement. The time with John was extremely valuable to me. Most importantly, John introduced me to most of the Vietnamese I would work with during my tour. In Vietnam, it is always better to have someone the Vietnamese knew well available to introduce you.

On June 10, 1994, after a month of in-briefings and travel, I assumed command of Detachment 2. The goodbyes were very emotional for John. He had become very close to the members of Detachment 2 during his tenure. I was extremely grateful to John Cray for his kindness as I tried to learn the ropes.

In July 1995, during my out-briefing with Lieutenant General David Bramlett, Deputy Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (DCINC), I credited much of my success to my predecessors; Jack Donovan and John Cray. I did not do that out of false humility, but out of the reality that it was their efforts that laid the groundwork for the progress we made during my tenure. They built the organization and set the systems in place. All I had to do was sustain their systems, tweak them here and there, take care of the troops, and continue to nurture our relationships with the Vietnamese. It was primarily John Cray though who positioned me well for success and I will always be grateful to him for the unselfish manner in which he prepared me to assume my duties.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

The command and control scheme for JTF-FA is, by design, very clean. There are very few intervening headquarters between the troops in the field and the highest level of the government. One very important "agency" not included in the command and control structure is the families of the unaccounted-for, but it is the families that are always uppermost in the mind of every member of the JTF. Although there is no direct contact between the families and the JTF personnel in the field, everything we did, ev-

erything we discovered, was shared with the families. The conduit between the JTF and the families is the respective Service Casualty Branches.

The CJTF-FA works directly for the CINCPAC. Despite having a very close relationship with the Defense POW/MIA Office (DPMO) and always being very conscious of their operations and influence, we were not in their chain of command. The CJTF seemed to take it as his and his staff's responsibility to shield the Detachments in the field from inquiries and directives from anyone except JTF-FA Headquarters and they did this extremely well. I rarely spoke directly with anyone involved with this issue who was not in my chain of command, and when I did, I always cleared it with the CJTF or DCJTF first.

Until about December 1994, our primary means of communication with JTF-FA Headquarters was via telephone conversations and fax. This was extremely expensive. In December, JTF-FA established an E-mail network between it and all the Detachments in the field. This cut costs dramatically and also made it easier to send correspondence between elements of the JTF.

As depicted in Figure 3, JTF-FA is organized into a headquarters element stationed at United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) Headquarters, Camp Smith, Hawaii, and Detachments 1 through 4 posted in Bangkok, Thailand; Hanoi, Vietnam; Vientiane, Laos; and Phnom Penh, Cambodia, respectively. Detachment 1 is the administrative and logistical hub for the remaining three Detachments in Southeast Asia. Because we did not have a U.S. embassy in Vietnam, Detachment 1 was our link to the rest of the world. They purchased many of our groceries from the U.S. embassy commissary in Bangkok, and we flew them into Hanoi once or twice a month on a space available basis. Detachment 1 was also our postal connection. All mail for Detachment 2 went to Detachment 1, and they held it until someone came to Hanoi. Mail was extremely important to us, and the standing JTF rule was that nobody left Bangkok for Detachment 2 without picking up the mail. Even the CJTF helped us out in this regard by always picking up the mail when he passed through Bangkok en route to Hanoi. Likewise, nobody left Hanoi for Bangkok without taking our mail out.

The only other Detachment I had regular contact with was Detachment 3 in Laos. There was a lot of coordination involved with trilateral operations, and LTC John Whohig (my counterpart in Laos) and I spoke frequently to coordinate them.

The mission of Detachment 2 is to "coordinate all United States Department of Defense efforts in Vietnam to achieve the fullest possible accounting for Americans still unaccounted-for as a result of the war in Indochina." The USG knows that it will never resolve every case, thus the requirement to provide the fullest rather than a full accounting. Detachments 3 in Laos and 4 in Cambodia have missions similar to Detachment 2 with the additional requirement of supporting the Ambassador's country team. During my tenure as Commander of Detachment 2, the United States and Vietnam did not have diplomatic relations. As a result, I did not have this requirement.

Work at Detachment 2 was essentially a seven-day-a-week proposition, but I endeavored to be as flexible as possible regarding individual schedules. Because the intensity of our work varied from time to time and section to section, I tried not to watch the clock. I expected Detachment personnel to work when they needed to work, but to take

some time off when their responsibilities allowed it. I did require them, however, to inform their supervisor of their whereabouts if they were not in their office in the event an issue arose. The high quality personnel assigned to the Detachment allowed me to exercise this level of flexibility without worrying about the quality of work degrading. As much as possible, I tried to give the Detachment Sundays off, but there was always some work members of the Detachment had to accomplish on Sunday, especially during JFAs. Since Monday in Vietnam was Sunday in Hawaii, we did not receive many calls from the Headquarters on Monday. This enabled me to give the Detachment Monday mornings off, thus giving them two evenings a week when they knew they would not have to work the next morning.

Much of our work schedule revolved around the time difference between JTF-FA Headquarters in Hawaii and our office in Vietnam. We were about 19 hours ahead of Hawaii. The CJTF prohibited the JTF-FA staff from telephoning us prior to 0730 Vietnam time unless it was an absolute emergency. This precluded us from being hounded at all hours of the very early morning about issues that were not urgent. Our work day began between 0700 and 0730 Tuesday through Saturday, and at 1130 on Mondays, and continued until our work was complete. During a JFA, we normally worked until about 2100 everyday.

Other than the normal day-to-day operation of the Detachment, we undertook seven basic tasks: 1) investigate live sighting reports, 2) conduct joint investigations and recoveries, 3) conduct historical and archival research, 4) interview witnesses and officials and analyze information and "leads" in the field, 5) coordinate and support teams in the field, 6) participate in technical meetings, and 7) represent the USG in repatriation ceremonies. To effectively accomplish each of these tasks, we organized the Detachment.

Historically, the Commander of the Detachment has been a combat arms lieutenant colonel who had successfully commanded at the battalion level, and was either a Senior Service College selectee or graduate. Some have argued that the commander should be a foreign area or intelligence specialist. The fact is, however, that the Commander is primarily an "operator." The skills normally associated with a combat arms officer are the skills required of the Detachment Commander; i.e., motivate personnel, deal effectively with people, manage resources and people over vast distances, coordinate aviation assets, and resupply activities, etc.

The Commander serves in this position for 12-13 months. Once again, some believe that the turbulence associated with a one-year tour for the Commander is detrimental to the effort. I believe maintaining it as a one year tour is one of the keys to preserving the credibility of the organization. The unaccounted-for issue is a very emotional one, not only for the families, but also for those of us who worked so hard to resolve it as fully as possible. As one works the issue, it is very easy to develop strong personal opinions about it, and those associated with it. It is also not difficult to develop relationships, either positive or negative, with the Vietnamese officials with whom you work and this could effect negotiations. The bottom line is that individuals who work this issue for an extended period of time begin to develop an "agenda." As soon as this happens you are likely to lose your credibility with the families.

One of the Commander's primary responsibilities is to ensure that personal opinions and agendas do not develop to such an extent that they cloud the facts. When a new officer assumes duties as the Commander, he views

the issue with a new set of eyes, and this is desirable. For those who believe that a one year tour for the Commander is detrimental in terms of continuity, I must add that there are numerous experts available to the Commander who provide advice and expertise that more than compensate for this lack of experience.

Besides the Commander, there were normally five other long-term members of the Detachment (i.e., longer than one year). The Air Force provides the Detachment's Executive Officer/Operations Officer. This individual is normally a relatively senior, experienced and successful Air Force Major who had extensive experience in operational duties. I screened numerous files to identify a successor for the incumbent while I was there. When examining records, I focused on several professional attributes. First, was he/she capable of assuming full command of the Detachment? In the 13 months I commanded, I went on TDY over 40 times. During my R&R period at Christmas, I was away from the Detachment for two weeks. The Deputy had to be fully capable of assuming command of the Detachment in my absence. Second, I looked for operations experience. Operations at the Detachment run at a fast pace and the Deputy must be able to coordinate field activities, manage aviation resources, and coordinate and execute logistical resupply of the teams, with very little or no supervision.

Several of the officers the Air Force nominated for the Deputy position had intelligence backgrounds. I was very leery of accepting an officer whose record reflected this, as I was concerned that the Vietnamese might look at this assignment suspiciously. We worked very hard to convince the Vietnamese that our only purpose for being in Vietnam was to resolve the unaccounted-for issue, and that we had no interest in gathering other types of information. Mr. Le Mai, the Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, remarked to my Detachment Historian during a dinner toward the end of my tenure, that they had initially thought we had "other purposes" for being in Vietnam, but that now they knew that we were there for only one purpose, to resolve the issue of unaccounted-for Americans. I worked extremely hard not to violate that trust as I thought it would be extremely detrimental to the issue if the Vietnamese ever perceived that I was violating that trust. Assigning an officer with an intelligence background to the Detachment could have given that perception to the Vietnamese.

The Detachment had the normal administration, operations and logistic sections of any military organization. A long-term member of the Detachment directed each; Administration—an Army Staff Sergeant or Sergeant First Class, Logistics—a DA civilian under a two-year renewable contract, and Operations—an Air Force Major and Air Force Technical Sergeant or Master Sergeant.

The final section organic to the Detachment was the Casualty Resolution Section (CRS). Mr. Gary Flanagan, a retired USAF linguist/analyst, directed the operations of the CRS. Gary has been working this issue since October 1987, initially with the Joint Casualty Resolution Center and then with the JTF. Gary is one of those threads of continuity I spoke of earlier. For a new commander coming into the Detachment, much of what occurs doesn't always make sense, and dealing with such a different culture is often frustrating. Gary was extremely skillful in explaining the historical basis for various methods, and often kept me out of trouble by recommending techniques for getting things done with the Vietnamese.

Gary directed the efforts of the Research & Investigation Team (RIT). The RIT is a six-

person team that deploys to Vietnam for a period of four months. The JTF manned the RIT with the most skillful Vietnamese linguists and analysts assigned to the JTF, and the team works its most difficult cases. It is responsible for archival research, oral history interviews, special remains and priority case investigations, and walk-in interviews.¹⁵ As we near the "fullest possible accounting" and large-scale Joint Field Activities become less productive, the RIT will provide the organizational and operational design for continued efforts well into the future.

Though he returned to Washington, D.C. toward the end of my tour, Mr. Bob Destatte was an invaluable asset to me throughout my tenure. He was the Detachment's Research Historian, assigned to DPMO, but attached to Detachment 2 as DPMO's in-country analyst. I don't think there are many who are familiar with this issue who would argue against me when I say Bob is the most knowledgeable individual involved with this issue today. He is a fluent Vietnamese linguist and can totally immerse himself in the Vietnamese culture as required. He accompanied me to most meetings during delegation visits as he was one of the few people who both understood the issue and understood Vietnamese. He was able to convey some of the nuances of what the Vietnamese said during the meeting that others would miss. Bob was amongst the first Americans in-country in the early 1960's and has been in and out of Vietnam ever since. He was the single most important person to me as I was beginning to learn the issue. If Bob had a fault, it was that he is a perfectionist and sometimes got mired in the details of a particular issue. This said, his reports were always extremely detailed, complete, and authoritative. Bob knew the background of every aspect of this issue, and willingly shared it with anyone interested. It was a great loss to the Detachment when he returned to the United States. I always took great comfort in being able to walk downstairs to his office whenever I needed assistance.

At various times, additional personnel come under the command and control of Detachment 2. Whenever there is a live-sighting to investigate, Stony Beach, the Defense Intelligence Agency office in Bangkok, Thailand, dispatches an investigator to investigate the report. Though this investigator works directly for DIA, as soon as he enters Vietnam, he comes under Detachment 2 for the duration of his investigation in Vietnam.

The largest group of "temporary" personnel directed by Detachment 2 is the Investigation/Recovery Team (IRT) that enters the country every other month for Joint Field Activities. Each IRT consists of well over 100 specialists who fan out across the country to investigate leads and interview witnesses, and conduct recovery operations. For most of my tenure, the IRT consisted of two Investigation Elements (IE) and six Recovery Elements (RE).

The mix of IEs and REs varies depending upon constraints the Vietnamese impose and the work-load we had to accomplish. In the early days of the JTF, the Vietnamese limited the number of personnel it permitted into the country, however, they became much more flexible in adjusting these numbers to the needs of the mission. The JTF has investigated every case at least once, many numerous times. As such, in early 1994 it changed the IE/RE mix from three IEs and five REs to the current ration. The JTF has between 40 and 50 cases scheduled for recovery in Vietnam, and on average, an RE can complete two recoveries each JFA. To facilitate the backlog of recoveries, JTF-FA increased the number of REs to six.

During most JFAs, the IEs and REs were dispersed throughout Vietnam. The primary means of contact with them was telephone, if that was available, and HF radio when the teams were operating in remote sites. The Detachments in Laos and Cambodia communicated with their teams in the field via SATCOM radio, which was much more reliable than the HF. This was a major issue between the USG and the Vietnamese. We requested permission to use SATCOM continuously. We felt it was a safety issue with the teams (U.S. and Vietnamese) in the field. There were times when I was out to touch with teams by radio for up to four consecutive days. Communications between the Detachment and two teams in the field became so bad during one JFA that I had a helicopter fly to the site every other day to check on the team. This was a very expensive proposition, but work at remote sites can be very hazardous and I could not risk not knowing their situation. Every visiting delegation raised the SATCOM issue at the highest levels of the Vietnamese Government, but they never acceded to our request. Admiral Macke, CINCPAC, even assured the Vietnamese that we would use only unencrypted systems and went so far as to offer to provide the Vietnamese a SATCOM station to enable them to monitor our communications. We had nothing to hide. Their reasoning for denying our requests was that they did not have the regulations in place to control satellite communications. They posited that granting us the authorization opened the door for others to use it. While I never quite understood their position, I never made any progress in changing it.

I had a very direct and close relationship with the Vietnamese Government. Until the opening of the United States Liaison Office (USLO) in Hanoi, I was the senior USG representative in Vietnam. Even after it opened, I remained the primary point of contact in Vietnam concerning the issue of missing Americans. My direct counterpart in the Vietnamese Government was the Director of the Vietnamese Office Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP). During most of my tenure, this was Mr. Vu Chi Cong. The VNOSMP contained representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA), National Defense (MND), and Interior (MOI). The MFA coordinated the operation for the Vietnamese as they are the ministry responsible for dealing with officials from other countries. The MND and MOI had representatives in the VNOSMP because they are the two ministries who would have collected and stored information during the war regarding U.S. service men; MND for obvious reasons, and MOI because they were responsible for the administration of POW camps and the prison system.

I found the VNOSMP to be very helpful and open to our effort. I had easy access to the VNOSMP. Mr. Cong even gave me his home telephone number in the event an emergency arose after normal duty hours.

In sum, the organization and command and control structure I worked under was very effective. I had one boss, the CJTF, and he and his staff never hesitated to run interference for me as necessary to keep other agencies from distracting our efforts. The CJTF never micro-managed my operations and allowed me great leverage in how I accomplished the Detachment's mission. This flexibility was very important to my credibility with the Vietnamese, as they knew that I was entrusted to make decisions and to follow through on those decisions. Despite the freedom of action he allowed us, the CJTF was always there to support us when necessary. I was well staffed with some of the best soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and civilians I have ever worked with. The Vietnamese ensured that I had direct access

to the necessary agencies in their government whenever necessary. The command climate truly provided an environment that ensured our success.

PROGRESS TOWARD THE FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING

In March 1992, President Clinton validated former President Bush's four areas requiring tangible evidence of progress by the Vietnamese as a precondition to normalizing relations: (1) repatriation and identification of remains, (2) access to documents, (3) trilateral cooperation, and (4) progress in resolving priority cases and live sighting investigations, and support for joint field activities (JFAs). The President has continued to stress these areas even as the United States begins to engage Vietnam in other issues of concern.

I considered sufficient progress in the President's four areas our end state, despite the fact that tangible evidence of progress is a difficult end state to define. Although as a military officer I am much more comfortable when I have an end state that I can clearly enunciate, I soon discovered that when dealing with emotional that have great political consequences at the highest levels of the government, clarity of the ultimate objective is often difficult to define more precisely.

The press often asked the question; "When will all this end?" My answer to this was always that their question was one for the policy-makers; i.e. President Clinton, members of Congress, the Secretary of State, etc. I was merely an operator in the field. It is, however, my opinion that the effort will never end. "End" connotes finality, a ceasing of all efforts. Today, we are still finding remains of unaccounted-for-soldiers from World Wars I and II, and the Cold War. Task Force—Russia is searching the archives and records of the former Soviet Union in an effort to resolve losses from the Cold War era. We have yet to search the areas in North Korea where we lost America soldiers, and last year, a group in Canada even unearthed the remains of an American lost during the War of 1812. As long as we have Americans unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia, I do not believe our efforts will ever entirely cease. Rather, if at some point our efforts become less productive (i.e., a significant diminution in successful investigations and excavations) the means by which we seek to achieve our ends, the fullest possible accounting, may evolve.

By definition, JTFs are temporary. At some point in the future, it is reasonable to envision an organization such as CILHI controlling the entire accounting effort in Southeast Asia. There might be a small team of investigators such as the current RIT that remains in Vietnam to pursue leads as they develop. As the small in-country team discovers likely sites for excavation, an RE from CILHI could deploy to Vietnam to excavate that location. Whenever we have information that leads us toward resolving a case, I believe we will follow it.

The USG hinges future relations with the Vietnamese on progress toward the accounting effort. It is also critical to understand how the Vietnamese view their assistance in this endeavor. When negotiating with the Vietnamese and when speaking with the press, it is important to keep in mind the Vietnamese Government's official premise for cooperating. Vietnamese officials repeatedly reminded visiting delegations that they consider this issue a "humanitarian" issue and that they cooperate because it is the right thing to do. Their cooperation does not depend on closer relations, financial assistance, etc. This seemed to me to be a very important point with the Vietnamese. I felt it

was the basis for their position that their cooperation would continue until we resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the USG.

As I said earlier, it was not my responsibility to assess the amount of progress we made; those were policy decisions. It was my job to identify means of effectiveness of joint and unilateral efforts. I endeavored to provide relevant facts pertinent to each of the President's four areas, and then left the assessment to the policy-makers. The discussions that follow are the elements of progress I deemed significant during my tenure. This was the information I presented to visiting USG officials.

RECOVERY AND REPATRIATION OF REMAINS

Since the end of our involvement in the conflict in Indochina in 1975, the remains of 428 individuals have been repatriated to the United States and positively identified.

