



VIETNAM

Casualty Resolution

TOP U.S. PEACE PRIORITY by Charles H. Briscoe

The purpose of this introductory article is to show that the *modus operandi* for resolving American missing in action (MIA) cases was viable in South Vietnam from 1972-1974, despite U.S. combat troop withdrawals. It demonstrates that the information campaign prepared by psychological operations (PSYOP) was as critical to 'prepping the area of operations (AO)' as it is today. PSYOP designed information solicitation products for audiences ranging from illiterate village elders to grade school children in rural areas worked just as they do today in Afghanistan and Iraq. Targeting basics remain timeless. The article is centered around the experiences of a Vietnam PSYOP veteran, Major (MAJ) Paul D. Mather, who served fifteen years in the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC).

As the U.S.-driven Paris Peace negotiations proceeded, JCRC was created by the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) to resolve the status of some 2,500 MIA and MIA/BNR (body not recovered) military and civilians unaccounted for during hostilities throughout Southeast Asia (SEA). By conducting humanitarian operations it was to find and investigate more than 1,000 reported aircraft crash and grave sites on land and offshore. To get Communist acquiescence, JCRC would not be based in South Vietnam.¹ Being aware of the many challenges to mission accomplishment in 1973 will help one understand why many of the same problems still plague POW resolution teams today.

Some background on the American wartime personnel recovery program will precede an explanation of how JCRC evolved, its organizational structure, and mission. Several sequential temporary assignments in 1974 gave MAJ Mather 'hands on' roles in the operational cycle of field MIA resolutions. These led to the recovery of a Special Forces (SF) officer, MAJ George Quamo, Deputy Commander, Command and Control North (CCN), U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), Special Operations Group (SOG), and two more Americans in Hue. Quamo led the CCN relief force to rescue the survivors of the Lang Vei SF Camp after it was overrun 7-8 February 1968 by a succession of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) sapper-infantry-tank attacks. While U.S. servicemen were fighting, dying, and being wounded in SEA, their homeland was being torn asunder by massive social unrest country-wide.

The Vietnam War hardened American public attitude towards its military prisoners and those missing in action. While the U.S. government unceremoniously withdrew its combat troops in 1972 after fighting its longest war, a grass roots movement to organize the POW families and missing in SEA garnered serious political clout. Mrs. Sybil Stockdale, wife of Commander (CDR) James B. Stockdale (U.S. Navy pilot shot down 9 September 1965), formed a

Opposite: The remains of SP4 Valentine B. Vollmer, A Co, 1st Bn, 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division (KIA 16 February 1968) and Mr. Steven A. Haukness, U.S. Information Agency, Da Nang (KIA 31 January 1968), recovered in early August 1974 outside Hue, were carried by *Air America* C-46 to Saigon before being transferred to the Central Identification Laboratory in Samae San, Thailand (CIL/THAI).

U.S. AIR FORCE

LTC Paul D. Mather



DOB: 9 June 1938.

POB: Floyd County, Iowa.

HS: Greene, Iowa, 1955.

College: Iowa State University, B.S. Aeronautical Engineering, ROTC commission.

1960-65: Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) engineer assignments.

1965-67: University of Wyoming, M.A. Mechanical Engineering.

1967-69: Air Force Systems Command, Andrews AFB, Washington, DC.

1969: PSYOP Officers Course, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center & School, Fort Bragg, NC.

1969-70: Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), An Loc Province Advisory Team.

1971-72: Engineer Project Officer (*Minuteman* ICBM), Hill AFB, UT.

1972-73: Engineer staff officer, Civil Operations and Rural Development (CORDS), MACV.

1973-88: JCRC J-3 PSYOP, Vietnam & Thailand.

1988-90: National Defense University, Washington, DC.²



The symbol of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia.



Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) unofficial pocket patch.



BG Robert C. Kingston, a combat infantry veteran of Korea (7th Infantry Division and JACK [Joint Advisory Commission, Korea]) and former brigade commander, 1st Cavalry Division and Deputy Senior Advisor, II ARVN Corps and MR II in Vietnam, became the first commander of the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) in 1973.

National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia (short title: National League of Families) that year. It quickly attracted popular support (most memorably by the sale of by-name Prisoner of War [POW]/MIA identification [ID] bracelets).⁴ The National League of Families became the single greatest focal point between the American electorate and the Nixon administration.⁵ The families were demanding answers.

