

Goodwill Efforts Can Help Account for US MIAs

VFW calls on Vietnam War veterans and families who have documents and personal items taken from the country during the Vietnam War to return them to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

Oct 15, 2024

The VFW Washington Office is asking veterans and families to search for old documents and memorabilia found in the Vietnam War and send the items to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).

Instead of donating or discarding souvenirs taken from the war, VFW recommends that veterans and their families turn them over to DPAA. Returning personal items, such as photographs and letters, back to the Vietnamese families who lost members in the Vietnam War could assist in identifying the estimated 300,000 missing Vietnamese troops from the war. VFW hopes that this offer of goodwill can help account for U.S. troops still missing from the war. This effort aligns with the VFW's longstanding mission to foster productive relations between the U.S. and Vietnam.

“Anything that can bridge the gap between the U.S. and the people of Vietnam is helpful in solidifying the relationship with their government,” DPAA spokeswoman Ashley Wright said. “Our mission, in a lot of ways, is seen as a humanitarian operation. We are trying to gain trust, even after all these years.”

Items collected from Vietnam War veterans and their families will be given to DPAA. After that, the artifacts are turned over to the appropriate Vietnamese officials. Anyone interested in turning over items to VFW and DPAA can mail artifacts and personal effects to:

*VFW Washington Office
Attention: Public Affairs
200 Maryland Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002*

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

406 W. 34th Street
Kansas City, MO 64111
Office 816.756.3390
Fax 816.968.1157

WASHINGTON OFFICE

200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002
Office 202.543.2239
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info@vfw.org
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VFW and DPAA aim to account for missing troops from past conflicts. VFW supports DPAA's efforts by advocating for the recovery and identification of remains, raising awareness about recovery efforts and encouraging the submission of relevant information and artifacts that could aid in the identification process.

"When VFW members come forward with artifacts from their service in Vietnam and other places around the world, it opens doors for DPAA to bring more missing Americans home," VFW Executive Director Ryan Gallucci said. "When I joined the VFW delegation to Vietnam in 2023, I saw first-hand how invested Vietnamese communities can be in ensuring that Americans are identified and returned to their families.

"But this investment is the product of years of goodwill on behalf of American veterans who served on the ground in Vietnam, providing Vietnamese families with similar peace of mind for their loved ones," Gallucci added. "We hope that this exchange of artifacts and ideas will continue in support of DPAA's noble mission as we strive to achieve the fullest possible accounting of our missing."

Since 1929, VFW has prioritized the mission of accounting for all missing U.S. veterans from past wars. The VFW's influence in Washington, D.C., led to the formation of the DPAA in 2015, which is dedicated to recovering U.S. troops listed as prisoners of war or missing in action.

For more information, visit <https://www.dpaa.mil>.

This article is featured in the 2024 October issue of [VFW magazine](#), and was written by [Dave Spiva](#), associate editor for VFW magazine.