Recovery and repatriation of remains showed strong progress during my tenure. On the surface, this indicator of progress is relatively easy to measure. Ostensibly, all that should be necessary is to count the numbers of remains we recover in the field and subsequently repatriate to the United States. Nevertheless in just about every aspect of this issue, you can look at the results in two ways. Executives of the National League of Families (NLF)¹⁷ contend that the only meaningful way to measure progress in this area is by the number of unaccounted-for Americans that have been identified positively. Since January 1992 when the JTF began operations, CILHI has identified 110 previously unaccounted-for Americans. The NLF points to this relatively low figure when compared with the total number of unaccounted-for as evidence of slow progress in recovering and repatriating remains and a lack of cooperation by the Vietnamese. On the other hand, you can look at the number of remains that have been repatriated in that same period, consider that more than 20 years have passed the losses occurred, and develop entirely different conclusions regarding the success of JTF operations. I contend that the JTF and CILHI have been highly successful in recovering and repatriating remains.

The difficulty of locating remains was clarified for me when teams excavated the former Lang Vei Special Forces Camp in Quang Tri Province to search for five unaccounted-for Americans. The JTF had excavated this site twice previously without success. In February 1995, we brought Major (Retired) Frank C. Willoughby to Vietnam to assist us in our efforts. Mr. Willoughby had designed and built the camp, and commanded it at the time of the incident in 1968. Upon his arrival at the recovery site, MAJ Willoughby reconnoitered the area our teams had excavated during previous JFAs as they tried to find the camp's Tactical Operations Center (TOC). It was in the TOC where one of the five missing Americans had been seen last.

Mr. Willoughby thought that given the old maps and descriptions of the area, the areas where we excavated were reasonable locations to dig. However, after a couple of days to orient himself on the ground, Mr. Willoughby suggested excavating for the TOC some 50 yards from the previous locations. He also confirmed the location of the camp's Observation Post (OP) and a 4.2-inch mortar pit where the four remaining service members were last known to be. After several days of excavating, we found the remnants of the TOC, one bone fragment and one possible bone fragment. Still visible on the concrete floor of the TOC were the scars made by hand grenades the attackers threw down the bunker's air vents.

Since the war, the local Vietnamese had used the site of the camp as a "quarry" for

materials to build Highway 9, and dramatically changed the nature of the terrain. Mr. Willoughby thought that the remains of his soldiers had most likely been in the area of where the Vietnamese had quarried, and were thus irretrievably lost. I firmly believe that without Mr. Willoughby's on-site knowledge we would not have found the site.

During one of my visits to the site, Mr. Willoughby and I sat on a hill in the middle of the old camp and he recounted the day of the battle for me. As we looked west from the hill, we could see Laos which the attacking Vietnamese had used as a sanctuary. This battle was the first of the war when the Vietnamese used tanks to attack the American positions, and is the subject of a book by David Stockwell entitled, *Tanks in the Wire*.¹⁸ We could probably see about two miles distant, and he said that at the time of the war, all that we were now surveying was triple canopy jungle. Today, the view encompassed only rice paddies between the camp and the Laotian mountains. He said that the hill we were sitting on was a good ten to 12 feet taller during the war, and that the bulldozing of the hill for road materials had changed its appearance dramatically.

This story clearly demonstrates the problems associated with time. More than 20 years passed since the incident of loss. Not only was it likely that the environment had eroded whatever remains the ground held, but it was obvious that "man" had changed the terrain. The terrain changes and the memories of witnesses fade. There is an element of luck involved every time we find remains. To be able to then identify the remains is even more fortuitous.

I need to digress from the subject of repatriation of remains to further elaborate on Mr. Willoughby's trip. Though I barely got to know him, Mr. Willoughby will always be one of my heroes. It was a very emotional trip back for him, but one which I think helped him close an open chapter in his life. During one of my visits to Lang Vei, I brought a television crew from KCRA television in Sacramento, California. While interviewing Mr. Willoughby, the commentator asked him why he returned to Vietnam to help us. Although I do not remember the exact wording, Mr. Willoughby replied by saying that he was the Commander at the time they evacuated the camp, forced by enemy action to leave five of his soldiers behind. During the war, he always felt it his duty to do everything he could to bring his soldiers home. The passage of time had not relieved him of his duty, for he was still their commander. Over 25 years passed since the incident, but duty to his soldiers still drove this great American—one of God's noblest people.

I also had the opportunity during this visit to learn about another aspect of this issue. After the television crew interviewed Mr. Willoughby, they turned to one of my VNOSMP counterparts, Senior Colonel Bien¹⁹ asking him for his impressions of our efforts. SRCol Bien said that he had lost four brothers during their "war for independence," one of whom was lost in the same area near Highway 9. Unfortunately, this brother is still missing. SRCol Bien said that many members of his family criticized his efforts to help the USG account for its missing, when he cannot even account for his own brother. The commentator then asked how he answered their reproaches. SRCol Bien replied very curtly, "I tell them that I help because it is the right thing to do."

Unilateral Activities by the Vietnamese to Recover Remains

During my tenure, delegations continually stressed that the Vietnamese needed to work more unilaterally to resolve this issue. Some

stress unilateral action because they believe that the Vietnamese Government is withholding remains and information concerning missing Americans. Thus, they reason that only the Vietnamese can resolve these cases and they could do so by simply handing over the information or remains they possess. I am not in a position to conclusively state where the truth in this matter lies. I do know, however, that unilateral operations are a poor substitute for joint investigations and research. Unilateral operations do not result in near the quality of work joint operations do.

Another aspect of our requests for more unilateral efforts on the part of the Vietnamese that I felt was important was the lack of credence we sometimes attached to their results. Time and time again, I saw individuals both inside and outside the USG criticize the results of Vietnamese unilateral efforts simply (in my opinion) because their results did not coincide with the results they expected. In my opinion, if we ask the Vietnamese to investigate cases unilaterally, then when they do we have a certain obligation to accept the results of their efforts. I am not saying that we should unconditionally accept every report just because the Vietnamese say it is accurate. What I am saying is that if we are unwilling to accept their results whatever they might be, then maybe we should reconsider the value of requesting the unilateral activity in the first place.

We should keep in mind that unilateral work by the Vietnamese precedes everything we do. There is no way we could find witnesses to interview, documents to analyze or sites to excavate without prior work by the Vietnamese; never have—never will. Approximately ten days before every JFA, the Vietnamese team leaders begin to coordinate with provincial officials, reconnoiter sites, search for witnesses, and arrange for their presence. Thanks to their preliminary efforts, when American team members arrive, we can maximize the time in-country. Additionally, the Vietnamese provide unilaterally almost half of all remains that we obtain.

In June 1994, a Vietnamese citizen from Son La Province contacted Detachment 2 officials stating someone he knew in Son La had remains of an American service man. During the interview, he produced a dog-tag impression correlating to Case 0954 to the Casualty Resolution Section at Detachment 2. We sent an official from our office and one from the VNOSMP to Son La to meet the individual who allegedly had the remains. Although the individual in Son La denied having any remains, the witness who gave us the information in Hanoi insisted that this was the correct individual. At that time, we were unable to obtain the remains, but the Commander of the local Border Defense Forces pledged that he would continue to investigate this case and recover any available remains. In January 1995, we received the remains from the VNOSMP and in February 1995, we repatriated the remains to the United States.

This was an important lesson for me in dealing with Vietnamese authorities. When the Vietnamese citizen initially refused to give us the remains, I felt that the SRV officials should have searched his home and belongings and confiscated the remains. After all, it is against the law in Vietnam to hoard remains or demand compensation for them. I soon learned, however, that the Vietnamese continually stress that they prefer persuasion rather than force to entice Vietnamese citizens to turn remains over to U.S. or Vietnamese officials. They are concerned that force would discourage other citizens from coming forth with remains or information. Besides, the remains could have been any-

where, and if he had hidden them, the likelihood of finding them would have been very slim. Case 0954 is an example where the Vietnamese process of patient persuasion seems to have worked.

Nevertheless, I did get the impression that when persuasion failed, SRV officials were not hesitant to enforce the law. During the 32d JFA, SRV officials confiscated remains from an SRV citizen who demanded compensation for them. The officials later provided them to our team members. Seeking compensation for remains is not an uncommon occurrence. Vietnamese citizens will often approach team members in the field, or they will even come to "The Ranch" to offer remains or information in exchange for money, gold, or a visa to the United States for themselves or a relative. In all cases, our answer was that under no circumstances would we compensate them for remains or information. Rather, we encouraged them to provide the remains for information as an "act of compassion to help resolve this humanitarian issue." In most cases, the citizen, seeing he was not going to receive anything in return, handed over the remains or provided the information anyway.

Refusing to "buy" remains or information was an important position for the Vietnamese Government as well as ours. Vietnam is an extremely poor country. If word spread that the USG was "paying" for remains, some Vietnamese, not realizing that we can differentiate between remains belonging to a Southeast Asian Mongoloid and an American, would begin "robbing graves" throughout Vietnam in hopes of earning money. Rather than helping our efforts, this would likely cause many Vietnamese to resent the results of our efforts.

During my tenure, there were several cases of individuals absolutely refusing to hand over remains they had without some type of reward. In some instances the Vietnamese were able to document repeated attempts by the same individuals to sell remains. I know of at least two successful prosecutions of "remains dealers" while I was in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese also appeared to act unilaterally in cases that might involve some sensitivity with the Vietnamese populace. During the 34th JFA, Vietnamese authorities in Ben Tre Province unilaterally excavated a site in a War Heroes Cemetery. Past investigations of this case led us to believe that the Vietnamese had buried an unaccounted-for American in the cemetery inadvertently. Provincial officials were very sensitive about the possibility of angering the villagers if they saw Americans excavating in their War Heroes Cemetery. The provincial officials disinterred several graves during the evening when they would not be observed by the villagers, and presented the remains to a JTF-FA anthropologist waiting nearby for examination. Unfortunately, he determined all the remains to be of Southeast Asian origin. The importance of this episode, however, is the level of cooperation it demonstrates. Could this have occurred in Arlington National Cemetery, the final resting place of many of our war heroes?

In another development regarding unilateral efforts by the Vietnamese to develop "leads" concerning unaccounted-for Americans, the Vietnamese government unilaterally tasked the Ministry of War Invalids, Social Welfare and Labor (responsible for accounting for the over 300,000 missing Vietnamese from the war) to coordinate their efforts with those of the VNOSMP. Now, before their investigators travel to the various provinces, they take with them a list of unaccounted-for Americans possibly lost in those areas. When they interview witnesses regarding Vietnamese missing, they also ask about our unaccounted-for individuals.

Amnesty Program

The Vietnamese Government actively publicizes their remains amnesty program²⁰ and the U.S. MIA Office. They allowed Detachment 2 to place an advertisement in the Hanoi Yellow Pages inviting Vietnamese citizens who might have information about unaccounted-for Americans to contact the VNOSMP or the U.S. MIA office in Hanoi. They also televised advertisements requesting information on specific cases and placed the U.S. MIA Office on tourist maps. Additionally, many of the remains we receive from Vietnamese citizens originate from remote areas of the country, thus indicating widespread word of the amnesty program.

One such case occurred during the 34th JFA. The VNOSMP notified us that villagers in Quy Nhon Town had discovered what they believed were remains of an American. A family in Quy Nhon found these remains while looking for the remains of one of their children in a local cemetery. When they removed the bones from the ground, they realized that they were much too large to be Vietnamese. They placed them back into the grave and notified local officials of their discovery. The local official called the VNOSMP offering to excavate the site unilaterally, and the VNOSMP then called me to request that I send an anthropologist to Quy Nhon Town to examine the remains. On March 7 and 8, 1995, a JTF-FA anthropologist reviewed the remains. The remains consisted of nearly three-quarters of an entire skeleton and 21 (possibly 22) teeth, five with restorations. The anthropologist determined the remains to be from a large male, over 40 years old, over six feet tall, and not Southeast Asian Mongoloid. We repatriated these remains to the United States.

"Dog Tag" Investigations

Since 1979, the USG has received literally thousands of reports of remains associated with a set of "dog tags" in the hands of private citizens. About 97% of the Americans named in these reports were never unaccounted-for, while somewhat more than 100 Americans named in the reports are still missing. You must consider two facts regarding "dog tag" cases. First, during the war, many Americans lost their dog tags, gave them to their "girl friends," traded them, etc. Second, when we evacuated the embassy in 1975, the machines used to manufacture dog tags remained behind. Budding "entrepreneurs" have been cranking out counterfeit tags ever since. The end result is that, whether real or counterfeit, a glut of dog tags is available throughout Vietnam, especially in stores and street corners catering to tourists.

Shortly after my arrival in Vietnam, a U.S. citizen visiting Vietnam contacted one of our EIs working in the vicinity of Ho Chi Minh City to tell them that she had 1,444 dog tags of missing Americans and a set of remains. She said that Vietnamese secret police and even the CIA were following her, and she feared for her life. The IE team leader agreed to meet with her and she related a fantastic story of intrigue. She said that a very "reliable" Vietnamese man had contacted her and offered to lead her to where he knew there were a number of dog tags and remains of missing Americans. She knew he was reliable because he did not ask for any money for the items, only some compensation for the time and travel. She recounted an escapade involving nighttime motorcycle rides disguised as a Vietnamese peasant to various locations. She further described crawling into a "previously unknown" tunnel in Marble Mountain, Da Nang (one of the most famous tourist sites in all Vietnam), and there, on top of the ground, lay 1,444 previously undiscovered dog tags. Then he took

her by motorcycle to a cemetery where a small bag containing bones laid on top of the ground.

She believed she had solved the entire issue of unaccounted-for Americans, and told us that she planned to call a press conference as soon as she landed in Los Angeles (she claimed to be a journalist). Knowing that it is easier to discredit an inaccurate story before it comes out than to react to one after it hits the media, we thought it was critical to determine the veracity of her claims. Our first step was to send CILHI's best anthropologist to HCMC to examine the remains. He found them to be from a Southeast Asian Mongoloid. It was obvious to him that they were not American. For two days, analysts in Detachment 2 searched our database of missing Americans comparing it to the names on the dog tags. Not a single one correlated to an unaccounted-for American. As soon as we confirmed our findings, I immediately called the JTF-FA Public Affairs Officer (PAO) in Hawaii to inform him of the results of our investigation. I never heard of any news report or press conferences regarding this incident.

JTF-FA cannot afford to dismiss any of these claims without fully investigating them. Though the odds are slim, the possible benefit of discovering new leads far outweigh the amount of work involved chasing dead-ends. The Archival Research Team (ART) began investigating dog-tag leads during my tenure and the RIT continues this effort today. In October 1994, the ART received partial human remains and a set of dog tags that we tentatively correlated to two cases of unaccounted-for Americans. One set of remains contained teeth with restorations. A CILHI anthropologist confirmed that the remains were likely to be those of an American, and we repatriated these remains to the United States.

ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

The USG believes that museum artifacts and archives, tradition houses (local museums), military historical files, prison records, etc., might contain information pertaining to Americans still unaccounted-for. Since its January 1992, members of JTF-FA have examined over 30,000 items correlating to over 820 unresolved cases. These include more than 2,000 photographs of former POWs, remains, crew gear, personal identification items, aircraft wreckage, sketches, maps, etc. During its existence, the ART had unrestricted access to museums and tradition houses throughout Vietnam, and interviewed many of the past museum curators. USG investigators, including DIA analysts, have visited several prisons throughout Vietnam and have discovered no evidence that the Vietnamese held U.S. prisoners after 1973. Additionally, the Vietnamese established the Joint Document Center (JDC) in a wing of their Central Army Museum in Hanoi. The JDC serves as a permanent location dedicated to the joint review of any artifacts or documents researchers might discover. Detachment 2 and VNOSMP analysts man the JDC on a daily basis.

Providing archival information to the USG presents an interesting dilemma to the Vietnamese. Prior to the arrival of CODEL Bond in the Fall of 1994, I attended a meeting between Mr. Jim Hall and Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phong, Director of the Americas Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.²¹ During the meeting, Mr. Hall encouraged Mr. Phong to present any documents they may have uncovered during their unilateral research to the visiting delegation. Mr. Phong responded that they no longer thought it wise to hold documents they find to present to delegations. Rather, they preferred to hand them over to the Detachment immediately upon

discovering and reviewing them. The Vietnamese were in an interesting Catch-22. If a delegation visited and the Vietnamese did not give them a document of some type, critics of their level of cooperation quickly claimed that the Vietnamese were withholding information. On the other hand, if they provided documents to visiting delegations, these same critics claimed that the Vietnamese had all the documents we were looking for and provided tid-bits to visitors to try to convince us of their cooperation. I could not argue Mr. Phong's logic because I saw it happen.

Although the number of items investigators have examined is large, access to documents and other items of archival research was one of the toughest areas for us to note significant and tangible progress during my tenure. Only late in my tour did our efforts begin to show concrete headway. One of our primary goals was to "coach" the Vietnamese to report their activities more effectively. We stressed that it was not good enough to simply perform research and then tell us that they did not find anything. We suggested to them that if they looked for documents in the archives of the Air Defense units in Military Region 4, for example, they needed to provide us the specifics of their efforts; what files did they look at, what time period did the records cover, where did they perform the research, when, who were the investigators, etc.?

During one of our Technical Conferences, General Viale, CJTF-FA, requested our counterparts improve the detail of their reports. In response, Mr. Cong, Director of the VNOSMP, tried to explain their problem. He said that when Vietnamese investigate a case, and find nothing, no report is necessary. Partly in jest, I told him that the American Government can write reams about what we don't find. Nonetheless, on a more serious note I explained that knowing the circumstances around which investigators found nothing may often be as valuable to an analyst as actually finding something. Mr. Cong concluded by saying that it was taking a "cultural change" for them to realize what we wanted, but pledged his support to continue to try.

Ms. Virginia Foote, the President of the US/Vietnam Trade Council and frequent visitor to Vietnam, offered another consideration regarding the detail of Vietnamese reporting. In mid-1995, the DASD for POW/MIA Affairs, General Wold, asked Ms. Foote to intervene with the Vietnamese to encourage them to improve the detail of their reporting. During a meeting with the Ministry of Interior official in charge of the U.S. MIA work by the MOI, Ms. Foote encouraged him to improve their reporting procedures. She received a "very firm, and rather angry, answer that such reporting would expose their military intelligence filing and personnel system which they will not do." Ms. Foote advised General Wold and Ambassador Winston Lord that "they might have set too high a reporting standard and that the Vietnamese are never going to issue reports explaining in depth their process for unilateral searches for the reasons given by MOI. In my view (Ms. Foote's), it is not reasonable for the USG to push this too far."