Prompted by League of Family pressure on the Defense Department, PACOM, which had directed the military fight in South Vietnam, began creating JCRC to find, recover, identify, and repatriate more than 2,500 American military and civilians MIA in Southeast Asia (SEA).⁶ The locations of the preponderance of unresolved losses differed by service: Air Force, Laos (363) and North Vietnam (358); Army (522) and Marine (217) MIAs and BNRs, South Vietnam; and Navy losses at sea (173) and over land (233--most in North Vietnam).⁷ Improved forensics and DNA identification in the mid 1980s enabled medical pathologists and physical anthropologists to resolve MIA cases exponentially.⁸ This new organization, JCRC, should not be confused with its wartime antecedent that had similar initials, the Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC).

JPRC, formed 17 September 1966 by MACV, was assigned to SOG. Its mission was to coordinate the rescue of imprisoned, detained, escaped, and evading U.S. military and civilians and allied troops when air and ground search and rescue (SAR) efforts were ended in South and North Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand.⁹ JPRC collected MIA information because the Communists would not identify the American POWs. "The *ad hoc* approach to formalization of the process in the early years was at best a patchwork fix for what became the most emotional aspect of the war," recalled Colonel (COL) William H. Jordan.¹⁰ Two weeks before MACV disbanded SOG (April 1972), the ten assigned JPRC personnel and their MIA records were transferred to the Director of Intelligence, J-2.¹¹ As U.S. military units began withdrawing from South Vietnam, five people in the Joint Graves Registration Office, Saigon

were assigned to JPRC.¹² At the end of November 1972, JPRC (now up to sixty personnel) was provisionally called JCRC. Former emphasis on those possibly alive shifted to the dead after the POWs were released.¹³ Less than a month later, PACOM authorized 110 personnel to raise the number of field recovery teams (FRT)* to eleven.¹⁴ By then, recruiting was going 'full bore' in Saigon.

In 1973, MAJ Paul Mather, the Army-trained PSYOP officer, was an engineer advisor in the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) program under MACV. CORDS was rebuilding rural security and confidence in the South Vietnamese government province by province. Facing curtailment of his second tour (no career credit) because of mandated military drawdowns, Mather volunteered for the JCRC PSYOP position. As that organization matured in a tenuous environment the Air Force major did more than PSYOP. He became the 'institutional memory' of JCRC. Based on experience spanning fifteen years, Paul Mather wrote the seminal book on the topic, *M.I.A.: Accounting for the Missing in Southeast Asia*, in 1994.¹⁵

Charged with resolving the status of America's 2,500 MIA and MIA/BNR, JCRC was activated on 28 January 1973 at Tan Son Nhut Air Base (VNAF [South Vietnamese Air Force]) by Brigadier General (BG) Robert C. Kingston. After being interviewed by BG Kingston, those accepted for assignment were transferred to Thailand.¹⁶ The new joint element would be located on Nakhom Phanom (NKP) Royal Thai Air Force Base in northeast Thailand. The Joint Graves Registration Office and the U.S. Army Mortuary, Saigon (Tan Son Nhut Air Base), the U.S. Air Force Mortuary at Da Nang and the Central Identification Laboratory (CIL), were consolidated, renamed CIL/Thailand, placed under the operational control (OPCON) of JCRC, and moved to Camp Samae San on Utopai Royal Air Force Base, southeast of Bangkok.¹⁷ CIL/THAI, led by Quartermaster (QMC) Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Harold Tucker, became operational on 23 March 1973.¹⁸ Both units were filled with personnel from the U.S. military, civil service, and contract employees slated to leave South Vietnam in accordance with the Paris Peace Accords.¹⁹

*Note: To avoid confusion and provide clarity, field recovery team (FRT) will be used throughout.

★ ★ CEASE-FIRE! ★ ★

★ ★ All GIs Out of Viet in 60 Days ★ ★

PARIS PEACE ACCORDS

President Richard M. Nixon, plagued by social unrest across the country, pushed “Vietnamization” of the war as integral to America’s unilateral peace negotiations with the Communists in Paris. Phased withdrawal of American combat forces was conditional to his “Peace with Honor” rhetoric. The prompt release of POWs and accountability for MIAs was a non-negotiable stipulation. To ameliorate the South Vietnamese government concerns, massive amounts of military assistance ranging from aircraft to munitions were delivered before the Paris Peace Accords took effect on 28 January 1973.³

After the Paris Peace Accords were signed on 27 January 1973 (effective the following day), cooperative American and South Vietnamese recovery efforts were subject to the whim of the Communists, the Viet Cong (VC) and the NVA forces. Contrary to published agreements, the NVA surreptitiously occupied sections of the south vacated by American troops.²¹ Therefore, 25 percent of unresolved cases in South Vietnam were in areas dominated by ARVN forces, 65 percent in VC and NVA controlled regions, and 10 percent in contested areas.²² JCRC search and recovery missions had to be coordinated with the Four Party Joint Military Team (FPJMT). NVA and VC military representatives lived on Camp Davis, a sub-post of Tan Son Nhut Air Base.²³ All services were represented in the eighteen American military delegates. Though the FPJMT only met twice weekly for four hours, the U.S. team had to report to PACOM daily.²⁴ Anxious to get to work, JCRC concentrated on South Vietnam where ‘limited’ combat allowed cautious field work with the ARVN forces. Searches had to be coordinated by the liaison office (LNO) in each country.

