

## **Issue: American Legion POW/MIA Policy**

### Message Points:

- The POW/MIA issue is of paramount concern to The American Legion. The Legion's Mandate on this issue commits us to keep the spotlight on securing the full accounting for all POW/MIAs from the Gulf War, the war in Southeast Asia, the Cold War, the Korean War and World War II. Full accounting means the return of live POWs, the repatriation of their remains, or convincing evidence why neither of these is possible.
- With regard to Vietnam in particular, The American Legion has always believed that the Vietnamese have the knowledge and the capability to account for the fate of many more of our POW/MIAs from the War in Southeast Asia. Moreover, only Vietnam, by taking unilateral actions to repatriate remains and to provide relevant information from wartime records, documents and the oral history program, can help account for many still missing Americans.
- The American Legion continues to oppose the normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam. We remain unconvinced that Vietnam is cooperating in full faith on POW/MIA issues. We are also concerned about the poor state of human rights in Vietnam, especially for ethnic groups such as the Montagnards that were American allies during the war.
- The American Legion supports the continued declassification of all POW/MIA information, the strengthening of joint commissions with Russia, North Korea and China, and adequate resourcing of investigative efforts and field operations to resolve POW/MIA issues. The American Legion has also worked continuously with both Congress and the Defense Department to improve the policies and programs for the accountability of missing persons. For years The American Legion supported a National POW/MIA Recognition Day, which is now recognized annually on the third Friday in September.
- The American Legion will continue to speak out and exert maximum pressure on both the Administration and on the Congress to fully account for America's POW/MIAs.