At least annually, President Clinton sent a delegation representing him to Vietnam to assess the level of progress we were making and the level of Vietnamese cooperation. The delegations normally thanked the Vietnamese for their past cooperation and encouraged more effort in various areas. The delegations often brought specific requests for information regarding specific cases of particular interest to the USG, and suggested ways of improving cooperation.

At the request of the July 1994 Presidential Delegation, the MOI and MND each formed a

small team to unilaterally research historical files and interview Vietnamese officials who may have information concerning missing Americans. They submitted an initial "work-plan" and asked for our ideas concerning the plan. The VNOSMP provided the teams' initial report to us in March 1995, and on May 15, 1995, Mr. Phong gave additional reports from the MOI and MND to me. On May 30, 1995, Mr. Tran Van Tu, Acting Director, VNOSMP, provided a report from the MOI to me detailing their research efforts in seven northern provinces.

At the time of my departure, Detachment 2 was receiving on a regular basis, reports from the VNOSMP and the special teams formed by the MND and MOI for unilateral research. In total, I received five written reports of progress from the VNOSMP. Though I did not see the final assessments of these reports prior to my departure, they did appear to have useful and previously unavailable information.

Personal Diaries and Artifacts

Though we have not received a large number of personal records, we did receive some, and it appeared that the Vietnamese Veterans Association was encouraging its member to provide more to us. Shortly after President Clinton lifted the trade embargo, a retired PAVN²² Senior Colonel voluntarily shared information about unaccounted-for Americans that he had recorded in his personal wartime diary. In one instance, his diary confirmed that one aircraft and a crew of eight men who disappeared while on a mission in Laos nearly 30 years ago, crashed more than 140 km (nearly 100 miles) from the last known location noted in U.S. records. "The Vietnamese Veterans Association, headed by General Quang, started an aggressive campaign to encourage Vietnamese veterans to come forward with information that might help account for Americans killed during the war. Materials have been coming in greater quantity since diplomatic relations were established."²³

TRILATERAL COOPERATION²⁴

The most important aspect of Trilateral Field Activities is that the Vietnamese Government considered this an issue between the U.S., Laos and Cambodia, not Vietnam. This is important because Vietnam continually stated that they would support whatever requests the U.S. made regarding these operations so long as they were able to locate the witnesses and persuade them to participate. Their actions supported their promises. On December 1, 1994, U.S., Vietnamese, and Laotian officials met in Hanoi to lend structure to the way we conducted trilateral operations. All participants agreed that Vietnamese and JTF-FA investigators would continue to identify and then interview Vietnamese citizens who might possess information pertaining to unaccounted-for Americans in Laos. If, after the interview, Vietnamese and U.S. investigators concluded that the witness had pertinent information, Laotian investigators would travel to Vietnam to interview the witness. If, subsequent to their interview, the Laotians agreed that the witness possessed reliable information that could help resolve a case, they authorized their travel to Laos and participation in a JFA in Laos.

From this conference forward, it was apparent that the VNOSMP was working diligently to identify Vietnamese witnesses who could assist in resolving cases in Laos. During the first three JFAs following the trilateral agreement in December, the VNOSMP provided eight Vietnamese witnesses to assist investigations in Laos. The VNOSMP located all the witnesses unilaterally, made them available for the Laotians to interview, and escorted them to Laos. All

this is in spite of several witnesses living in remote locations, short notices for passports and visas, and frequently difficult transportation and communication problems with local officials and witnesses. In one instance, the witnesses did not want to travel to Laos citing health and business. They did agree, however, to travel to Hanoi on short notice and spent hours studying maps with our specialists and describing their recollections of the incident.

Two cases exemplifying trilateral cooperation stand out most. The first trilateral case we investigated under the new guidelines involved the loss of 11 Americans at Phou Pha Thi in northern Laos. Phou Pha Thi was a "secret" radar site that vectored U.S. aircraft into targets over northern Vietnam during the conflict. During the war, a PAVN sapper unit scaled sheer cliffs in the middle of the night, surprised the defenders, and overran the site. 11 Americans remain unaccounted-for. After weeks of unilateral work, the Vietnamese located the best witness for the Phou Pha Thi site, Mr. Muc, a retired PAVN Colonel, who led the PAVN attack on the site. Our most experienced linguist and analyst, Mr. Bob Destatte, interviewed Mr. Muc and found that his recollection of the events that transpired the night of the attack confirmed that he had in fact led the attack. We nominated Mr. Muc to travel to Laos to help with the trilateral field activity.

In December 1994, Mr. Muc went to Phou Pha Thi and assisted U.S. and Lao investigators on site. Though their efforts were in vain, both the Vietnamese and Laotian governments had cooperated fully on the agreed upon trilateral procedures, and the process worked. We continued to use this model during all future trilateral operations.

The second case occurred shortly after our first trilateral operation. The Vietnamese unilaterally located a witness to a C-47 crash in Laos. The Vietnamese made him available for a joint interview on very short notice, and he provided three sketches of the area surrounding the crash site. These sketches included the relative locations of three mass graves and a mass burial site of eight U.S. air crew members. We nominated him to travel to Laos, and in January 1995 he and two other Vietnamese witnesses whom the Vietnamese located unilaterally traveled to Laos to help investigators on site.

Trilateral operations between the U.S., Vietnam and Laos progressed from being something out of the ordinary to being normal operations. Detachments 2 and 3, the Vietnamese representatives, and Laotian specialists all appeared to regard this as an integral aspect of operations in Laos and treated it as such.

PRIORITY CASES, LIVE SIGHTING INVESTIGATIONS, JOINT FIELD ACTIVITIES

Priority Cases

Priority "Last Known Alive" Cases.²⁵ These cases involve some of the USC's most sensitive cases in that they include cases where the USC has been unable to conclusively determine if the individual is dead or alive. Of the 196 individuals in this category, one is a foreign national, we have completely resolved and identified the remains of 27 individuals, and determined the fate of all but 50 of the individuals. Investigators have investigated each of the remaining Priority Cases at least once, some as many as seven or eight times.²⁶

One priority case we investigated while I was in Vietnam was Case 0644. The last known location for 0644 was in a militarily sensitive area. The Vietnamese denied access to the site to us because they claimed that no aircraft ever crashed there. They would not allow our teams into that sensitive area

unless there was a reasonable expectation that it would lead to success. We continued to request access to the site. The Vietnamese sent LTC Pham Teo, one of their most experienced investigators, to the site to unilaterally investigate the case. He found several witnesses who confirmed that the crash occurred outside the sensitive area in a neighboring province. LTC Pham Teo traveled to the location the witnesses identified to investigate their claims. He recovered a small amount of remains and some identification media. A joint U.S./SRV team investigated the new crash site during the October-November 1994 JFA. They found the crash site LTC Pham Teo identified and recovered small pieces of wreckage. The Joint Forensics Review in September 1994 accepted the remains LTC Pham Teo unilaterally recovered and we repatriated them to the U.S. in September 1994 for further analysis. CILHI's forensic analysis determined these remains were of an adult male, however, the remains were insufficient to permit determination of race. JIT-FA rescheduled this case for reinvestigation.

Special Remains Cases.²⁷ During my tenure, the 30th through 35th JFAs, we excavated sites associated with 13 special remains cases. We recovered remains from five sites and CILHI was able to resolve two of the cases through positive identification of remains (Cases 0951 and 1910).

Another case, Case 0037, was resolved after our investigation led to confirmation that the remains had been interred at Arlington Cemetery since the mid-1960s. This was a "remains reportedly recovered but not repatriated" case and proved very interesting. Case 0037 involves remains of an American civilian who was killed in Vietnam during the war. The Vietnamese claimed that they had recovered the remains and returned them directly to the widow during the war. Our government, however, did not have a record of the repatriation. Despite a unilateral investigation by Vietnamese authorities and two field investigations by US investigators, both of whom concluded the remains had been returned, our government continued to press the Vietnamese. Finally, DOS contacted the widow who confirmed the Vietnamese claims.

We have investigated every SRT case jointly with Vietnamese specialists at least once. JTF-FA and CILHI have resolved five cases fully. The field investigation teams have found no evidence that could sustain the belief that Vietnamese authorities have recovered remains for the Special Remains Cases that they have not yet repatriated which is the basic premise for the SRT list. Discussed below are a few cases we investigated from each category of SRT cases. The point I am trying to make by relating the circumstances of these investigations is that the results of these investigations led me to believe that our assumption that the Vietnamese still control these remains is not entirely valid. Our investigators determined through exhaustive investigations that there are at least 30 cases for which the remains are non-recoverable. There are another 14 cases for which we have evidence to believe that remains we have recovered and repatriated to CILHI are those of the unaccounted-for individual, but have been unable to conclusively identify them.

Case 0951 (Died in Captivity List). This case involved the loss of one American who the Vietnamese reported as having died on January 2, 1969 while in a jungle POW camp in what is now Quang Nam Da Nang Province. Six prisoners died in the camp. The Vietnamese claimed to have excavated and repatriated five sets of remains from the camp location following the war and that they were unable to find the sixth. Joint teams

investigating Case 0951 confirmed the Vietnamese claim. The sixth remained unaccounted-for.

The VNOSMP helped us find the old camp site. There, we found eight holes indicating that as the Vietnamese claimed, they had successfully found five graves, and had tried three times unsuccessfully to find the last American. In January 1994, CSM Davis, a former POW still on active duty in the Army, accompanied a joint investigation element to the site. He identified where he personally buried the unaccounted-for American associated with this case. After excavating the site for three weeks in August 1994, a joint team found a nearly complete skeleton, including 31 teeth (10 with restorations) at the site. CILHI confirmed the identification of this individual in April 1995. This demonstrates, at least in this case, that the Vietnamese never recovered this set of remains—contrary to what some might claim.

Case 1910 (Graves Registry Case). A joint team excavated the crash site on the side of a karst in October-November 1994.²⁸ It recovered material evidence and remains, including hundreds of possible human bone fragments, 16 teeth, eight with restorations, that led to a successful identification for this case. It is puzzling as to why the individual's name appeared on a graves registry unless villagers had buried the remains they found and left the majority at the crash site.

Case 0853 (Graves Registry Case). A joint team excavated this site in January 1995. We recovered material evidence and remains (including two teeth, one with restoration) that we were hopeful would lead to a successful identification for this case.

Case 0215 (Photo and Graves Register Case). Our investigators found a photograph of the unaccounted-for American, apparently severely injured, receiving medical care at a hospital. Vietnamese authorities helped us locate and interview the doctor and three of the four nurses in the photograph. Their information led us to other witnesses who confirmed the American died shortly after he arrived at the Quang Ninh Province Hospital, and was buried in the public cemetery behind the hospital. Notwithstanding that the only known firsthand witness to the burial died several years ago, Vietnamese authorities allowed us to excavate parts of that public cemetery to search for the remains of this American during the October-November 1994 JFA. Though the excavation inadvertently disturbed a few graves of local residents, local officials and citizens volunteered their support for the team's work. The team did not find the remains, however, local citizens volunteered new information that might lead us to a person who left the area years ago, but who helped bury this American.

Excavating this case also exemplified the compassion of our team members. While excavating a site at the cemetery, the RE unearthed the remains of a small child. Apparently, at the time of the burial the family did not have enough money to purchase a casket for the child. They simply wrapped the dead child in cloth and interred the body. Our team members went to the local village and purchased with their personal money a small casket in which they placed the child's remains. The RE then ceased their work and allowed the villagers time to reinter the child with the appropriate ceremonies. Our soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen are truly our best ambassadors.

*Live Sighting Investigations*²⁹

Since the commencement of JTF operations in January 1992, the USG has investigated over 90 live-sighting reports. None reflected the presence of live unaccounted-for Americans. The USG has no evidence that live Americans are being held against

their will in Vietnam. Neither does the USG have any evidence proving there are not—it is almost impossible to prove a negative. As such, we always devoted the necessary time, manpower, and resources to fully investigate each and every live-sighting as completely as possible.

The Vietnamese have been very forthcoming in granting access to sites we need to investigate as a part of an LSI. Later in this paper (beginning on page 51), I explain the manner in which we investigated normal cases in militarily sensitive areas. These procedures did not, however, apply to LSIs. Normal investigations during JFAs do not entail the sense of urgency and immediacy that LSIs do. When we investigate the incident site for an aircraft crash that occurred 20 to 30 years ago, it is unlikely that the site will change much more than it already has. However, the very nature of an LSI demands that we receive immediate access or the integrity of the investigation would be in jeopardy. The Vietnamese understand this. To my knowledge, and to that of the primary Stony Beach live sighting investigator, the Vietnamese have never denied JTF-FA or Stony Beach personnel access to any place we asked to enter as a part of an LSI.

The USG must take care not to endanger the unrestricted access the Vietnamese have allowed for LSIs. Many live sighting reports are credible, but some are not. The USG should take care not to allow ridiculous live sighting reports such as those by former Congressman Billy Hendon (see Annex A) to jeopardize Vietnam's support for the serious work U.S. and Vietnamese teams are conducting.

Joint Field Activities

JTF-FA has sent more than 11,700 notices of progress regarding their cases to over 2,200 families.

I always tried to stress to visitors and journalists that it is necessary to look beyond the "statistics," and look at the overall progress. It would be easy to look at the number of provinces we operated in during the 35th JFA and compare that to the number in any of the other JFAs. Or, you could look at the number of cases we investigated and excavated during the 35th JFA and compare those numbers to the activities of the 28th JFA, immediately following President Clinton's decision to lift the trade embargo. By only looking at raw statistics, one could very easily conclude that the Vietnamese felt they had achieved their goal with the lifting of the embargo and that they now saw no reason to continue to cooperate with our efforts. Simply looking at the statistics could lead you to conclude there had been a diminution of cooperation. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

It is true we have operated in significantly fewer provinces during recent JFAs, but we consciously decided to concentrate our efforts in the central part of the country. This allowed us to maximize work-time and minimize travel time. In the early days, an IE could check into a hotel in Da Nang and fully investigate all its cases from that single location. Today, on the other hand, an IE may interview one witness in Da Nang one day, drive for two days to another province to interview another witness for the same case, and continue in this manner for a number of days. Several cases during my tenure involved treks by IEs through the jungle for two to three days just to investigate a single "last known location." There was even a case in Song Be Province for which we contracted elephants to transport the IE to and from the site because the terrain was so treacherous and wild animals (tigers and snakes) were so prevalent. In the end, we were able to find a helicopter landing zone

near the site, and did not need to use the elephants.

Like the investigations, excavations have become much more complex. Today, it is not unusual for a case to take two JFAs to complete. Once again in Song Be Province, we had a case that required three JFAs. During the 34th JFA, two cases, Case 0927 and 0911, were extremely difficult to excavate because of the clayey soil, mud and water. Though scheduled to be completed during the JFA, the excavation teams could not complete them in the allotted time. It was very important to finish them as soon as possible since the approaching monsoons would likely destroy the work we had already accomplished and preclude further excavations. At our request, the Vietnamese extended the two excavation teams in-country an extra two weeks. This was a significant decision, and one that required approval from the highest level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

During the 35th JFA, local officials in two provinces demanded exorbitant land compensation fees for alterations our excavation teams made to the terrain around two of our recovery sites. They made these demands after the recoveries were complete, despite repeated requests by us that they identify valid compensation fees prior to the start of the operation.³⁰ When Detachment personnel could not resolve the issue satisfactorily with the local officials, the Acting Director, VNOSMP, sent one of his most experienced specialists to assist in negotiations with local officials. Within one day, we had resolved the differing positions and agreed on a suitable level of compensation. Provincial officials also agreed to try to do better at identifying costs up front in the future.

Investigations in Militarily Sensitive Areas

One requirement of JTF-FA is to visit the last known location noted in U.S. records for each unaccounted-for American. Occasionally, this site falls within a sensitive military installation or area. Vietnamese authorities have worked with us to develop a method of investigating these cases that meets their security concerns and our need to try to achieve the "fullest possible" accounting.

First, Vietnamese specialists unilaterally investigate the case to try to confirm the facts of the case. If they find that the incident occurred outside the sensitive area, we follow with a joint investigation of the area outside the militarily sensitive area. If the joint investigation confirms the Vietnamese findings, there is no longer any need for U.S. investigators to seek access to the area.

If the Vietnamese determine the incident did occur inside the sensitive area, they unilaterally seek witnesses who can clarify the facts of the case, and then arrange for U.S. investigators to interview the witnesses outside the sensitive area. If they are unable to resolve the case through unilateral investigation, and if they confirm the incident occurred in the militarily sensitive area, Vietnamese authorities work with us to devise a "case-specific" resolution that has sometimes included giving American investigators access to the area. In short, the Vietnamese required that we follow every lead possible before requesting access to a militarily sensitive site. If the case was still unresolved and the only viable leads led us back to the restricted area, the Vietnamese were willing to negotiate a suitable solution.

During the 30th JFA the Vietnamese granted us access to three of five militarily sensitive areas vicinity the Cam Ranh Bay naval facility for which they had previously denied access. For the two remaining cases, they brought witnesses outside the sensitive area for our investigators to interview.

One of the remaining cases involved a drowning. The missing American had been on R&R and was swimming in the ocean. Witness reports at the time of the incident indicate that the individual was swept underwater and not seen again. As I said earlier, JTF-FA procedures require that we visit the "last known location" which, in this case, was within a secure area vicinity Cam Ranh Bay. The Vietnamese denied our teams access to the site, reasoning that we had controlled the naval facility for some years after the incident—if we did not find the body then, what made us think a visit to the site today would result in finding the remains?

During the 34th JFA, joint teams investigated two cases that occurred in militarily sensitive areas, Cases 0272 and 1895. Though the Vietnamese would not grant us access to the last known location as it was in the sensitive areas, they did investigate the case unilaterally and made several witnesses available for our interview.

MISCELLANEOUS INDICATORS OF PROGRESS

*Oral History Program (OHP)*³¹

The OHP has been a very productive program for JTF-FA. It amassed a large body of knowledge that helped us understand many aspects of Vietnamese operations during the conflict, most importantly the POW camp procedures. Numerous interviews with present and former high ranking Vietnamese officials have provided many insights into what might have happened to some of our missing.