Since the formation of JCRC LNOs in South Vietnam, North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos was contingent upon country approvals, the first office established in October 1973, was located at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. Air Force COL John F. Farnham, Navy Commander (CDR) Vincent S. Mazzola, and MAJ Paul Mather, the “public communications link with the populace” were the original ‘plank holders.’ Since JCRC LNO numbers were part of the fifty U.S. military personnel ‘cap’ on the Defense Attaché Office, Saigon (DAO, Saigon), it was a small operation and most people were ‘dual-hatted.’²⁵ USMC COL Ralph D. Wallace, the Hanoi LNO awaiting country clearance, attended the FPJMT meetings to present crash and burial site search package requests, check status of previous requests, and to announce PSYOP information leaflet dissemination.²⁶ The practice of airdropping leaflets to solicit information, begun by JPRC during the war,

was reoriented as MAJ Mather’s ‘rewards for information’ program with handout products.²⁷

“The print products seeking information (posters and notebooks) and promising rewards were designed by Mr. Tran Ngoc Diep, the Vietnamese cultural editor in the Media Development Element (MDE). Though assigned to 7th PSYOP Group (POG) on Okinawa, the MDE was an integral part of the JCRC J-3 Operations/Plans/Communications Division at NKP,” stated Mather.²⁸ Information solicitation product proposals had to be approved by the Political-Military (PolMil) Officer, U.S. Embassy before being sent to Okinawa for printing.²⁹

“The bundled products were flown from Kadena AFB to Tan Son Nhut. I met the Air Force planes and arranged distribution to the four military regions (MR) through the ARVN liaison office. Delivery to the MRs was accomplished by *Air America*. Our local Vietnamese in the MR offices pasted posters in conspicuous places, handed out flyers, and delivered notebooks and calendars to the schools and businesses,” continued the PSYOP officer.³⁰ Some information solicitation products, designed to appeal to cultural sensibilities of Vietnamese common people, are shown on the following pages.

JCRC information solicitation broadcasts on the South Vietnamese government radio were a ‘hard sell’ at the embassy. “Despite repeated tongue lashings from General Kingston, it took long time to get radio broadcast appeals approved. But, we finally did in May 1974, and hundreds of cheap, battery-powered AM transistor radios were handed out in rural areas,” said MAJ Mather. “This expanded our target audience.”³¹ Having ‘seeded’ rural areas with PSYOP awareness products, JCRC sent FRTs into areas with little VC and NVA contact.

****Note:** The 4th POG provided tactical PSYOP to the U.S. military in Vietnam. The strategic-missioned 7th POG was responsible for all of Asia. Thus, it supported this ‘postwar’ role.



The Viet Cong destroyed 220,000 barrels of fuel at the Nha Be petroleum storage facility ten miles downriver from Saigon during the night of 2-3 December 1973.



SF Captain (CPT) Richard M. Rees, JCRC FRT 6 (center) was killed on 15 December 1973 during a recovery mission in Gia Dinh province. On the left is SF Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Sully de Fontaine, commander, Control Team B, two days before the unarmed JCRC team was ambushed.

While cross-checking information provided by South Vietnamese civilians with the MIA records in the JCRC database at NKP took time, the “public communication” efforts produced results. JCRC launched its first field recovery mission on 7 May 1973.³² By September, eleven more field investigations had been accomplished. Twenty-one sets of remains were recovered; seven, positively identified as American; four, tentative. The Asian Mongoloid remains were presented to the South Vietnamese military for appropriate disposition. Personal ID items and serial numbered aircraft parts, found during the searches, furnished additional leads.³³ By late October, thirteen grave and crash sites had been inspected and thirty-one sets of remains had been recovered. In December 1973, with only seven crash and six grave sites remaining in areas of low threat dominated by ARVN, the risks of conducting humanitarian operations in contested war zones hit JCRC hard.³⁴

Flushed by field recovery successes, BG Kingston supported investigations near Saigon to attract international media.³⁵ Despite VC sapper and rocket attacks on the Nha Be petroleum storage site (ten miles south of the capital on the Saigon River) during the night of 2-3 December 1973 that destroyed 220,000 barrels of oil and cloaked the Vietnamese capital with smoke for a week, the ARVN minimized the enemy threat. BG Kingston gave the JCRC Public Information Officer (PIO) operational lead in order to orchestrate press coverage.³⁶ Two JCRC FRTs (FRT 6 [CPT Richard M. Rees] and FRT 10 [CPT Albert C. Welch] having five men each) were to investigate two sites within twenty miles of Saigon. Two Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel and a photographer and six CIL/THAI personnel (all volunteers) were attached to the two FRTs.³⁷