The MND OHP cell unilaterally researches the information we provide to them for each OHP interview we request. Due to the limited communications and transportation capabilities throughout Vietnam, the VNOSMP two-man cell then travels to each potential location nationwide to locate each witness. Most witness searches require the VNOSMP members to coordinate with the province, district, village, and hamlet authorities consecutively. In some cases, when OHP leads are unclear, the VNOSMP spends days and weeks tracking down individuals. They might interview hundreds of people for leads before ever finding the individual in question.

One such case involved our request to speak to a Mr. Phap. Since May 1993, the MND cell of the VNOSMP has searched for Mr. Phap, a possible witness for a priority case. This continuing search spanned several provinces and included searches of the PAVN officers' registry, visits to local veterans groups, and queries with province officials. Despite the negative results so far, the VNOSMP continues to search for Mr. Phap even though the search is the equivalent of searching for some named "Bill" in Texas while only knowing that "Bill" served in a company during the war. This is only one example of unilateral efforts to find witnesses when the U.S. has very limited identification or location data for a witness.

During more difficult searches, the VNOSMP members seek members of local veterans groups, officials of the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids, and Social Affairs, local family registers, and public security agencies. Without these efforts prior to each OHP interview, the joint OHP team could spend several days on the road in order to conduct each interview. Their preliminary efforts save the joint OHP team a lot of time.

While I was in Vietnam, the VNOSMP produced two OHP unilateral reports of interview. Although these reports lacked the details we desired, they were full-page documents with far more details than the standard VNOSMP reports of the past. The VNOSMP has also produced reports on each round of joint OHP activities. The latest re-

ports included a section on unilateral VNOSMP activities during the investigative phase.

The Vietnamese have worked diligently to assist us in the OHP. They dedicated some of their most experienced investigators to the effort and participate in all joint interviews with our analysts. They have also interviewed numerous officials unilaterally.

On January 20, 1995, a joint U.S./Vietnam Oral History team interviewed active duty PAVN Lieutenant General Tran Van Tra at the Ho Chi Minh City Veterans Association Office in Ho Chi Minh City. In addition to other duties, General Tra is the director of the Vietnam Veterans Association, Ho Chi Minh City Chapter. General Tra had refused several interview requests previously. His only requirement in granting this interview was for a "high ranking American official to attend the interview." As I was then the highest ranking American in-country, I went to the interview along with Detachment linguists and analysts.

The interview began as a lecture with General Tra telling me that further progress in resolving this "humanitarian" issue rested with the will of the people. If the USG could rally the Vietnamese people behind our effort, he said, we could make great progress. "After all," said General Tra, "we know what great obstacles can be overcome when the people are behind the effort." (I thought that was a fairly obvious reference to the "Vietnam War.") General Tra continued by emphasizing that we should show more compassion for the Vietnamese people's loss of over one million killed during their "War for Independence," and the more than 300,000 Vietnamese still missing.

At this point, I spoke telling General Tra about the Vietnam Veterans of American Veterans Initiative.³² I told him that the VVA's information led Vietnamese investigators to a mass grave containing the remains of approximately 95 missing Vietnamese. From this point forward, the entire tone of our meeting changed. Rather than a one way lecture from General Tra to me, the interview became a discussion of what measures the Vietnamese veterans organization could take to assist our work.

During the interview, General Tra also provided general information on PAVN channels that managed U.S. POWs during the war. He also stated his firm conviction that the Provisional Revolutionary Government's (PRG) delegation to the Four Party Joint Military Commission (FPJMC) ensured the release of all U.S. prisoners held in the South during the conflict. Pursuant to this interview, General Tra pledged that his organization would unilaterally collect information on unaccounted-for Americans.

As a result of our initial interview, General Tra's Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Nguyen Van Si, met with our VNOSMP counterpart Colonel Le Ky on January 22, 1995 to discuss specifics of how the Ho Chi Minh City Veterans Association Chapter could assist in the U.S. MIA effort. They decided Vietnamese veterans might provide the following types of information and he pledged his commitment to the effort: personal accounts of wartime incidents involving U.S. losses, POWs, and unaccounted-for personnel; personal wartime journals with information on U.S. losses, POWs, and unaccounted-for personnel; information on where POW/MIA related archival documents might be today; and names of other individuals with possible POW/MIA related information.

Technical Conferences

Prior to each JFA, we held joint meetings between JTF-FA and VNOSMP to coordinate our operations. General Viale was the senior U.S. representative and Mr. Vu Chi Cong, Di-

rector, VNOSMP, was the senior SRV representative. During these meetings, we assessed progress to date, reviewed the results of the most recent JFA, discussed our requirements for the upcoming JFA, and discussed any other issues pertinent to our efforts. In 1990, these technical meetings routinely lasted three or more days. The Vietnamese side deliberated and often contested each talking point. Today, the meetings last only two to three hours. The Vietnamese representatives come to the meetings well prepared and work with us to ensure well planned, efficient and effective JFAs.

Vietnamese Veterans Assistance

A Vietnam Veterans Organization delegation from Ho Chi Minh City Chapter accompanied visiting American VVA members to Tay Ninh in February 1995. In Tay Ninh, the Vietnamese host, BG Nguyen Van Si, introduced a retired PAVN colonel to the VAA group. The colonel gave his account of the 1972 shoot down of a U.S. jet. We received this information on February 26, 1995, and confirmed that Brigadier General Si was the same General Si who was General Tran Van Tra's chief of staff. We felt that the fact that General Si attended our Oral History interview in January and later introduced a retired officer with specific case information was a very positive sign that the Vietnamese veterans can locate witnesses for unresolved cases, and that General Tra was sincere in his pledge to help mobilize Vietnamese veterans to our aid.

Detachment 2 analysts tentatively correlated the veteran's account with that of a still unaccounted-for American. A joint team excavated a site they believed to be associated with this case in May 1993. They recovered a small amount of possible human remains, but CILHI was unable to identify them.

On May 29, 1995, the VNOSMP provided Commander, Detachment 2, with three letters from Vietnamese veterans groups providing information concerning cases within Laos. At the time of my departure, analysts were reviewing these letters.

LESSONS LEARNED

OFFICIAL VISITORS

Every Detachment Commander had to host numerous official visitors from the USG and I was no exception. During my predecessor's tour, the President considered lifting the U.S. trade embargo against Vietnam. This resulted in innumerable "fact-finding" trips to Vietnam, especially by representatives of Congress. During my tenure, President Clinton considered normalizing relations with Vietnam, and likewise numerous visits ensued.³³ Many have asked me about the utility of these visits expecting that their primary purpose was as a boondoggle by the various visitors. I must emphasize that it was my experience that virtually every visit by a USG official was tightly scheduled with official functions. Any sightseeing on the part of the visitors was normally en route to another Ministry or while driving to and from the airport. Meetings with Vietnamese Government officials began early in the morning and lasted until late afternoon. The only break they normally took was a working lunch hosted by one of the Vietnamese ministries, usually the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An official reception or supper normally ended each day and lasted until about 2130 (Vietnamese official dinners were very predictable in their duration—two hours).

Throughout all the visits that occurred while I commanded the Detachment, only one, the visit of Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) did not leave me with a thoroughly positive impression of the purpose and accomplishments of the trip. Mr.

Rohrabacher is a member of the International Relations (Asian & the Pacific) Committee and an outspoken critic of JTF-FA operations in Vietnam and U.S. policy toward Vietnam. He visited Vietnam at the same time as CODEL Spence, but did not join them in any of their meetings except to arrive uninvited at a working lunch at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The only reason he joined CODEL Spence here was that he needed a ride to the airport with the CODEL immediately following the luncheon. Despite our mission being the driving force behind relations between the U.S. and Vietnam, and despite his criticisms of our operations, I never met Mr. Rohrabacher. He refused our offer to update him on our operations. Whether or not he agrees with U.S. policy or JTF-FA operations, it seems to me he would want to gather information from every source possible in order to draw an informed conclusion.

Since the issue of unaccounted-for Americans was, and remains, the most important issue between the U.S. and Vietnam, official visitors normally began their visits with a visit to the Ranch. Here, we updated them on our current operations, and when asked, provided our assessment of progress to date. When assessing progress, I cited developments in each of the President's four areas requiring progress. I tried not to draw conclusions from these developments, but rather attempted to lay out the facts as I saw them, and let them draw their own conclusions. However, if asked point blank for my opinions, I was obligated to answer with my opinion.

During the CODEL Bond visit in late 1994, Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) joined the CODEL for the Ranch briefing. Senator Kerry has been a driving force behind normalizing relations with Vietnam and he wanted to ensure the CODEL left the briefing fully aware of our operations and the level of Vietnamese cooperation. He asked me several questions during the briefing to emphasize points he wanted the CODEL to take away from the briefing. At one point, he asked for my opinion of how normalizing relations with Vietnam would improve the Vietnamese Government's cooperation in our efforts. I think he expected me to say that it would greatly improve cooperation.

I responded instead by saying that I did not believe it would affect the Vietnamese Government's cooperation very much, because I thought they were already cooperating at a very high level and there was not much more they could do. Where I thought the benefits of normalizing relations would make their greatest mark was on the level of cooperation we received from individual Vietnamese citizens. I thought this would be of significant benefit to our efforts. I said that as the U.S. and Vietnam increase contacts, and to the extent those contacts were positive, we would progress more quickly because we would receive even more grassroots support. I am a firm believer that Vietnamese veterans and average citizens possess information that could be useful to us; they just need some motivation to step forward.

I do not think Senator Kerry was entirely pleased with my answer and would have preferred for me to say that normalization would greatly increase Government cooperation. I knew that was what he wanted me to say, but it was not what I really believed.

Most delegations that visited Hanoi asked for issues we would like to see them raise with the Vietnamese. They would also tell us what they were going to discuss and asked for our opinions on both the issue and the manner in which they should approach the Vietnamese about the issue. They were especially interested in Bob Destatte's and Gary Flanagan's perspectives as they had worked with the Vietnamese the longest.

I would only ask them to raise an issue with the Vietnamese if both the CJTF-FA and I had been unsuccessful in resolving it at our respective levels. I cleared all issues with the CJTF-FA prior to recommending the delegation raise it to the highest levels of government. In Vietnam, as in many other countries, it is very dangerous to raise an issue above your counterpart's head without first giving him the opportunity to solve it. Then if it is still unresolved, telling your counterpart that you are going to recommend a high-level delegation raise the issue is normally a good idea. "Face" is very important to the Vietnamese and cooperation on difficult issues that may arise in the future often depends on how respectful you are of your counterpart's position. In short, there is nothing new here. Attempt to solve problems at the lowest possible level. Never "back door" your counterpart.

Many visitors also asked us how best to discuss issues with the Vietnamese. When Admiral Macke visited, I recommended that he begin discussions with the MND by talking about his experiences as a pilot during the war. I found that the Vietnamese senior military officials seemed to enjoy exchanging "war stories" with American veterans. This "ice breaker" often led to a cordial and informal discussion of issues following the introductory discussions. Admiral Macke began his discussions at the MND by remarking how much more pleasant his flight over Hanoi was that day than it had been some 25 years earlier. This led to a very friendly exchange between him and the Vice Minister of National Defense, General Bun.

We prepared visitors as best we could so that they would not be surprised by events during their visit. We provided each visitor with a folder containing the schedule of events, a tourist map of Hanoi, biographies of the Vietnamese hosts, as available, and sketches of meeting areas as best as we could determine. Biographies were often very difficult to get. We never wanted to give the Vietnamese the impression that we were "gathering intelligence," so trying to collect biographical information about their government's leaders was a very sensitive proposition. We depended on public information and past encounters with the individuals to orient the visitors to their hosts.

Each folder also contained our "best guess"³⁴ of what the physical layout of the meeting rooms would be, where to sit, where the interpreters would be, etc. Because we could not usually see the rooms prior to the actual meetings, we based our sketches on what we had seen in the past. Providing a sketch precluded awkward uncertainty in the beginning of the meetings as delegates tried to figure out where to sit. The beginnings of meetings were the times when photographers and other members of the media were present, so we did not want our representatives to appear hesitant or uncertain.

At the first meeting I attended with the July 1994 Presidential Delegation (my first high level visit), I entered the room after the visiting U.S. delegation had taken their seats. The only remaining seat at the table was on the Vietnamese side. The Vietnamese, always very gracious hosts, quickly ushered me to the empty seat. I soon learned that this was not a very good idea. Had I been aware of the protocol, I would have declined their offer and sat somewhere else, however, nobody had told me what to expect. This was a good lesson for me. We tried to prevent this kind of awkward moment for visitors by briefing them ahead of time.

We endeavored to do the same for receptions, luncheons and suppers. Most official dinners were held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs guest house, the Le Thach Government Guest House, and they all followed a

similar pattern. Items I always tried to verify before the delegates arrived were; which door should we enter through (there were two), the menu (if possible), the seating arrangement, and the English language proficiency of the host. If I could not determine the seating arrangement prior to arrival, I tried to slip into the dining area during the initial welcome at the door to at least determine which side of the table the key delegates would sit. I did not want them wandering around the table searching for their name plate.

Many of the Vietnamese officials spoke English extremely well, but would rarely speak anything except Vietnamese during official meetings. During receptions, however, they would often speak English. When Congressman Solomon Ortiz (D-Texas) visited, we told him that many of the officials from the MFA's America's Department spoke Spanish fluently. Within minutes at the luncheon, Congressman Ortiz and the Director of the Americas Department, Mr. Phong, were deeply engaged in conversation using Spanish. Mr. Phong, who had graduated from the University of La Havana and had been posted in Cuba in the past, also speaks English fluently, but I think he really enjoyed talking with Congressman Ortiz in Spanish.

At General Viale's direction, we also prepared folders that we gave to the delegation's principal(s) en route to each meeting location. This contained only information pertaining to the next meeting. Though the initial folder at the hotel was useful, we found the second folder ensured that the pertinent information for the next meeting was fresh in the visitor's mind and helped focus his thoughts.

Translator Support to Delegations

There were several linguists assigned to Detachment 2. We did not possess any interpreters, and I quickly learned that there is a huge difference between an interpreter and a linguist. Interpreters undergo specific training to become proficient in their skill and we simply did not have personnel trained in that manner assigned to the Detachment. TSgt Ron Ward, USAF, did, however, fill this void extremely well. When visitors came to Vietnam, we always linked-up Ron Ward and the visitors the evening before the initial meetings so they could discuss issues the visitors planned to raise during the meetings. If the visitors sent talking points to us ahead of their visit or provided them upon their arrival, Ron was always responsible for translating them to ensure he understood not only the literal meaning, but also the intent. Ron stayed "glued" to the visitors throughout their visit, including riding with them between meetings to explain nuances of discussions or to discuss any changes the visitor wanted to make for the next meeting. If space in vehicles when driving between visits was limited, I always deferred to Ron to ensure the visitor was comfortable with the translation.

Translating with the Vietnamese was not always an easy task. I believe it was a cultural trait of the Vietnamese to speak very softly. This made it very difficult at times for the interpreter to hear the principal. The Vietnamese officials always provided an interpreter, but we still tried to have Vietnamese linguists in every meeting to ensure our interpretation of the translation was the same as the interpreters. If necessary, our interpreter would interrupt the proceedings to either clarify a point or ask for an explanation. The Vietnamese did the same to us.

One rather comical instance occurred during our Trilateral Conference with Vietnamese and Laotian officials on December 1, 1994 in Hanoi. Vietnamese Vice Foreign Minister Binh was the senior Vietnamese official

present, and his interpreter was a Vietnamese VNOSMP team leader who spoke English excellently.³⁵ Vice Minister Binh made some introductory welcoming remarks in Vietnamese to the conference that lasted two to three minutes. The interpreter translated in the following manner, "I would like to welcome the delegates to this very important conference, and all that welcoming stuff." The point here is that there is a huge difference between someone who fluently speaks another language and one who is a trained interpreter. Understand the difference, and accept the handicaps you bear when an interpreter is unavailable. I was always very comfortable with Ron Ward as an interpreter. He took his job seriously, understood the ramifications of his duties, and studied hard. He also understood the issue thereby ensuring the proper translation of our positions.

INTERACTION WITH THE MEDIA

"Watch your adjectives!" As I said earlier, the CJTF's cautionary words stuck with me throughout my tenure. This forewarning came to mind on numerous occasions as I operated in what the media described as the "center of a political typhoon. On one side are Americans who believe the U.S. government and military have been duped by the Vietnamese into spending millions of dollars on a wild-goose chase for remains that Hanoi already controls and cynically manipulates. On the other side are compatriots who accuse the first group of exploiting the families of MIAs by holding out false hope of information, or even survival of their loved ones in Southeast Asian jungles."³⁶

Before even leaving CONUS, I quickly became aware of the media challenges I would face as the Commander of Detachment 2. During my orientations at the Defense POW/MIA Office in Arlington, Virginia, I had a chance meeting with Ms Ann Mills Griffith³⁷, the Executive Director of the National League of Families, and a strident critic of U.S. policy toward Vietnam. When I was introduced to her, her only words were, "Well, I hope we hear less from you in the press than we have your predecessor. He's the most quoted Army officer in the country. But * * * maybe we can get together prior to your departure and talk about the issue." I did not meet with her again until she came to Vietnam as part of the July 1994 Presidential Delegation.

When the Commander of Detachment 2 assumes his duties, he is immediately thrust into a position with great political sensitivity and media interest. There was an interesting discrepancy with the manner in which the Department of Defense (DOD) handles media access versus the way the Department of State (DOS) handles it. As I understood it, DOS personnel were not authorized to "go on the record" with the media unless they have prior DOS approval or have achieved a certain level of responsibility in the Department. When Mr. Jim Hall first arrived in Hanoi in January 1995 as the Chief of the United States Liaison Office, he did not have this authorization despite his years of experience in Asian and Vietnamese issues. Conversely, from Day 1 as the Commander, I was not only authorized, but encouraged to speak to the media. During his in-briefing to me, General Viale directed that I "tell the JTF's story and include the media where and when appropriate."

President Clinton's apparent desire to normalize relations with Vietnam was looming in the near future during most of my tenure. His decision hinged on Vietnamese cooperation on the issue I was responsible for coordinating in Vietnam, so the media was always keenly interested in our activities. Interaction seemed to run the gamut of media fo-

rum. The print media was in Hanoi in force. Permanently posted in Hanoi from the print and television media were John Rogers of Reuters, George Esper, Bruce Stanley and Kathy Wilhelm of Associated Press, Kristin Huckshorn of the San Jose Mercury News, Adam Schwarz of Far Eastern Economic Review, Jason Bleibtreu of Worldwide Television News, and Philippe Agret of Agence France—Presse. Ron Moreau, Newsweek's Southeast Asia correspondent, and Tom Mintier, Cable News Network's Bureau Chief in Bangkok also visit Hanoi frequently. There were also several foreign and American "local" television affiliates who visited including "Der Spiegel" who produced an extensive documentary on Vietnam which included our efforts, and KCRA television from Sacramento, California. Though they never actually came in person, the British Broadcasting System called me several times and interviewed me twice on live radio while I was in Hanoi.

The 30th anniversary of the "fall of Saigon" also precipitated numerous press visits to Vietnam. Neil Sheehan³⁸ came to Hanoi to research an article published in the April 24, 1995 edition of The New Yorker magazine. Also from the print media came Steven Butler, U.S. News and World Report, and Frank Gibney of Time. From the television media came Jim Vance of WRC-TV in Washington, DC, Robin Smith³⁹ and her husband Bill Plant for a piece for "Eye to Eye," and the crew of "Larry King Live."

The purpose of identifying all of these journalists and correspondents in this paper is not to impress anyone with our "15 minutes of fame," but instead to display the magnitude of the problem. My preparation for working with the media consisted of one morning in the catacombs of the Pentagon where Air Force Public Affairs officers ran me through a number of scenarios I might face. These scenarios included an interview with a print journalist, an on-camera interview where the commentator was sitting in the room with me, an on-camera interview where the interviewer was in another location and I had only the camera to speak to, and a chance interview by a "mob" of journalists, both print and video. There was not a single scenario they presented me that I did not face several times as the Commander in Hanoi. Their preparations kept me out of trouble on several occasions.

Thanks in large measure to their efforts and advice from those at other agencies, to include the CJTF-FA, I deployed to Vietnam with a few "rules of thumb," for dealing with the media:

Always tell the truth.

Watch the adjectives.

Talk only about what I know—don't speculate or guess.

Know the two or three most important things I want to get across and keep coming back to them—no matter what the question is; i.e., have an agenda—the press will.

Never assume video cameras or tape recorders are "off."

There is no such thing as a casual conversation with a member of the press.

Invite the press along on visits to the field.

When dealing with complex emotional issues (such as this) don't grant quick interviews with members of the press who I was not confident fully understand the issue.

Whenever possible, lean heavily on the organization's Public Affairs Officer.

Always tell the truth

Often, there were times when certain information was not "releasable" to the press, and I had to decline comment. This always seemed a better option than trying to mislead the press or give them an incomplete answer just to appease them. I developed a

rapprochement with the Hanoi press such that when I declined comment, they understood that I would give them the information as soon as possible. That did not, however, always preclude them from continuing to press in hopes that I might slip up and divulge the information. In my opinion, George Esper and Bruce Stanley were the most skilled at asking the same question several different ways. The press always tried to get information concerning the success of our JFAs prior to the end of the JFA. We never wanted to provide that information until the Repatriation Ceremony, because it was not until then that we were certain about the number of remains our forensics specialists had agreed to repatriate. We did not want to publicize inaccurate information. The media also knew that I attended meetings between the Vietnamese and all visiting U.S. delegations. They often tried to get me to tell them what occurred during the meeting, but I felt that was an issue the leader of the delegation should provide, if he desired to do so. I always declined comment.

Watch the adjectives

The political sensitivity of this issue meant that individuals on all sides of the issue would likely dissect my comments to try to find any "hidden" meaning. Calling cooperation "strong" was much different than saying it was "outstanding." I tried to measure my comments such that I was presenting facts, not speculation or opinion.

Talk only about what I know

Although operations in Vietnam were the focus of media coverage of the issue of unaccounted-for Americans, it was only one facet of the entire operation. Often, the media asked questions concerning operations in Laos or Cambodia and I would fend these off by simply saying that I stayed too busy in Vietnam to try to remain current with operations elsewhere. I normally referred them to the Detachment Commanders in those countries. Referring media to the JTF-PAO was also a very effective means of "staying in my lane," and not talking about something in somebody else's realm.

Know the two or three most important things you want to get across and keep coming back to them

The first four issues listed below were recurrent themes with the press throughout my tenure. For on-camera interviews, the USAF PAO team at the Pentagon recommended a "trick of the trade" to get my themes across as forcefully as possible. Normally, the start of the interview began with the commentator welcoming me and saying hello. This proved to be a great time to strike first, by acknowledging the greeting and then beginning to hit at least the first two themes listed below before even being asked a question. The same technique worked at the close of most interviews, where I had the opportunity to close with key words such as "highest national priority" and "committed to finding answers for the families." The themes I tried to emphasize were:

President Clinton made resolving this issue a matter of the "highest national priority" and was devoting the necessary personnel, resources, and funding appropriate to that level priority.

There were hundreds of dedicated young Americans working arduously in the field with one objective in mind—to find the answers the families of the unaccounted-for so richly deserve.

We were enjoying the continued support of the Vietnamese Government and people to resolve this issue.

Regarding what the U.S. policy toward Vietnam should be, I always stressed that I

was an "operator" in the field, not a policy-maker and was not qualified to make policy recommendations or comments.

Regarding the issue of live Americans still being held against their will in Vietnam, I continually emphasized that the USG had no evidence to support the contention that live Americans are being held against their will, however, we also do not have any evidence to be sure there are not. Therefore, we devote the necessary time, people and resources to fully investigate each and every live-sighting report.

This last issue hit its apex when former Congressman Billy Hendon visited Hanoi in May 1995.⁴⁰ During his visit, another "media theme" I continually emphasized was that despite Mr. Hendon's claims, the Vietnamese had never denied U.S. investigators access to any location it requested to visit in conjunction with a live-sighting investigation.

Video cameras and tape recorders are never "off"

One of the scenarios the USAF PAO instructional team covered during my orientation at the Pentagon involved an on-camera interview. At the conclusion of the interview, the commentator made some closing remarks and thanked me for the interview. The cameraman then walked away from the camera as the commentator began idle chit-chat. Unknown to me, the cameraman left the camera on and running. The commentator's seemingly innocent conversation regarding the issue we had been discussing on-camera was actually an attempt to draw me into saying things I did not want to say on-camera. I never noticed this occurring during my tenure in Hanoi, but I was always cognizant of its possibility.

Invite the press along on visits to the field

One advantage I had with the media in Hanoi that others may not enjoy in other assignments is that the media was very dependent on me for access to sites and information. I developed strong relationships with many of the correspondents and when an investigation or excavation was taking place that I thought might interest them, I invited them to "hitch a ride" with me when I visited the site. Many of our sites were inaccessible except by helicopter, so if they did not go with me, they did not go at all. I never used this advantage as a threat, but was able to pick and choose who I would invite to go along with me.

No casual conversations with the media

Though I did develop an excellent rapport with most of the Hanoi media representatives, I always kept in mind LTG Bramlett's⁴¹ advice to me during a previous assignment that there are "no casual conversations with a general officer," and applied that to the press. There were occasions where I went "off the record," but these instances were only with journalists who I knew very well and trusted. During my entire tenure, I cannot think of a single instance where anyone in the media violated that trust, but I must emphasize that going "off the record" can entail great risk (and sometimes great stupidity).

Ensure the media member understands the issue

As is probably apparent by now, the unaccounted-for issue is very complex and emotional. I tried never to grant an interview with a new journalist/correspondent unless they would take the time for me to brief them on the issue. As I became more and more familiar with the issue, this became a very arduous requirement, with discussions lasting as long as three hours, but it paid off. To my knowledge, I was only misquoted once during my tenure, and even that was not a very serious case.

Lean heavily on the PAO

LTC Dave Fredrikson, the JTF-FA PAO was often the most valuable JTF-FA staff member for me. He deployed to Vietnam often, and whenever he did, he lifted a great load off my shoulders. He had been assigned to the JTF since its inception, and fully understood the issue and its history. He had developed a personal relationship with the Hanoi press corps and understood their strengths and weaknesses. Often, Often, however, there were times when the press wanted to talk to the Commander, not a staff officer from Hawaii. In those instances, Dave became a close listener to both the press and me to ensure I did not inadvertently say something incorrectly. Prior to events when we knew a lot of press would be present, Dave also helped prepare and rehearse me for their issues.

When Dave wasn't in Hanoi, I sent information regarding all press contacts, no matter how insignificant, to him by fax or E-mail. In that way, he knew which media to watch to ensure they "got the story right." The PAO cannot help unless he is up to speed on the issues. To be effective, the PAO needed to know everything that went on in the JTF, and the Commanders in the field were his best source of information for operations in their respective countries.

The only time I had difficulty with the press was when I tried to handle a "press pool" rather than giving the problem to the PAO and letting him handle it. This occurred during Mr. Hendon's visit. Once it came time to visit the "live-sighting" location, the Vietnamese allowed us to take along one member of the press. After consulting with Dave Fredrikson, I informed the press that because we could only take one member of the media with us, we would use the "press pool" technique, and that individual must agree to share his/her report with the others. My mistake was in designating the specific member that would accompany us. I chose John Rogers of Reuters who was the senior member of the Hanoi press corps. He was extremely knowledgeable of the issue, but was also what I would best characterize as "quietly competent." His familiarity with the subject was the real selling point for me, but I also thought that John's low-key approach with the Vietnamese would best serve thorough and objective coverage of a very sensitive investigation. The Vietnamese never before allowed a member of the media to accompany an LSI. I did not want to betray their trust.

To make a long story short, Kathy Wilhelm (AP) did not agree with my decision, stating that it is the press who should decide who would represent them in the pool. In the end, and after much heated discussion and aggravation with Kathy, I referred her to Dave Fredrikson. I told her that I would defer to whatever he advised. After all was said and done, Dave recommended that I allow the press corps to decide. I did. Kathy Wilhelm represented the media, and she did a good job of covering the investigation.

In retrospect, it would have been a lot easier if I had deferred to the JTF-FA PAO from the outset. I was clearly delving into an area where I was unfamiliar, I was extremely tired (and short-tempered) after a week of responding to Mr. Hendon's shenanigans, and I had lost patience with many in the press corps who I felt were giving Mr. Hendon and his ridiculous accusations much too much coverage. I was also annoyed at their telephone calls at all hours of the day and night for the latest information. I had lost my objectivity, and hindsight has shown me that passing the ball to someone separated from the difficulties in Hanoi, i.e. Dave Fredrikson in Hawaii, would have relieved me of much needless aggravation.

INTERACTION WITH U.S. VETERANS GROUPS

During my tenure as the Commander of Detachment 2, delegations from several veterans groups visited Vietnam and requested a briefing at the Ranch. We always granted their requests as we felt strongly that their constituency needed to understand the extent of our efforts. I must admit that I was usually more nervous prior to briefing veterans groups than I was prior to Congressional delegations. For some reasons, I always expected a confrontation, but in fact, never had one. I found every veterans group delegation that visited us to be genuinely concerned about unraveling the truth surrounding the issue, fully supportive of our efforts, and absolutely devoted to taking home the facts to their members. This is not to say that all veterans agreed with U.S. policy decisions toward normalizing relations with Vietnam. Most did not, but that was not an issue that was of concern to me. My job was to convey to them the extent of JTF-FA's efforts in Vietnam, our dedication to finding answers for the families, and our commitment to achieving the fullest possible accounting. In their dealings with those of us in the field, my experience with the veterans organizations was uniformly positive.

The U.S. veterans program that was of most help to us in the field was the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) Veterans Initiative. As I said earlier, the Vietnamese claim to have over 300,000 of their own people still missing from their "war for independence." The VVA has requested that their membership forward to the VVA any war memorabilia, artifacts, photographs, maps, etc., that may help the Vietnamese resolve instances of their missing. Semi-annually, officials from the VVA travel to Vietnam to provide the items they receive to the Vietnamese veterans organization. This is a veterans-to-veterans program, not government-to-government, and the VVA closely guard this relationship. We helped them on occasion, but only by assisting them interpret maps or make sense of one document or another.

In the summer of 1994, the VVA visited Vietnam and one of the items they provided was a map indicating the location of a mass grave of Vietnamese. The map indicated that approximately 100 Vietnamese had been buried at the location marked on the map. Gary Flanagan, our CRS, helped the VVA officials refine the location on current maps, and the VVA traveled with Vietnamese veterans to find the site. The Vietnamese excavated the site and found the remains of approximately 95 individuals.

This program encouraged Vietnamese veterans to provide the same type of support to our operations. By us showing compassion for their loss, I believe the Vietnamese veterans who have diaries, photographs or other items in their private possession will be more likely to provide those items to us.

INTERACTION WITH DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The primary mission of the United States Liaison Office (USLO) was to promote additional progress in securing the fullest possible accounting on the issue of unaccounted-for Americans. In addition to their primary mission, the USLO performed several secondary tasks on behalf of the USG and provided other services similar to those other liaison offices, consular offices and embassies provide. These tasks included: assuring the protection and welfare of U.S. citizens, conducting human rights dialogue with the Vietnamese Government, promoting increased bilateral and multilateral ties with Vietnam, and promoting U.S. business and economic interests.

Although during my tenure we never had an "officially sanctioned" relationship, I clearly saw myself as part of the USLO

"Country Team," and, therefore, subordinate to the USLO Chief. However, I was the senior DOD official in Vietnam representing the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command (CINCPAC), who was directly responsible to the President for all matters pertaining to the issue of unaccounted-for Americans. I was entirely responsible for coordinating the full-accounting mission in Vietnam, and had only one boss, the CJTF-FA. Whereas we recognized the DOS commitment to the issue of accounting or missing American servicemen as its first priority, we insisted that the USLO and all Vietnamese Government agencies coordinate all POW/MIA business, correspondence, and reports with me as the Commander of Detachment 2.

I always tried to keep the Chief, USLO, Mr. Jim Hall apprised of all our official activities and provided him copies of all requests, correspondence and reports. Mr. Hall directed that his relationship with me be direct; I did not have to work through his deputy or anyone else in the USLO. I understood the importance of working with Mr. Hall to ensure he was fully abreast of all matters pertaining to the issue. Likewise, I always felt that Mr. Hall understood that CJTF-FA and CINCPAC were totally responsible for all aspects of our efforts, and that they held me responsible for in-country activities. Mr. Hall went to great lengths to support and facilitate our operations.

As a result of a statement by Secretary Christopher that promised Congress that a member of the USLO would have full-time responsibilities as the POW/MIA officer, my work was made somewhat more difficult. I felt this was unnecessary and counter-productive as the issue of accounting for missing Americans was my primary job. I worked on it all day every day. The DOS in Washington, D.C. insisted that Mr. Hall assign this duty to one of his personnel as, in my opinion, a political gesture—a decision somebody made without fully understanding the role of the Detachment Commander. It was not based on the realities in Vietnam. Albeit well intentioned, there was simply no way that anyone in the USLO would know as much about the issue as I did.

Because we worked in separate buildings, did not mean we did not talk. Mr. Hall and I had a very close professional relationship based on trust and mutual respect. He knew that I worked this issue everyday, all day, and that if he needed information on the issue, all he had to do was ask. Likewise, I was fully aware that Washington expected him to be fully knowledgeable of our issue, and I always tried to keep him apprised of everything we did.

I tried to ameliorate this directive from Washington by working mornings at the USLO and afternoons in my office, but this did not work well. I found it very difficult to work in two offices, especially when I had to carry my work from office to office. I continued to check-in with Mr. Hall daily, but gradually stopped going to the USLO in the mornings to work. I don't think anyone really minded, and I accomplished a lot more in my own office at the Ranch. Mr. Hall was very understanding of my predicament and chose to allow me to do what I thought best.

Overall, the establishment of the USLO was a very positive step. It was especially helpful during VIP visits. Previously, the entire Detachment's work would grind to a halt as we supported the visits with baggage handlers, escorts, etc. Now, the only one whose time is monopolized during these visits is that of the Detachment Commander, and there was no way to change that as I could not delegate that responsibility.

As I said, prior to the arrival of the USLO we were responsible for all aspects of VIP visits. Once the USLO opened, it assumed

the responsibility of coordinating itineraries, providing transportation and lodging, customs/immigration clearance, baggage handling, etc., for all non-DOD officials visiting SRV. As previously, I continued to attend all meetings and other activities involving the visitors. I thought this was extremely important as the USG began to engage the Vietnamese on issues other than the POW/MIA issue. The Detachment Commander's presence in meetings served as a reminder to the Vietnamese that though we were talking about other issues, the issue of missing Americans was still the number one priority of the USG. I also provided all necessary briefings and reports concerning JTF-FA operations, as requested by Mr. Hall or the visiting officials.

Regarding VIP schedules, I did not think some of the action officers at the USLO were as aggressive with the Vietnamese as experience had taught us we could be. When we coordinated a schedule for visitors, we always fenced the time the Detachment needed to brief the delegation (normally two hours) as their first order of priority. This ensured that they were as current as possible on our operations and progress. We then provided the remaining time to the Vietnamese for them to schedule the rest of the visit. It was my impression that action officers at the USLO took the opposite approach; give the Vietnamese the schedule, let them fill it in with the requested meetings, and then fill in the remaining time with our briefing. As a result, we never had quite the time available to prebrief incoming delegations that we had in the pre-USLO days.

I also learned that DOS and DOD cultures simply have different briefing "styles." Some months later, this informal "style" was later confirmed to me as the normal operating procedure for DOS during a lecture by Ambassador Marc Baas to a War College seminar.⁴² Once the USLO was established, we normally briefed visitors over lunch while we all sat on couches in Mr. Hall's office. It was my experience that DOS personnel rarely use briefing slides and brief in a much more informal fashion than does the military. In my opinion, nothing beat coming to the Ranch and sitting at the table for a formal briefing, but I also have come to realize that is very much a part of the military culture and not necessarily characteristic of other agencies. In support of that, I had several Congressional Staff delegations comment to me that it is always refreshing to have an Army officer brief them; they always get a hand-out, the briefing is normally to the point and clear, and we don't tend to dodge the tough issues. To this day, I believe it is much more difficult to do this when everyone is sitting in easy chairs eating sandwiches and drinking cokes.