When one survey was cancelled after the JCRC contingent arrived from Thailand on 12 December, both teams were sent to the remaining site. CPT Rees, who was senior officer, took charge with FRT 10 in support. After two days of hosting press and dignitaries at the field site the routines of the nineteen unarmed Americans were well known in the area. Aircraft maintenance problems with a VNAF helicopter on the third day, 15 December, delayed movement of FRT 6 to the work site until late morning. FRT 10 was left waiting on the tarmac in the shadow of the Tan Son Nhut Airbase tower.³⁸

As the three unarmed VNAF UH-1 ‘Huey’ helicopters, clad with prominently displayed orange recognition panels, began landing in trail formation, B-40 rocket, machinegun, and small arms fire hammered the first two aircraft. Facing this deluge of fire, most Americans with FRT 6 (CPT Rees) leaped from their helicopters to take cover behind the rice paddy dikes. The lead and trail aircraft broke out of the killing zone to escape. The second Huey, crippled by an exploding B-40 rocket and heavy machinegun fire, slid off the dike into the water-filled paddy, nose first.³⁹

By the time a pair of VNAF Huey gunships arrived to force the VC withdrawal (thirty minutes later), CPT Rees was dead and four Americans wounded (First Lieutenant [1LT] Ben C. Elfrink, CIL/THAI, seriously) and one VNAF airmen was dead and three were wounded. At Tan Son Nhut Airbase,

PSYOP Information &



Grammar school students proudly display their 'Year of the Tiger' *Giap Dan* (1974) version 2 calendar/notebooks.



'Year of the Tiger' *Giap Dan* (1974) calendar/notebooks were handed out to villagers who used the canals to ferry produce to market.

A young girl admires her 'Year of the Tiger' *Giap Dan* (1974) calendar/notebook (version 2).

Solicitation Products



"If you know the whereabouts of a grave, some human bones, or the location of a crashed airplane that you think is American, please report this immediately to the nearest authority."

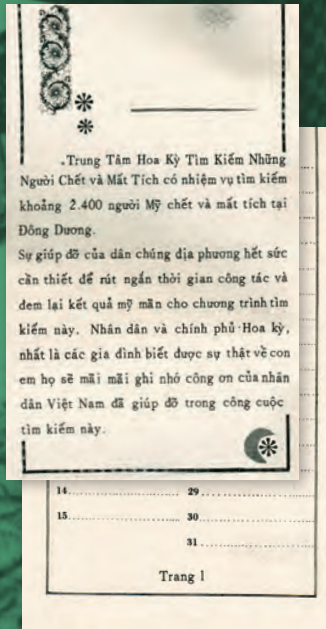
The stamp says: "Please leave a written note in Post Office Box 43." (translated by Patty Dung Garrett)



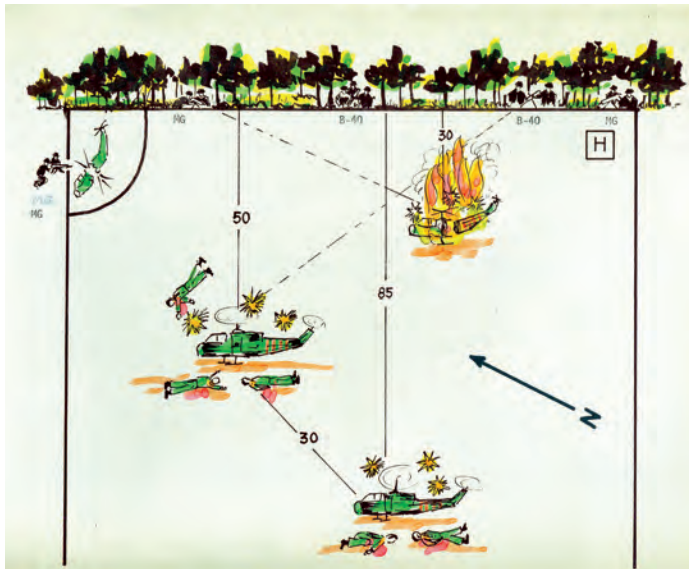
The JCRC 'Question Mark' flyer was pasted on the wall of a grocery kiosk along a river bank.



Cheap, Japanese-made transistor radios enabled JCRC to widen their rural audience. Though notices were often 'sandwiched' between programmed blocks of popular music, government announcements, and national news, they got the JCRC 'message' out.