My greatest concern about the USLO role in Vietnam came when Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Counter-Narcotics, Mr. Gelbard, visited Southeast Asia. A red flag went up for me during his visit. I concluded from his visit that with the opening of the USLO, other governmental agencies were rushing to push their agenda with the Vietnamese and either downplay, or pay lip-service to the POW/MIA issue. I felt that these competing agendas would confuse the Vietnamese, and that they might lose focus on the issue. I must add that I was pleased that we were beginning to engage the Vietnamese on issues other than the issue of unaccounted-for Americans and knew that the Vietnamese also felt it a refreshing development. My only concern was one of emphasis and a fear that the our issue would lose its priority with the Vietnamese before President Clinton had determined that sufficient progress had been achieved to warrant improved relations.⁴³

IMPRESSIONS OF VIETNAMESE PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Living in Vietnam was like nothing I ever expected. Prior to arriving in Vietnam, my only experience in a "communist" led country was in then East Berlin in 1982. I will never forget crossing from West to East Berlin. I can best characterize it as going from color to black and white. To me, East Berlin appeared cold, grey, and depressing. The people did not appear happy, merchandise in stores was shabby, and the store shelves were not well stocked. I expected much the same atmosphere in Vietnam and was therefore shocked by the environment I found. Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Da Nang (the only major urban centers in Vietnam) are vibrant cities. Construction is occurring everywhere, store shelves are well stocked (new American products were arriving on the shelves almost daily), the people appeared happy, and color was everywhere. Not everything is "rosy" in Vietnam, however. The people are very poor, the infrastructure is almost non-existent, and it is obvious that the country is struggling as it opens to the international community and moves toward a market economy. Through my readings and attendance at various meetings during the visits of U.S. delegations, I know that the Vietnamese have a long way to go to abide by United Nations standards regarding human rights, but it is not evident on a daily basis.

In short, I did not find the atmosphere oppressive as I did in East Berlin 12 years earlier. Most significantly to me was that the Vietnamese people appeared hopeful about the future and that their quality of life was destined to improve. I felt an atmosphere of optimism almost everywhere I went in Vietnam.

The most surprising thing to me was the friendliness of the Vietnamese, most especially toward Americans. Even in Hanoi, the people seemed to thoroughly enjoy talking to Americans and saw America as the land of everything good. My impression was that given the opportunity to choose, Vietnamese would much rather attend American universities, buy American goods, and model their future after the United States. It was interesting to find that if Vietnamese children called you a Russian, they normally meant it as an insult, not a compliment.

Vietnamese are probably the hardest working people I have ever encountered. Most Vietnamese work at least six days a week, many seven, with their only real vacation coming during Tet.⁴⁴ Our Vietnamese employees were extremely loyal, rarely complained, and always willing to go the extra mile for us.

The family appears to be the most significant aspect of everyday Vietnamese life. As I tried to learn Vietnamese, I found that the most valuable phrases to learn revolved around being able to talk about your own family and ask about theirs. Young unmarried Vietnamese usually still live with their family, and once married, the children will also often take in one or both parents. I found that beginning a negotiation with my counterpart normally got off to a better start if I began with small talk about his or my family.

I cannot remember a single instance of a Vietnamese talking derisively to me about someone else. I do not believe it is in their nature to talk badly about anyone else. Anyone dealing with the Vietnamese, whether officially or unofficially, should keep this in mind. I truly believe that the Vietnamese do not trust someone who speaks badly of others in public. It is probably a trait we could stand to emulate.

It was also a rare event for a Vietnamese official to flatly refuse a request of ours.

Now, this by no means meant that we always got what we asked for. Rather than saying "No," I found that the Vietnamese used phrases such as, "That would be very difficult," or "We will have to study that issue more," or "We would like to do that but we will have great difficulty getting the other ministries to support it." I soon learned that these phrases normally meant "No."

As I said earlier in this paper, "Face," as some people call it is very important in Vietnam as it is in most Asian countries. I took every opportunity possible to publicly praise my counterpart during visiting delegations, and always tried to compliment lower level officials in the presence of their superiors. Praise goes a long way in Vietnam, as it does everywhere. Conversely, when I was having difficulty with someone, I would never criticize them in public or speak to their superior without first informing them of what I would do if we were unable to progress at that level. Vietnamese do not mind you going over their head, just don't do it behind their backs.

One of my goals upon assuming command of Detachment 2 was to improve the personal relationships between the Detachment and our Vietnamese workers and counterparts. Since my days as a lieutenant, I have always felt that it is helpful to nurture relationships with those with whom you work. I have found that it is much more difficult to decline a request from a friend, than it is to refuse a casual acquaintance. I have also found that subordinates work much harder for those whom they respect and "like" than for those who just pay their salary and do not care for them as an individual.

As I said earlier, we had several Vietnamese local hires who worked at the Ranch. Whether these individuals were our secretaries, our cook, our maids, drivers, guards or gardeners, I tried to make them feel a part of the Detachment. After all, without their efforts, we would not have been able to concentrate on our own duties. I began inviting them to Detachment social events such as Thanksgiving supper and though very shy in the beginning, they soon opened up to us and became lasting friends. We even had a farewell of sorts for one of our retiring guards. This elderly gentleman had guarded our compound since we first leased it, so we had a luncheon on the Ranch for him and presented him with a JTF-FA Certificate of Appreciation signed by me. I can almost guarantee that he has that certificate proudly displayed in his home. I am just as certain that when he speaks to his Vietnamese friends and family, his reflections on Americans will be positive.

We tried to do the same for our counterparts in the VNOSMP. Not too long after my arrival, we hosted a small party at the Ranch for Detachment 2 and the VNOSMP. It was a very relaxed atmosphere that included American and Vietnamese food. I believe this was the first time many of our VNOSMP counterparts had even been on the Ranch other than at the main office building.

I knew we had made great strides in developing trust and friendship when the VNOSMP invited us to a Tet party at the Le Tach Government Guest House. Like our invitation to them earlier in my tour, they included the entire Detachment. This was also a first in our relationship.

In the Spring of 1995, we decided to host a party at the Ranch for our counterparts. I asked Mr. Hall if the USLO would like to co-host it with us and he quickly agreed to help us. We wanted to make this an *American* event complete with hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, country music and rock-and-roll. Guests at the party ran the gamut from our guards and maids, to the Vietnamese Vice Minister of Interior, the Director of the

Vietnamese Veterans Organization, senior officials in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and National Defense, the Hanoi press corps (on the agreement that everything was "off the record" that evening), and a couple of American businessmen. Vietnamese officials rarely showed themselves to us in a casual atmosphere, but everyone seemed to relax and enjoy themselves. I think we spread a lot of good will during this party and gained much more than we gave.

These few instances of shared camaraderie served a very important purpose—they built trust between our organizations and between individuals. Becoming friends did not mean that I would always agree with my counterparts or them with me. Neither did it mean that I would push any less vigorously for issues I thought were important to achieving the fullest possible accounting. What I do believe it meant was that I understood the Vietnamese perspective and could usually find a way to honor their position while still accomplishing the mission I was bound to do. It meant that I was better able to read body language and recognize intent versus literal meanings of spoken words. It meant that I could better time my requests or frame them in such a way as to maximize my opportunities for success. In short, I think our friendships developed trust. Trust led to greater access an enhanced cooperation. And better cooperation led to progress.

CONCLUSION

When Sergeant Major of the Army Richard Kidd visited our troops in the field in Vietnam in January 1995, he asked me what message I would like him to take back to the United States. I wanted to repeat my reply to him here in my concluding comments, because I hope you have come to the same conclusions.

The President of the United States considers this issue one of the highest national priority and is resourcing it appropriately.

There are hundreds of great Americans working tirelessly under arduous conditions with only one purpose in mind—to provide the families the answers they so richly deserve.

There are hundreds of Vietnamese citizens working side-by-side with our specialists to help us find the answers, and the Vietnamese government is cooperating strongly in our efforts.

We are finding many of the answers we are seeking. No, we aren't finding all the answers, but we are making significant progress toward the fullest possible accounting.

Finally, I asked him to tell all the soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines that he can that 20 years after the conflict in Vietnam, the United States is still trying to bring home its fallen warriors. Through all the reports of the circumstances of loss I read, I did not see a single case of our soldiers being "abandoned" on the battlefield. Our service men and women should continue their Service, knowing that we will come for them too.

One of the most important findings of DOD's "Zero-Based Comprehensive Review of Cases" is that if found "no evidence that information is being deliberately withheld" by the governments of Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia.⁴⁶ Could the Vietnamese Government do more? In my opinion, they probably could, but I also look at all the other difficulties they face as they try to rebuild their country. I believe they are providing a level of cooperation far exceeding what might be reasonable to expect of them, and that the Vietnamese Government is committed to continuing their current level of cooperation indefinitely. During a visit by one of the Congressional delegations to Vietnam, the Vice Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Mr. Le Mai, said that he did not expect the USG to stop pressuring Vietnam for assistance in achieving the fullest possible accounting. He simply hoped that it could soon become just one issue of importance amongst many other issues discussed between two countries with normal relations. Though the issue of missing Americans is still one of America's "highest National priorities," and it correctly remains the primary issue of discussion between Vietnam and the United States, Mr. Le Mai's expectations are being realized today albeit slowly.

During my tour in Vietnam, I received much more than I gave. The men and women of Joint Task Force—Full Accounting are an inspiration to us all as they endure the long hours, the elements, the heat, the humidity, the snakes, the unexploded ordnance, and numerous other hardships to do their job—and do so happily. The leadership of JTF-FA, Generals Needham and Viale and Colonel Frizell, provided the guidance and resources I needed to accomplish the mission, but allowed me the flexibility and authority I needed to operate confidently and effectively. I had the best command environment I could have possibly hoped for.

The JTF-FA staff worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make those of us in the field successful, and they did so without receiving many of the accolades and fanfare those of us who were in the field received. I also must acknowledge the efforts of those who went before me, Colonel Jack Donovan, Colonel John Cray and all those who served with them. It was their efforts that created the conditions under which I was able to operate, and they set the stage well. If at any point in this monograph I gave the impression that the accomplishments I cited were mine, it was unintentional and false. Progress on this issue was a team effort that included the Detachments in the field, the JTF-FA and PACOM Headquarters and staffs, and the Defense POW/MIA Office. I privileged to be a small part of a great team.

There are other groups contributing to the fullest possible accounting that I believe also need a lot of the credit for the success of the operators in the field. The Vietnam Veterans of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the National League of Families and many other groups are faithfully representing their constituency to get the answers they deserve. They too contribute to the overall effort. I also appreciated the open-minded approach the Congressional and Congressional Staff delegations took during their visits. Without the not always politically popular efforts of Senators John McCain, John Kerry, Kit Bond, and Sam Nunn, I do not believe we would be making the progress we are today.

I always enjoy talking about our nation's efforts in Vietnam, because I do not feel the American people or, more importantly, the men and women of America's Armed Forces are aware of the extent of our nation's commitment to resolving the very emotional issue of Americans still missing in Southeast Asia. This monograph has given me the opportunity to reflect on the most rewarding year of my 22 year career, and to offer some thoughts as to how we approached our duties. I hope this paper will be of some use to those who may follow in similar situations, and that it serves as a record of the impression of just one member of a very large team dedicated to pursuing and achieving the fullest possible accounting for Americans still unaccounted-for in Indochina.

I opened this paper with a quote describing why I think JTF-FA's mission is important. I will close with another quote. How can the contributions of JTF-FA best be summarized? I think Admiral Richard Macke, CINCPAC, said it best on February 10, 1995

when he presented the Joint Meritorious Unit Award to JTF-FA:

"What will be the legacy of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting? It won't be the sites searched, the witnesses interviewed, the tons of soil sifted. Your legacy will be the relief of the families of those we are able to account for. And your legacy will be the iron-clad faith that the men and women of our armed services have in each other. When we are next called upon to put ourselves in harms way, we can do so without hesitation, because we know you'll come. I can think of no greater legacy to leave to those who come after us."

God's noblest people and their families must always know that we'll come—no matter how long it takes.

LIVE-SIGHTING REPORT—MR. BILLY HENDON

One of the most difficult periods of my tenure occurred in April 1995. Mr. Billy Hendon arrived in my office claiming to have information concerning live Americans being held by the Vietnamese.⁴⁷ He said that he had "irrefutable proof" that the Vietnamese were holding Americans in an underground facility beneath a mountain in a militarily sensitive area in Vinh Phu Province (northwest of Hanoi). Furthermore, he claimed that the Vietnamese had denied JTF-FA investigators access to this sensitive area for the purpose of live-sighting investigations.

I told him that if he would provide his "intelligence" to me, I would forward it to the necessary agency immediately, and we would investigate it. He said that he did not trust me to investigate it without first "tipping-off" the Vietnamese and would not give me the information. Rather, he suggested we gather all the press we could and all go investigate the case together.

While I was speaking with Mr. Hendon, I directed my Detachment NCOIC to contact the United States Liaison Office (USLO), as I thought they should be involved in this. The Deputy Chief of the USLO and the Regional Security Officer soon arrived at my office to assist me in my actions with Mr. Hendon. Once they arrived, I excused myself so that I could call JTF-FA Headquarters to inform them of the situation. I spoke at length with Colonel Frizell, the Deputy Commander, and received specific guidance regarding my interactions with Mr. Hendon. After our discussions, I returned to convey Colonel Frizell's guidance to Mr. Hendon. In Hawaii, Colonel Frizell immediately notified the Deputy CINCPAC, DPMO and other necessary agencies of our situation and actions.

Once back in my office, I told Mr. Hendon that I would not make a "media circus" of any live-sighting investigation as it would be inappropriate. Colonel Frizell also spoke to Mr. Hendon telephonically twice. He explained our position to him in what I am sure were much less politically correct terms than I had used. A distinguished career in the United States Marine Corps, which included his aircraft being shot down over northern Vietnam during the conflict and three years as the Deputy CJTF-FA, did not exactly endear the likes of Mr. Hendon to Colonel Frizell.

Mr. Hendon responded that he would not give me the information until his conditions were met. We reached an impasse that neither of us was willing to skirt.

We concluded our meeting when Mr. Hendon asked if he could stay on the Ranch as he feared for his life. He claimed that Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phong (Director of the Americas Department) and Mr. Vu Chi Cong (my counterpart in the VNOSMP) had threatened his life. After speaking with Colonel Frizell, I denied Mr. Hendon's request for the following reasons; the Ranch was not U.S. property (as embassy property is) and therefore can-

not provide the protection to U.S. citizens that embassies can, we did not have facilities to support such requests, and finally, we were confident that his claims regarding the threat to his life was baseless and ridiculous. I did, however, make arrangements for him to stay in a room in a small six-room hotel immediately adjacent to the Ranch. Several of my personnel were also living in the hotel for a short time, so I thought that would ease his concerns for his safety (if he really had any). As I walked Mr. Hendon from my office building, he asked what would happen if he refused to leave. I did not directly answer his question, but made it clear that I would not allow him to stay on the Ranch.

As Mr. Hendon left the Ranch, he locked himself to the outside metal gate of our driveway with a set of handcuffs. Since it was cloudy, beginning to sprinkle, and threatening thunder and lightning, I got some bolt cutters to free Mr. Hendon from his handcuffs. I also did not want the press to arrive with Mr. Hendon chained to my gate. As I was cutting the handcuffs (from the inside of the gate with Mr. Hendon on the outside), Mr. Hendon was taking pictures of me. In any event, Mr. Hendon had another pair of handcuffs and re-locked himself to the gate a little later.

As we watched Mr. Hendon throughout the day, we found that his efforts lacked a certain amount of integrity and sincerity. Locked to the gate, he entertained members of the press with his intent to remain locked to the gate until such time as I was willing to investigate his claims of live Americans. Yet, after the departure of the press, and as necessary, he unlocked himself from the gate to return to his hotel room to use the bathroom, or he would pay young Vietnamese children to bring him food and sodas and even managed to get a chair to sit on outside the gate. Needless to say, however, in the heat and humidity of Vietnam, Mr. Hendon soon decided that chaining himself to the gate would not bring him much progress compared to the discomfort he was experiencing. Soon he was only appealing at the gate during selected press intervals.

Later, I called the DFCJTF to ask permission to call Stony Beach in Bangkok and request they send a live-sighting investigator to Hanoi. In this manner we would be immediately ready to respond to any valid information we might receive from Mr. Hendon. He agreed, and the Vietnamese approved his visa within a few hours of our request. This quick approval was extremely rare in Vietnam. It normally took ten days for a routine request and two to three days for an emergency request. This told me the Vietnamese understood the urgency of our request.

I reviewed our actions with Mr. Jim Hall, the Chief, United States Liaison Office, Hanoi, and the DCJTF in Hawaii several times each day during this ordeal to: 1) keep them informed of the situation, and 2) receive their guidance. I continued to refuse to meet with Mr. Hendon again unless it was at the USLO with Mr. Hall. I also continued to deny Mr. Hendon further access to the Ranch. We remained willing to meet with Mr. Hendon whenever he decided to provide his information to us in the proper environment; i.e., in a relatively secure environment on U.S. property such as the USLO and not in the middle of a press conference.

As time went on, Mr. Hendon decided to hold a press conference to give the press the details of his "intelligence." During this conference he claimed that we refused to meet with him (we did not—we only insisted that we meet in the proper forum), that we refused to investigate this case (we did not—we were awaiting his information) and that the Vietnamese had denied us access to this site for investigation. He said that I had lied

when I said the Vietnamese had never denied us access to any site for the purpose of a LSI.

Mr. Hendon did a skillful job with the press of mixing apples and oranges regarding access to the site. His claims of being denied access to the Vinh Phu military reservation implied that the Vietnamese had denied access to the site for the purpose of investigating a live-sighting. We had not. As I discussed earlier in this monograph, the Vietnamese did deny us access to the reservation, but that was during our investigation of Case 0644, not an LSI. It is important to stress that to my knowledge, and to the knowledge of the primary Stony Beach live sighting investigator, JTF-FA and Stony Beach investigators have never been denied access to any location anywhere in Vietnam as a part of a live sighting investigation. I clarified this point with the press on several occasions, but I do not think this was ever made completely clear in the articles I saw.

For almost two weeks, Mr. Hendon lived in the hotel next door to the Ranch, occasionally sending a fax to me imploring me to meet his conditions so he could provide his "intelligence" to me. He was also in obvious contact with his associates back in the United States. We soon became the object of several "National Vietnam P.O.W. Strike Force" newsletters written by Mr. Joe L. Jordan, the Strike Force Commander. Mr. Jordan is one of the more vocal critics of U.S. policy in Vietnam regarding POW/MIA efforts. His newsletters made statements about me such as:

"Not only does Richmond refuse to go, he demands that Hendon give him the data so he can turn it over to the communists.⁴⁸

"Will some other U.S. Army scumbag like LTC Richmond help the communists hide his [future U.S. POWs] whereabouts [sic] 30 years from now after he has been captured?⁴⁶

"Your little panty-waisted, snot-nosed faggot commander of the ranch, U.S. Army Lt Col Melvin Richmond whined, 'We might be out there for months looking in each and every little cave.'⁵⁰"

But my favorite passage was when Mr. Jordan described Mr. Hendon's situation:

"He [Mr. Hendon] was last seen running down a dark alley in the red light and bar district near Le Nam De street with the KGB in hot pursuit. A caucasian [sic] American of 6½ feet in height like Hendon will not go unnoticed for long and he is believed to already be in secret captivity, his exact whereabouts unknown.⁵¹"

Mr. Hendon was in a very comfortable, but conditioned hotel room next door to the Ranch, meeting with the press everyday. The only hardship I noticed with Mr. Hendon was that the top of his head became very sunburned.