This basic, pocket-size, fold-out appointment calendar was given to small business proprietors.



A draftsman-produced color illustration of the 15 December 1973 ambush incorrectly depicts four helicopters involved (three lift aircraft with a Command & Control [C&C] overhead in reality) and five dead (one U.S. and four VNAF) scattered away from the rocket-disabled Huey. (The reality was one VNAF KIA and three WIA in downed helicopter).

CPT Welch and FRT 10 listened to radio reports as the tragedy unfolded.⁴⁰ Ambassador Graham A. Martin gave a 'severe jolt' to JCRC operations, when he shut down activities in South Vietnam.⁴¹ In retrospect, it was naive for U.S. military, as a former major combatant, to believe that it could conduct 'peaceful' humanitarian operations in a hotly contested war zone. Reliance on ARVN intelligence assessments after the major attack on Nha Be two weeks earlier cast aspersions on BG Kingston. Having situational awareness in South Vietnam became critical to his successor.⁴²

Nearly two months after BG Kingston's December 1973 departure, promotable COL Joseph R. Ulatoski, frocked to BG in the Pentagon for the JCRC assignment, got to Thailand. Awaiting him was a summons from Ambassador Martin in Saigon. Guidance from Admiral James O. Richardson, the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, Hawaii, during his stopover enroute to Thailand had been simply, "Do good and keep PACOM informed."⁴³

As soon as Ulatoski entered Ambassador Martin's office he informed the jet-lagged brigadier: "JCRC was forbidden to do casualty resolutions in Vietnam unless I could guarantee that there would be no more U.S. casualties. Recovery operations were to be done by the ARVN forces. But, our 'rewards for information' program was still okay," remembered Ulatoski. "A good talk afterwards with Al (Albert A.) Francis, the embassy's PolMil officer, 'who had the ambassador's ear,' proved most helpful."⁴⁴ But, issues at JCRC awaited him.

After a two month period without an assigned commander and with no prospect on the horizon for engaging in what they had volunteered for, morale, particularly on the SF-manned FRTs, was low. Some disciplinary problems had to be handled by BG Ulatoski. Then, he could address operational issues throughout Southeast Asia. Since Vietnam