Finally, Mr. Hendon's visa expired and the Vietnamese refused to renew it. Before leaving, Mr. Hendon gave us the information he had via a fax, and we began the LSI process. He left Vietnam proclaiming victory.

When we finally investigated Mr. Hendon's information, the results were as we suspected they would be. The location he provided was some 50 kilometers outside the Vinh Phu military reservation. It was in the middle of expansive rice paddies—not a mountain in view. And there was no evidence of live Americans ever having been held in that area. As a matter of fact, Mr. Hendon had been to that very location a couple of years previous.

It is unfortunate that individuals such as Mr. Hendon are able to manipulate the press and manipulate the hopes of families the way he does. At one point I told Bruce Stanley of AP that I thought they were giving Mr. Hendon entirely too much attention. I said that they were allowing Mr. Hendon to build a story where none exists. Bruce agreed

with my assessment, but said that they had to follow him . . . just in case he did something newsworthy.

There are hundreds of great Americans working tirelessly, often in very inhospitable conditions, to try to resolve this issue. There are other organizations such as the National League of Families and U.S. veterans groups who disagree with U.S. policies concerning Vietnam, but I always felt that their motives were pure and their intentions the same as ours—to find the truth for the families of the missing. I strongly resented individuals such as Mr. Hendon and Mr. Jordan who manipulated the press, manipulated the truth, misrepresented me, and misrepresented those devoted to finding the truth. I believe they cloud the issue, develop distrust amongst the families of the missing, and Americans in general, and do so for (in my opinion) personal gain.

GLOSSARY

Americas Department: The department of the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for relations between Vietnam and the Americas (including Cuba). During my tenure, the Director of the Americas Department was Mr. Nguyen Xuan Phong.

Amnesty Program: The Vietnamese established the Amnesty Program to encourage Vietnamese citizens to provide any remains and information they possess concerning unaccounted-for Americans to the Central Government without fear of punishment. My experience indicated that the Vietnamese Government was genuine in this offer. The only instances I knew of where the Government prosecuted Vietnamese citizens regarding remains involved "remains trading."

Archival Research Team (ART): The Archival Research Team worked with the VNOSMP to find SRV records containing information about unaccounted-for Americans, and jointly researched and investigated reports that private citizens had remains of unaccounted-for Americans. SRV records included war-time film footage, military and government records, and national museum and library holdings. Established in October 1992, the ARTs had access to all civilian and military museums, public security houses, tradition houses and newspaper and magazine offices in Vietnam. In May 1993, the VNOSMP and JTF-FA established the Joint Document Center (JDC) in the Central Army Museum in Hanoi. The JDC served as a repository for all documents, books, and reports that Vietnamese and U.S. investigators uncovered. Three ARTs deployed to Vietnam organizing their efforts along the lines of already established Vietnamese Military Regions (MRs); ART 1 operated in MR1, MR2, and MR3, all in northern Vietnam. ART 2 operated in MR4 and MR5 in central Vietnam, and ART 3 operated in MR7 and MR9 in southern Vietnam. In February 1995, the RIT assumed the duties of the ART as it was no longer necessary to have a single team dedicated entirely to this effort.

Anthropologist/Archeologist: Each RE has an anthropologist assigned to it. The anthropologist/archeologist provides the scientific control for the recovery site and ensures that every aspect of the recovery operation conforms with scientific standards that can withstand the closest legal and scientific scrutiny. Most anthropologists/archeologists assigned to CILHI are under contract to the Army Corps of Engineers. The anthropologists/archeologists working in the field are highly respected and among the world's most accomplished scientists of their fields. Within the elite group, CILHI certifies certain anthropologists/archeologists as being able to turn away remains. If a team recovers what they suspect to be a bone at a recovery site they cannot dispose of that piece of remains

(even if it has a beak on it or is an obvious animal bone) unless a certified anthropologist/archeologist authorizes the team to do so.

Died-in-Captivity Cases (DIC): Of the 84 SRT cases, 27 cases representing 29 individuals are DIC cases. Since these cases involve individuals who died while in Vietnamese captivity, U.S. Government officials believed it reasonable to assume that the Vietnamese should have control of the individuals' remains or know of their whereabouts.

Discrepancy Cases: Another name for Priority Cases.

Dog Tag Reports: Since 1979, the United States Government has received thousands of reports of remains associated with dog tags in the hands of private citizens. About 97% of the Americans named in these reports were never unaccounted for. A little more than 100 Americans named in the reports are still unaccounted-for. The Archival Research Team began investigating these cases in July 1994.

Excavate: If an IE discovers credible information (i.e.; witness testimony, wreckage, etc.) that allows it to narrow the scope of work at a location to a reasonable size location, it will recommend that an RE excavate the site to try to find remains.

Explosive Ordnance Specialist: An EOD specialist is assigned to each IE and RE. It is a common occurrence for our teams to encounter live ordnance remaining from the conflict in Vietnam. The EOD specialist ensures the safety of the team during its operations.

Fate Determined: A normal IE team can make three recommendations after investigating a case; reinvestigate, excavate, or pending. In the case of Priority Case Investigations, the team may make one other recommendation, fate determined. This means that although the case is still unresolved, the team did conclude that the unaccounted-for American died, thus his "fate has been determined." Further investigations will continue as necessary or until the case is resolved.

Graves Registry Cases: Of the 84 SRT cases, 39 cases representing 46 individuals are SRV Graves Registry cases. The names of these 46 individuals appeared on provincial graves registries, therefore the USG position is that since the registries reflect that the Vietnamese knew of the burial location during the war, they should still know the whereabouts of the remains.

Incident Location: Site where the unaccounted-for American was last seen or thought to have been; e.g., crash site, burial site, site of an ambush, etc.

Investigation Element (IE): Each IE is composed of a Team Chief, an Assistant Team Chief, two analysts/linguists, two Mortuary Affairs Specialists, a medic and an EOD Specialist.

Investigation/Recovery Team (IRT): The IRT includes all members of IEs, REs and any other support personnel deployed to Vietnam for approximately 30 days to conduct a single Joint Field Activity.

Joint Document Center (JDC): The Vietnamese established the JDC in a wing of their Central Army Museum in Hanoi. It serves as a location for U.S. and Vietnamese specialists to examine and store archival information such as films, photographs, artifacts, documents, etc.

Joint Field Activity (JFA): JTF-FA conducts six JFAs annually in Vietnam. Teams deploy by U.S. C-130 and commercial aircraft into Vietnam from U'Tapao Air Base, Thailand into Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi (for teams operating in northern Vietnam), Da Nang International Airport, Da Nang (for teams operating in central Vietnam), and Tan Son Nhat International Air-

port (for teams operating in southern Vietnam). From these initial staging areas, IEs and REs deploy by ground or helicopter to their initial operating location. Each JFA lasts approximately 30 days.

Joint Forensics Review: At the close of each JFA Vietnamese and U.S. forensics specialists examine all remains the joint IRT obtained during the JFA and any Detachment 2 may have obtained since the last review. They study the remains to scientifically ensure they are likely to be remains of a missing American.

Last Known Alive Cases: Another name for Priority Cases.

Last Known Location: The last known location is very similar to the incident location; the site where the unaccounted-for American was last seen or thought to have been (e.g., crash site, burial site, site of an ambush, etc.). IEs are always required to visit the last known location (unless during the course of their investigation they find evidence that categorically refutes the last known location). Even for over-water cases, the IE will go up to ten miles out to sea to investigate the last known location.

Life Support Technician (LST): An LST is assigned to every RE. He has two primary missions; (1) confirm that the aircraft wreckage at the site correlates to the aircraft of loss, and (2) determine if the crew members were aboard the aircraft at the time of impact. They did this by analyzing the wreckage, identification media, crew member life support equipment, etc.

Live Sighting: Contrary to popular opinion, this does not always mean a current report of a live American either living freely or being held against his will in Vietnam, though this could be the case. Every day, analysts in Hawaii and Washington, DC pore over historical documents and reports searching for information pertaining to an unaccounted-for American. Should they uncover a report of a live American during their research (e.g., an analyst finds a previously undiscovered notation indicating a captured live American was being led through a village in South Vietnam in 1967), this discovery could result in the initiation of a live sighting investigation.

Live Sighting Investigation (LSI): These receive the highest priority of any other operation involved with resolving this issue. Investigators from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) office in Bangkok, Thailand, Stony Beach, investigate all live sightings. JTF-FA, DPMO, JTF-FA and the VNOSMP go to great lengths to assure the integrity of each LSI. DPMO receives all live sighting reports either from the field, their analysts, or any other source. They analyze each report, and prepare draft requirements before tasking Stony Beach to investigate the sighting. Though DPMO can notify Stony Beach of the requirement via secure means of communications, Detachment 2 has no such capability. To minimize the opportunity for anyone to accuse the Vietnamese of "rigging" the investigation or "rehearse" witnesses, the only information that passes to the Detachment is that DPMO has initiated an LSI and a Stony Beach investigator needs an entry visa into Vietnam. It is not until the investigator arrives in Vietnam and sits down with the Commander of Detachment 2 and VNOSMP officials that anyone in Vietnam knows the specifics of the case. There have been many instances where immediately following the initial meeting with his Vietnamese counterpart, the Stony Beach investigator and his counterpart depart immediately for the site. The Vietnamese have never denied access by the Stony Beach investigator to any site involving an LSI. Once the investigator completes his investigation, he debriefs the Commander, Detachment 2 and returns to Bangkok, where

he files his report with DIA. An interagency board in Washington, DC reviews the report and votes to resolve, reinvestigate, or develop additional information for the case.

Mortuary Affairs Specialist: Specialists assigned to USACILHI whose Military Occupational Skill (MOS) involves proficiency and knowledge in wartime/combat burials.

Oral History Program (OHP): The Oral History Program began in 1979, when analysts from the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) began interviewing refugees from Vietnam to try to uncover information regarding unaccounted-for Americans in Vietnam. From 1988 to 1992, Vietnam allowed limited access to Vietnam for OHP analysts. In May 1993, JTF-FA presented what became known as the "List of 83" to the Vietnamese Government. This list contained the names of 83 former and current PAVN officers and government officials who the USB believed could have information regarding unaccounted-for Americans. Between May and December 1993, OHP team members from Detachment 2 interviewed 74 of the individuals from the "List of 83." This included 14 flag officers and 36 field grade officers and led to the accumulation of information concerning over 40 cases involving 21 unaccounted-for Americans. Between January and June 1994, JTF-FA continued to press the Vietnamese for access to the remaining nine individuals, but for a variety of reasons, could not gain access to them, and the OHP essentially ground to a halt. Some inside and outside the USG felt the program had failed because we were denied access to the remaining nine individuals despite our success in interviewing 89% of those we requested to interview. In July 1994 we proposed to the VNOSMP that we reinvigorate the OHP by approaching the program differently. We recommended that we get away from concentrating on a "List of 83" and instead concentrate on the product we gain through the program's interviews. The Vietnamese agreed and we began providing the Vietnamese with a list of individuals we would like to interview during a specified "investigation period" (normally concurrent with a JFA; 30 day period), and then interviewed all they made available. For those who we felt strongly that we needed to interview, but were not agreed to by the Vietnamese, we continued to resubmit the names. The bottom line is that in August 1994, we began a new interview phase. In September 1994 we reinterviewed Military Region 4 Graves Registry compilers and in October 1994 held a series of interviews in Quang Nam-Da Nang Province. The OHP continues a strong program today.

Over-Water Case: 470 unaccounted-for Americans are known to have been lost at sea. Most of these cases involve aircraft that were hit and tried to escape to the relative safety of the ocean before crashing. Other include losses of individuals when their vessels sank, or who were swept overboard. In Vietnam alone, over-water cases account for 449 of the more than 1600 unaccounted-for.

Pending: If an IE investigates a case and exhausts all leads without finding enough information to recommend a site to excavate, the team leader recommends placing the case in the pending category. This does not mean the case is closed as many contend. Instead, pending means that there are no further leads to pursue, and until such time as someone develops a credible lead, the JTF will not actively investigate the case. However, should an analyst uncover new information or questions regarding the pending case, JTF-FA will reactivate the case and schedule it for reinvestigation. This has occurred on several occasions.

Photo Cases: of the 84 SRT cases, 11 cases representing 12 individuals are Photo cases.

In many instances, either for historical or propaganda purposes, the Vietnamese photographed bodies and body parts of dead Americans. We have correlated several such photographs to 11 cases, 12 individuals who are still unaccounted-for. The USG position is that since the Vietnamese photographed the bodies or remains, they should still control or know the whereabouts of these remains.

Priority Case: Also known as Discrepancy Cases, Last Known Alive Cases, or even Priority Last Known Alive Discrepancy Cases. When General Vessey became the President's Special Envoy to resolve the issue of Americans still unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia, one of his first steps was to direct analysts to review all existing cases and determine the cases where the individual is thought to have survived his incident of loss and may still be alive. (Hypothetical Example: Two aircraft were attacking a target and a surface-to-air missile impacts one of the aircraft. That aircraft's wing man sees the pilot eject, and descend to the ground under a good parachute. The wing man might even have observed the pilot being captured and led away. This is one type of Priority Case. We know the individual survived his incident of loss, he did not return to the United States during Operation Homecoming, and it is possible that he is still alive.) JTF-FA and the VNOSMP formed a joint Priority Case Investigation Team to make a focused effort to determine the fate of the Priority Cases in Vietnam. Operations began on 11 June 1993 to determine the fate of 92 individuals associated with 73 cases. Eventually, this list grew to 196 cases. To date, teams have investigated every Priority Case at least once, some seven to eight times. Of the 196 individuals, one is a foreign national, and 27 have been resolved completely. There remain 50 individuals whose fate has not yet been determined.

Priority Case Investigation Team (PCIT): The U.S. and Vietnamese governments deemed investigating the Priority Cases to be so important that they formed a special team dedicated solely to investigating these cases. The U.S. manned the team with a DIA/Stony Beach investigator to ensure the highest quality investigation.

"The Ranch": The Ranch is the small compound located in the northwestern corner of Hanoi that houses Detachment 2, JTF-FA. It has three buildings, a team house, a TDY building, and an office building. JTF-FA leases this facility from the Vietnamese. The original Detachment 2 tenants named it the Ranch as it was a truly American name.

Recovery Element (RE): Each RE is composed of a Team Chief, a Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC), an anthropologist or archeologist, a photographer, four Mortuary Affairs Specialists, two analysts/linguists, an EOD Specialist, a Life Support Technician (LST), and a medic. The Team Chief is normally an Army Quartermaster Corps Captain. Most of the RE comes from USACILHI. The analysts/linguists and LST are assigned to JTF-FA. The EOD Specialist and medic can come from any Service, normally from a unit assigned to PACOM.

Reinvestigate: If, after the end of a JFA or investigation period, the investigators have not completed investigating the leads they were assigned or have developed new leads that they were unable to pursue, they recommend a team reinvestigate the case in the future.

Remains Not Recoverable: IE teams can recommend three categories for cases they investigate, excavate, reinvestigate, or pending. PCIT and SRT investigators can also recommend "Remains Not Recoverable." This recommendation means that the investigator has fully investigated the case and is confident that the remains of the unac-

counted-for American have either decayed beyond hope for ever being found, been destroyed, or otherwise beyond the capability of ever being recovered. Example—In one SRT case we found a Vietnamese villager who had actually buried an unaccounted-for American. When he led investigators to the site, he saw that what had been a small stream during the war, had swollen to be much wider. He pointed to where he had buried the American in what he described as a shallow grave, but it was now completely submerged. The investigators classified this case as "Remains Not Recoverable" as the remains had certainly washed away over time, and the likelihood of recovering them was very remote.

Remains Obtained: Obtaining remains includes receiving and recovering remains.

Remains Received: To receive remains means to gain possession of them when a Vietnamese citizen or official gives them to a U.S. official.

Remains Recovered: To recover remains means to gain possession of them through an excavation.

Remains Recovered But Not Repatriated Cases: Of the 84 SRT cases, seven cases representing 11 individuals are Remains Recovered But Not Repatriated cases. IAW the terms of the Paris Peace Accords ending our involvement in the conflict in Vietnam, the Vietnamese provided a list of remains they had recovered and were repatriating to the United States. These 11 individuals correlate to remains the Vietnamese reported that they had recovered, but that the USG claims it did not officially receive.

Remains Trading: Selling or trading remains or information. We know that many Vietnamese citizens possess remains; every JFA the IRT receives remains from Vietnamese citizens. It is not uncommon for a Vietnamese to offer to provide the information/remains in exchange for monetary compensation or a visa to the United States. In a few cases, what we called "remains dealers" approached our investigators. These "remains traders" differed from the average citizen requesting "compensation" in that they made their living from this endeavor. Neither U.S. or Vietnamese officials will pay for remains or information.

Repatriation: To return remains to the United States. In the case of Vietnam, teams must provide all remains obtained to their Vietnamese counterparts. At the end of the JFA, Vietnamese and U.S. forensics specialists from USACILHI examine all remains obtained to assure they are likely to be those of an American. If they conclude they are not America, the U.S. specialists do not accept them for repatriation to the United States.

Repatriation Ceremony: Ceremony at Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi, SRV, where the Commander, Detachment 2, on behalf of the United States Government officially accepts remains from officials of the VNOSMP, and loads them on a U.S. aircraft for return to the United States.

Research & Investigation Team (RIT): The RIT is a six-person team that deploys to Vietnam for a period of four months. It is manned with the most skillful Vietnamese linguists and analysts assigned to the JTF and works its most difficult cases. It is responsible for archival research, oral history interviews, special remains and priority case investigations, an walk-in interviews.

Resolved: To legally identify the remains as being those of an unaccounted-for American.

Scope Loss (or Off-the-Scope Losses): In many instances during the conflict, American aircraft simply disappeared from the "radar scopes" of ground monitoring stations, or the individuals were "never heard

from again after embarking on long-range ground or air reconnaissance missions or after their aircraft were last seen visually on radar heading toward a given target." In these instances, IEs use the point at which the aircraft or patrol went "off the scope" as the last known location, or they will extrapolate from that point using the direction and speed of travel to try to determine possible location of the loss. Scope losses involve the loss of 308 individuals. DPMO has determined that it cannot resolve the cases of 54 of these individuals.⁵²

Special Remains Case: Unlike the Priority Cases where the USG believes the unaccounted-for individual might have survived, we know that the individuals associated with Special Remains Cases died. However, because of photographic evidence, names appearing on graves registries, POW camp records, or other Vietnamese records it is reasonable to assume that at one point the Vietnamese had control of the individual's remains, and should now be able to produce those remains. There were originally 84 Special Remains cases.

Special Remains Case Team (SRT): This team's mission was to work with the VNOSMP to resolve the 84 SRT cases for which the United States Government had reason to believe the Vietnamese should be able to provide a full accounting.

Stony Beach: Stony Beach is the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) office in Bangkok, Thailand. Stony Beach analysts investigate all live sightings and provided the primary investigator on the PCIT.

Tri-Lateral Operations: During the war in Indochina, the Vietnamese controlled major portions of Laos and Cambodia. As such, when we investigate cases in Laos and Cambodia, it is very likely that Vietnamese citizens (former PAVAN or VC) would have more information concerning the incidents of loss than any Laotian or Cambodian citizens. If we can identify a Vietnamese citizen who possesses such information, we will coordinate between Vietnam and the third country (Cambodia or Laos) to bring that witness into their country to visit the site during a JFA in that country. These are called Tri-Lateral Operations as they are joint U.S./SRV/KOC or U.S./SRV/Laos operations.

Unilateral Research & Investigations: Many people both inside and outside the USG believe that the only way we can resolve this issue fully and rapidly is for the Vietnamese Government to increase their unilateral research and investigations. It is my opinion that some emphasize unilateral research because they believe the Vietnamese are purposely withholding archival information and even remains. They stress "unilateral" research in a round-about way of demanding the Vietnamese release these items. My experience does not lead me to believe the Vietnamese are withholding anything, and that as they find documents and remains, they are submitting them to Detachment 2. I believe our investigations are most fruitful when performed jointly with the Vietnamese; the investigations are always more thorough and the reports of investigation are uniformly more detailed. For those instances where the Vietnamese deny access to an American, and unilateral research/investigation by Vietnamese officials is the only other option, then, and only then, should we accept unilateral research as a viable option.

United States Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (USACILHI) or more commonly CILHI): CILHI has a world-wide mission to search for, recover and identify U.S. service men missing from all conflicts.

Vietnamese Office Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP): The VNOSMP is Detachment 2's counterpart organization in the Vi-

etnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is responsible for coordinating Vietnamese efforts to resolve the issue of unaccounted-for Americans. It is not involved with Vietnamese efforts to seek its own missing from the war. My direct counterpart during my tenure was Mr. Vu Chi Cong.

Walk-In Interviews: We always kept a skilled linguist at the Ranch in case a Vietnamese citizen arrived offering to provide some information, remains, artifacts, etc., to us. As noted earlier, our office was depicted on tourist maps and an advertisement for our office was in the Hanoi Yellow Pages. We normally had a couple of walk-in interviews each week.

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AP: Associated Press.
 ART: Archival Research Team.
 CILHI: More common reference to the United States Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii than the more accurate USACILHI.
 CINCPAC: Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Command. Admiral Macke was the CINCPAC during my tenure.
 CJTF-FA: Commander, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting. Major General Thomas H. Needham was the initial CJTF-FA. His command extended into the first month of my command at which time Brigadier General Charles Viale assumed command (27 July 1994).
 CODEL: Congressional Delegation.
 DIC: Died-in-Captivity.
 DPMO: Defense POW/MIA Office.
 EOD: Explosive Ordnance Disposal.
 IE: Investigation Element.
 IRT: Investigation & Recovery Team.
 JCRC: Joint Casualty Resolution Center.
 JDC: Joint Document Center.
 JFA: Joint Field Activity.
 JTF-FA Joint Task Force—Full Accounting.
 KOC: Kingdom of Cambodia. Normally referred to only as Cambodia.
 LSI: Live Sighting Investigation.
 LST: Life Support Technician.
 MFA: Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
 MND: Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense.
 MOI: Vietnamese Ministry of the Interior.
 OHP: Oral History Program.
 PACOM: More common reference to the United States Pacific Command than the more accurate USPACOM.
 PCIT: Priority Case Investigation Team.
 RE: Recovery Element.
 SRT: Special Remains Team.
 SRV: Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
 STAFFDEL: Congressional Staff Delegation.
 UPI: United Press International.
 USACILHI: United States Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii.
 USLO: United States Liaison Office.
 USPACOM: United States Pacific Command.
 VNOSMP: Vietnamese Office Seeking Missing Persons.

FOOTNOTES

¹Leslie Weatherhead, "Comradeship," quoted by Admiral Richard Macke, CINCPAC, in a speech awarding the Joint Meritorious Unit Award to JTF-FA, February 10, 1995.

²NOTE: Other names I will use for these countries throughout the text are Vietnam or SRV, Laos, Cambodia or KOC, and China or PRC, respectively.

³Unless otherwise noted, statistics used throughout this monograph are current as of February 27, 1996 and were provided to the author by the Public Affairs Office, JTF-FA, Camp Smith, Hawaii.

⁴JTF-FA mission statement.
⁵Unaccounted-for or missing are the correct terms when referring to the individuals we were searching for. POW, MIA and KIA are legal terms DOD uses to classify wartime losses and help determine benefits for the next-of-kin and the actual service member.

There are no remaining POWs or MIAs from the conflict in Southeast Asia. Colonel Charles Shelton was the last service member carried as a POW. The USG continued to carry him as POW after it had reclassified all other missing service men so that he might serve as a national symbol that the unaccounted-for "would not be forgotten." Colonel Shelton's family recently requested that the USG change his status to killed in action, body not recovered, and DOD concurred with their request.

⁶See Glossary for a complete explanation of the nature of today's Joint Field Activities.

⁷Bobby Garwood's return does not count in this first category as he was never "unaccounted-for."

⁸Department of Defense, "A Zero-Based Comprehensive Review of Cases Involving Unaccounted for Americans in Southeast Asia," (November 13, 1995), p. 1.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid, pp. 4-7.

¹¹Ibid, p. 6.

¹²Ibid.

¹³I met with the USAF Casualty Office in San Antonio, Texas prior to changing command. I was scheduled to meet with the USN Casualty Office, but nobody from their office showed up for the appointment they scheduled with me.

¹⁴See Interaction with the Media for a discussion of the training I received.

¹⁵See the Glossary for explanations of these terms.

¹⁶Table 1 reflects the number of remains repatriated during this period. Not all have been identified.

¹⁷The National League of Families is very active in trying to resolve this issue. Though I believe they, like all members of JTF-FA, are committed to achieving the fullest possible accounting, the NLF and its Executive Director are often critical of USG policy toward Vietnam. The NLF did not support either President Clinton's decision to lift the trade embargo against Vietnam, or his decision to normalize relations between the United States and Vietnam.

¹⁸Just as a note of interest, Mr. Willoughby did not think very highly of the accuracy of this book.

¹⁹SRCOL Bien was a 45 year PAVN veteran. He fought the Japanese, the French, the Americans, and the Cambodians. He is the MND representative to the VNOSMP.

²⁰See Glossary.

²¹At the time, the USLO had not yet opened. Mr. Hall was the Chief of the Vietnam/Laos/Cambodia desk, East Asian & Pacific Affairs, DOS.

²²Peoples Army of Vietnam.

²³Virginia Foote, President, U.S./Vietnam Trade Council, "Progress, Problems and Suggestions to MIA accounting," memorandum for the March 1996 Presidential Delegation to Vietnam, 29 February 1996.

²⁴See Glossary for an explanation of trilateral operations.

²⁵See Glossary.

²⁶See Glossary for an explanation of "Fate Determined."

²⁷See Glossary.

²⁸A karst is a relatively small peak jutting straight out of the ground. They are extremely steep, sometimes with sheer faces, and are normally a few hundred feet tall.

²⁹See Glossary.

³⁰We do not pay for remains or cooperation, however, we do pay landowners for alterations we inflict on their property; e.g. if we excavate a site in the middle of a farmer's rice paddy, it is only right that we compensate him for his lost crop.

³¹See Glossary.

³²See page 72 for an explanation of this program.

³³From June 1994 until June 1995, the following delegations visited Hanoi; two Presidential delegations headed by Ambassador Winston Lord and DSD for Veteran Affairs Herschel Gober, CODEL Bond (Senators Kit Bond, Sam Nunn, John Glenn, David Pryor, William Cohen, and Barbara Mikulski), CODEL Kerry (Senator John Kerry), CODEL Spence (Congressman Floyd Spence), CODEL McCain (Senator John McCain), CODEL Simon/Murkowski, STAFFDEL Record, STAFFDEL Stetson, CODEL Rohrabacher, DASS for POW/MIA Affairs James Wold, DASS Peter Tomsen (2), Admiral Zumwalt, and Sergeant Major of the Army Richard Kidd.

³⁴We based our assumptions on what we had seen in the past. Each ministry had a normal way of operating, and seldom deviated from it.

³⁵He had worked with JTF-FA teams for several years, understood American slang as well as most Americans, and was very comfortable in the presence of Americans. He is currently attending American University in Washington, DC on a Ford Foundation grant.

³⁶Steven Butler, "A painful search for the missing," *U.S. News and World Report*, 118, no. 17 (May 1, 1995); 62.

³⁷Ms. Griffith's brother is still unaccounted-for as a result of his aircraft crashing. In her role as the Executive Director of the NLF, Ms. Griffith is an ardent supporter for the families of the unaccounted-for. Her knowledge of the totality of the issue is, in my opinion, second to none. Though I strongly disagree with her on many of her interpretations of the facts, I have never disputed her strong desire to fully resolve this very difficult and emotional issue.

³⁸Author of *A Bright Shining Lie*.

³⁹Ms. Smith is the daughter of a pilot still unaccounted-for at the time of my departure. She came to Vietnam to try to find the crash site of her father and to bring some type of closure to her loss. Ms. Smith was able to visit the site we had identified during past JFAs and seemed satisfied with her findings. Shortly after her visit we excavated her father's crash site (the excavation was scheduled prior to her visit, and was not a result of her visit). Excavators found what they believed to be her father's Naval Academy ring in the excavation.

⁴⁰See Annex A for a complete explanation of the Mr. Hendon live-sighting claims.

⁴¹I had worked for then BG David Bramlett in the 25th Infantry Division (Light). During most of my tenure in Vietnam, LTG Bramlett was the DCINCPAC.

⁴²Discussion led by Ambassador Marc Baas to the Asia-Pacific Regional Strategic Assessment class on 23 February 1996.

⁴³In his actual meetings with the Vietnamese, by the way, Mr. Gelbard fully supported the issue of missing Americans as the USG's highest priorities, so my concerns regarding that particular visit were possibly somewhat unwarranted. Overall, however, I think the concern was (and may still be) a valid one.

⁴⁴Oriental New Year.

⁴⁵"A Zero-Based Comprehensive Review of Cases Involving Unaccounted for Americans in Southeast Asia."

⁴⁶Personal Opinion—Mr. Hendon is a former Congressman from North Carolina. I believe that he makes unsubstantiated claims concerning the POW/MIA issue to fan the emotions of families and veterans in America. It is my opinion that he manipulates this issue to win support for election activities and to earn a living.

⁴⁷Joe L. Jordan, "National Vietnam P.O.W. Strike Force" Newsletter, June 4, 1995.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Joe L. Jordan, "National Vietnam P.O.W. Strike Force" Newsletter, June 9, 1995.

⁵⁰Joe L. Jordan, "National Vietnam P.O.W. Strike Force" Newsletter, June 4, 1995.

⁵¹"A Zero-Based Comprehensive Review of Cases Involving Unaccounted for Americans in Southeast Asia," p. 10.

MINIMUM WAGE

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 23, 1996

Mr. SAXTON, Mr. Speaker, earlier today in my remarks during the debate on increasing the minimum wage, I mentioned over 100 studies that unanimously agree that raising the minimum wage has a detrimental effect on employment. I also mentioned that the "Card-Krueger studies" are erroneous in their conclusion that raising the minimum wage increased employment in New Jersey.

This summary of the academic research—100 studies—on the minimum wage is designed to give nonspecialists a sense of just how isolated the Card-Krueger studies are. It also indicates that the minimum wage has wide-ranging negative effects that go beyond just unemployment. For example, higher minimum wages encourage employers to cut back on training, thus depriving low-wage workers of an important means of long-term advancement in return for a small increase in current income. For many workers this is a very bad tradeoff, but one for which the law provides no alternative.

Last year I placed into the RECORD the complete list of these 100 studies. If you are inter-

ested in reviewing the complete list, please refer to page E387 of the February 16, 1995, issue of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Also, for a better understanding of why I believe an increase in the minimum wage will hurt those it's intended to help, I am putting into the RECORD a Joint Economic Committee Report entitled "Raising the Minimum Wage: The Illusion of Compassion", April 1996.

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE: THE ILLUSION OF COMPASSION

"[B]ut as Clinton himself explained two years ago, hiking the minimum [wage] is 'the wrong way to raise the incomes of low-wage earners.'"—(Time, February 6, 1995, p. 27).

Once again, we hear the cries to raise the minimum wage. The rhetoric is familiar; "the minimum wage isn't a living wage," and "we need to ensure that work pays." However, raising the minimum wage is a misguided passion. All the valid research shows that raising the minimum wage destroys jobs. It hurts exactly those workers it intends to help—the poor, the unskilled, and the young. Everyone wants to see income growth boost the economic well-being of the working poor, but throwing many of them out of work is not the solution.

SAWING OFF THE FIRST RUNG

The major way the minimum wage hurts the poor is by cutting off the first rung of the employment ladder. Raising the minimum wage destroys jobs. This statement is incontrovertible. Economists have consistently proven the job-destroying effects of higher minimum wages. But more importantly, higher minimum wages destroy entry-level jobs. Without entry level jobs, low-skilled and young workers cannot start jobs and gain valuable work skills.

BLOCKING WORK TO WELFARE

The rhetoric of raising the minimum wage has been linked to welfare. Proponents of higher minimum wages argue that a higher minimum wage is necessary to encourage welfare recipients to enter the work force. Tragically, as the minimum wage encourages welfare recipients to search for employment, it makes it more difficult for them to find work. First, with fewer jobs available, it is more difficult for all workers to find employment. Second, a higher minimum wage makes work more attractive to many people. This expanded pool of job applicants allows employers to be more selective. Employers pick applicants with more skills from this pool. Welfare recipients suffer because there are fewer jobs and more competition. The result of higher minimum wages is to keep welfare recipients dependent on the government for a longer time.

DESTROYING HUMAN CAPITAL

It is increasingly apparent that the key to a prosperous life is education. Sadly, incomes of high-school drop-outs are failing to keep pace with the incomes of college graduates. Dropping out of high school is almost a guarantee of a difficult life. Public policy should take careful pains to encourage students to stay in school. Unfortunately, raising the minimum wage encourages high-school students to drop out. By altering the rewards to work, some students leave school for minimum wage jobs. However, without a high school degree, advancement is more difficult.

THE ARGUMENT FOR HIGHER MINIMUM WAGES: THE SANDY FOUNDATION

"Now, I've studied the arguments and the evidence for and against a minimum wage increase. I believe the weight of the evidence is that a modest increase does not cost jobs, and may even lure people back into the job market."—President Bill Clinton, State of the Union Address, Jan. 24, 1995.

The argument against raising the minimum wage has a long and noble history. Several of the most prominent economists have argued against minimum wages. Yet, the Democrats continue to argue for higher minimum wages. Labor Secretary Robert Reich and Laura D'Andrea Tyson held a press conference to laud several studies that claim that higher minimum wages have no deleterious effects on employment. The whole argument of the press conference was based on a study by Dr. David Card and Dr. Alan Krueger of Princeton University. Drs. Card and Krueger examined the differences between New Jersey, which imposes a statewide higher minimum wage, and Pennsylvania, which kept the federal minimum wage. The research, on which the Administration has based its arguments, has collapsed under its own height.

Card and Krueger interviewed fast-food restaurants on both sides of the Delaware River. They posited that any differences between New Jersey and Pennsylvania could be explained solely by the minimum wage. What they found was that New Jersey restaurants hired more employees over the period of the study than Pennsylvania restaurants.

The results of the study were extraordinary. Card and Krueger seemed to have discovered a refutation of the law of demand. Economists were stunned. Because of the extraordinary results, they debated the results. Many economists argued that the differences between New Jersey and Pennsylvania were more than simply differences of minimum wage rates. Other economists argued that the study design was flawed.

Other economists were able to review the study using better data with devastating results for the Card-Krueger study and the Administration argument. Card and Krueger gained their data by asking one question. "How many full-time and part-time workers are employed in your restaurant, excluding managers and assistant managers?" Depending upon the answer, they interpolated employment trends. It is clear from this question that their report was deeply flawed.

First, the person answering the phone was allowed to interpret this question differently. Did they mean how many people this week, this month, this shift? Who is a part-time worker? Varying interpretations of this question allowed different answers from the same restaurant over the period of the study. The data Card and Krueger collected show incongruous results. For example, a Wendy's restaurant went from 35 employees (zero full-time, 35 part-time) to 65 employees (35 full-time, 30 part-time). Other restaurants show strange results as well.

Second, they simply divided the number of part-time employees by two and added them to the number of full-time employees. This method of estimating employment effects cannot accurately estimate the effects of higher minimum wages. Restaurant managers simply could have responded to a higher minimum by forcing employees to accept fewer hours.

The best data Card and Krueger could have obtained from these restaurants were hours worked. However, they did not obtain that data. Another set of economists, Dr. David Neumark and Dr. William Wascher, obtained the payroll data from the restaurants Card and Krueger surveyed. When Neumark and Wascher calculated the numbers, using the identical statistical methodology of Card and Krueger, they found the exact opposite of Card and Krueger. Card and Krueger found that restaurant employment in New Jersey rose, while restaurant employment in Pennsylvania fell. Neumark and Wascher found that employment in Pennsylvania rose more rapidly than employment in New Jersey. A