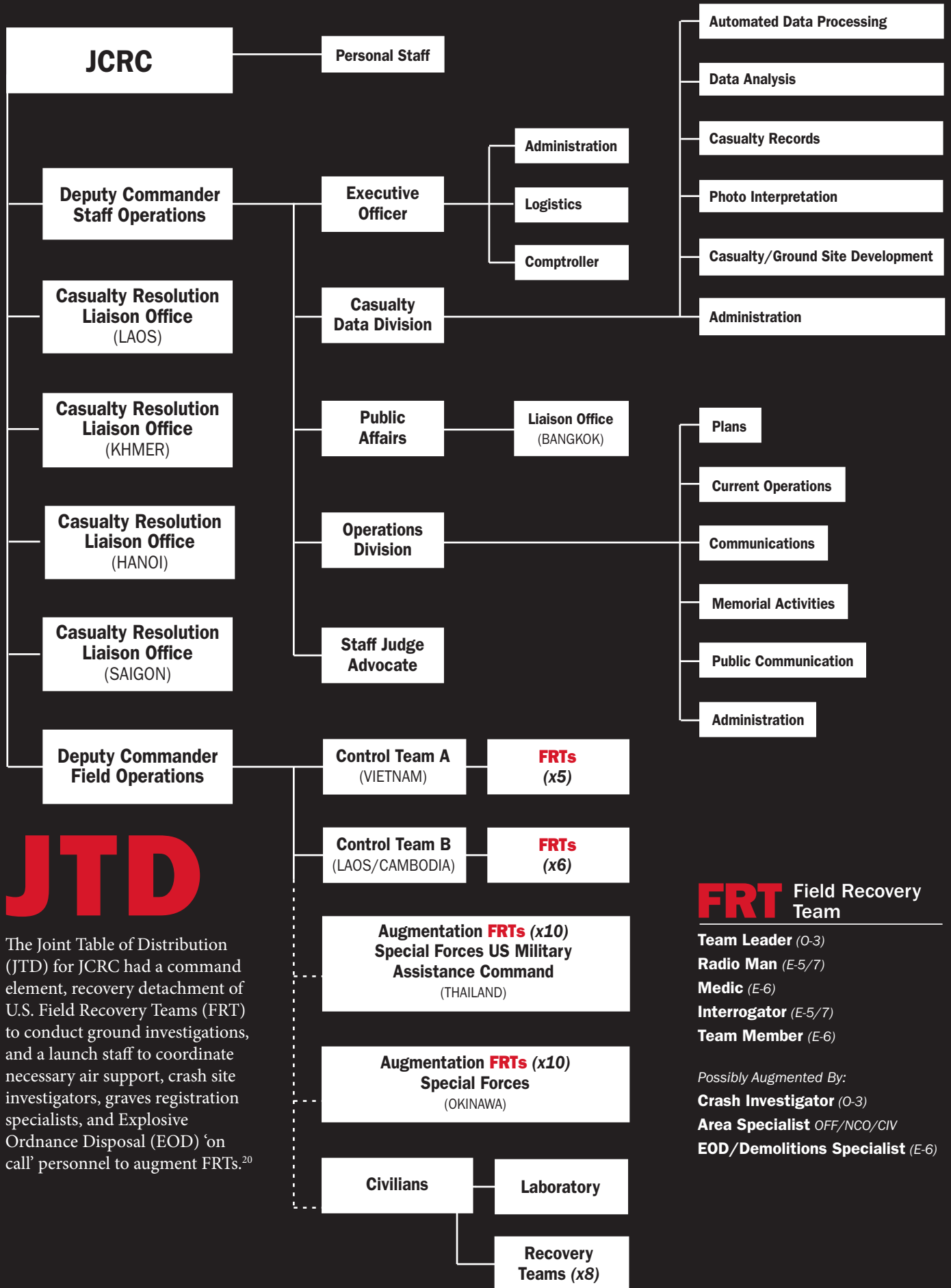


BG Joseph R. Ulatoski, a 5th Ranger Infantry Company and 8240th AU Korean War veteran, commanded a 25th Infantry Division (ID) brigade task force during the Cambodian incursion, May-June 1970. BG Ulatoski presented the Purple Heart to 1LT Ben C. Elfink [WIA 15 December 1973] at Camp Samae San, Thailand. Standing to the right is CIL/THAI commander, QMC LTC Clarke.

had the most MIA, restoring confidence in the Embassy became his priority focus.⁴⁵

Situational awareness in the war zone had to be regained and the ambassador had to be made comfortable with JCRC. The embassy staff and supporting agencies, especially USAID, had to be involved. MIA resolution was an emotional topic among Americans at home and had garnered considerable Congressional interest. To expand JCRC visibility more emphasis was placed on open PSYOP product solicitations, rewards for information, and establishing liaison offices in the U.S. Consulates in the four military regions (MR) to reduce the burden on small State Department field staffs. "Al Francis saw the benefits for the embassy, particularly with USAID. As these initiatives proved fruitful and were reinforced by field reports Ambassador Martin became comfortable with 'new' methods of operation by JCRC and relaxed constraints. Search and recovery regained some momentum. Our physical presence in the cities beyond Saigon provided us with 'ground truth' on combat conditions in the MRs. Thirty-one casualty resolution operations/activities were conducted, including a mission to Hanoi to recover the remains of twenty-three American servicemen," said the general.⁴⁶

When slow personnel backfills threatened to delay formation of a regional office in Da Nang, COL Farnham sent MAJ Mather north in early 1974 to serve as the interim JCRC Desk Officer in the consulate.⁴⁷ This temporary assignment allowed the "public communications link" of JCRC to participate in the full circle of a JCRC recovery—from start to finish. He was filling in for a civilian delayed in the hiring process. Assignment of experienced, mature Army SF captains as MR Operations Officers was phase two of BG Ulatoski's plan.⁴⁸



JTD

The Joint Table of Distribution (JTD) for JCRC had a command element, recovery detachment of U.S. Field Recovery Teams (FRT) to conduct ground investigations, and a launch staff to coordinate necessary air support, crash site investigators, graves registration specialists, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) 'on call' personnel to augment FRTs.²⁰

FRT Field Recovery Team

Team Leader (O-3)

Radio Man (E-5/7)

Medic (E-6)

Interrogator (E-5/7)

Team Member (E-6)

Possibly Augmented By:

Crash Investigator (O-3)

Area Specialist OFF/NCO/CIV

EOD/Demolitions Specialist (E-6)

What follows are examples of the complete MIA recovery process involving MAJ Mather during his six months at Da Nang in the spring and summer of 1974. The initial step, information solicitations to the Vietnamese peasantry to help identify aircraft crash and burial sites, led to cross-checking responses with ‘stubby pencil’ MIA records (being automated with key punch cards). Then, physical recovery of the remains could be arranged. Afterwards, the remains were shipped to the Samae San laboratory for conclusive identification. Confirmed CIL/THAI identifications led to official notifications of families before repatriation and final burial in the United States.⁵⁰

“One of our ‘rewards for information’ leaflets prompted a woodcutter to come to the Da Nang consulate. When he told the guards about finding a crashed airplane in the densely wooded mountains north of the city, they brought him to my office,” said Mather. “Although I had reported crash sites marked on 1/50,000 maps for MR IV as well as the latest readout of the JCRC computer-based master registry, I could find no crash site around the Hai Van Pass that connected Hue and Da Nang.”⁵¹



The six-seat Cessna 185E Skywagon, was designated a utility aircraft and classified U-17A by the South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF).

“But, the woodcutter was adamant. I took a chance and pulled out our *Polaroid* (camera). My secretary/interpreter, Ms. Du Bich Ha, gave him a very simple class on how to take pictures with it. We let him use the remaining film, critiquing his focus, emphasizing that each photo had to fully develop before taking another, and then showed him how to preserve the image by using a bar wipe to apply a protective coating. Although illiterate, the forester learned and understood that good photos were key to proving his claim...and some money. I reloaded the *Polaroid* with a new ‘twelve shot’ film pack and he left. Frankly, I thought I had seen the last of him because a *Polaroid* ‘instant’ camera was very marketable,” chuckled Mather.⁵²

“About ten days later, the woodcutter reappeared. He had the camera, some photos, and two VNAF identification cards. In one photo the tail number of the crashed airplane, XT14502, was ‘clear as a bell’ and the typed data on the plastic-covered ID cards was readable. We now had hard evidence to check with the list of missing allied aircraft, airmen, and passengers,” said MAJ Mather. “I was very excited with the prospect of finding someone.”⁵³

The Da Nang Desk Officer telephoned the Saigon Liaison Office to solicit help in identifying the airplane, its parent unit, occupants, and to determine when it went missing. MAJ Mather briefed the MR I Consul General, Mr. Paul Popple, and deputy, Ms. Theresa A. Tull, on the crash discovery. They emphasized that the South Vietnamese military were responsible for field recoveries outside the province capitals. They were fully aware that Ambassador Martin had restricted JCRC after SF Captain Rees, FRT 6, was killed 15 December 1973 in the midst of a recovery mission twelve miles southwest of Saigon.⁵⁴ Mather’s role would be an administrative supporting one.

The JCRC desk officer had to be satisfied with researching the database, arranging the recovery mission with the local



The VNAF U-17A crashed less than a kilometer inland and about 3 kilometers from the Hai Van Pass. (Original Map with crash site marked.)

ARVN and the Two Party Joint Military Team stationed in Da Nang, getting mortuary support from CIL-Thailand, and paying the reward if the recovery proved successful.⁵⁵ XT14502 was discovered to be the tail number of a six-seat, high-wing VNAF U-17A propeller airplane weighing 3,200 pounds. It was one of eighty *Cessna 185 Skywagons* purchased by the U.S. Air Force with Military Assistance Program (MAP) funds.⁵⁶

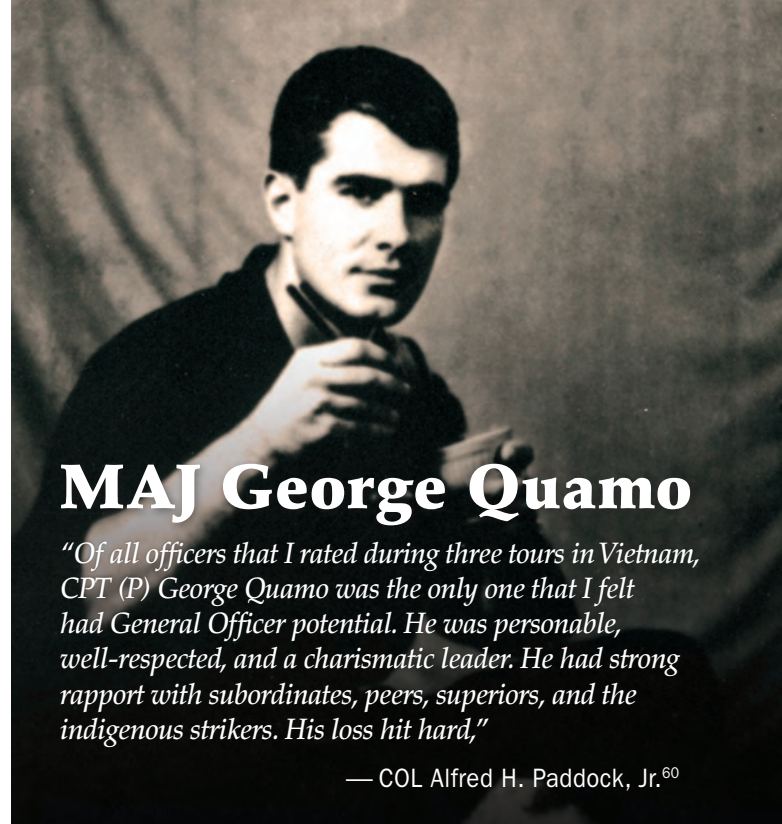
The U-17A belonged to the VNAF 1st Air Force Division, 41st Air Wing (Da Nang), 110th Air Squadron. The airplane was returning to Da Nang from Khe Sanh on 14 April 1968 when it went missing. The pilot, Lieutenant (LT) Nguyen Van Nhan, was transporting two passengers: a VNAF civilian, Nguyen Ngoc Hanh, and SF MAJ George Quamo, deputy commander, Forward Operating Base 3 (FOB 3), CCN (Command & Control North), MACV, SOG. Because the last radar contact with XT14502 was east of Da Nang out over the ocean, the VNAF presumed that XT14502 crashed in the water.⁵⁷

The Vietnamese military recovered the remains of MAJ George Quamo and the two VNAF personnel in late June 1974. The U-17A crash site (161226N 1080927E), was just 700 meters inland from the sea on the Bai Chu-oi peninsula and three kilometers away from the Hai Van Pass highway. Mr. Charles P. Warren, a CIL/THAI physical anthropologist, separated Caucasian from Asian Mongoloid bones at the Da Nang mortuary to speed up identification. MAJ Mather participated in the repatriation ceremony conducted by the ARVN military at the Da Nang Airfield on 28 June 1974. The Caucasian remains were flown to Saigon and then to Camp Samae San. On 15 August 1974 they were positively identified as those of Maj Quamo. Mather had returned to Saigon a month earlier because the civilian desk officer, Mr. John G. Rogers, had arrived.⁶¹

Completing the MIA resolution circle, Mr. Rogers, a former Army Mortuary, Saigon employee, paid the reward to the woodcutter. Phan Heong, a local high school student who helped with the recovery, 'capped' the ARVN honors ceremony with a letter of condolence to the Quamo family to "share their sadness" and appreciation for his sacrifice while protecting South Vietnam from Communism and for preserving their democratic way of life. The original, written in Vietnamese, and the English translation were mailed to his brother, James, by the MR I JCRC Desk Officer.⁶² "Locating, recovering, identifying, and repatriating the remains of MAJ Quamo clearly showed that the American MIA resolution system worked," commented retired Major General (MG) Thomas F. Needham, commander of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA), January 1992 to July 1994.⁶³

Appropriately, SF Major George Quamo, DSC, with his family present, was interred in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors on 21 October 1974.⁶⁴ MAJ Quamo's military decorations were presented at a special awards ceremony conducted at the Goodman Street Armory, Rochester, New York, on 6 August 1975.⁶⁵ Back in South Vietnam, two unplanned field recoveries in MR I by JCRC produced results.

During the Tet Offensive of 1968, the NVA massacred thousands of citizens in Hue, the former imperial capital.



MAJ George Quamo

"Of all officers that I rated during three tours in Vietnam, CPT (P) George Quamo was the only one that I felt had General Officer potential. He was personable, well-respected, and a charismatic leader. He had strong rapport with subordinates, peers, superiors, and the indigenous strikers. His loss hit hard,"

— COL Alfred H. Paddock, Jr.⁶⁰

DOB: 20 June 1940.

POB: Lynn, MA.

Family: Alexander & Kaliroi Quamo (Albania). Oldest of two sons and four daughters.

HS: Averill Park (Rensselaer County), NY, June 1958.

23 Oct 1958: BPED; BCT, B Troop, 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, 15th Cavalry.

1958–1959: SP5, Infantry AIT, C Troop, 1st Recon Squadron, 15th Cavalry, Ft Hood, TX.

1959–1960: Infantry OCS, Airborne, Ranger, Ft Benning, GA. Infantry Rifle Plt Ldr, E Co, 1st BG 5th Infantry.

1960–1962: Rifle Co XO, C Co & Co Cdr, E Co, 1st ID, Ft Riley, KS.

1962: MATA Course 1-63, Ft Bragg, NC, followed by DLI (Vietnamese & Laotian).

Oct 1962–Oct 1963:

Tng Advisor & Asst Bn Advisor, 3rd Bn, 33rd Regt, 21st ID, ARVN, III Corps, RVN.

Oct 1963–July 1964:

A Co XO, 7th SFG & Special Warfare Staff Officers Course, Ft Bragg, NC, XO, Det A-31 & Cdr, Det A-32 TDY RVN.

Oct 1964–Jul 1966:

DLI (Thai) & Infantry Officer Advanced Course, Ft Benning, GA.

Jul 1966–Jun 1967: S-1, B-210, 1st SFG, Inf Advisor, Royal Thai Regt (TDY Thailand), Gp S-3 Tng, 1st SFG, Okinawa.

Jun 1967–14 Apr 1968:

(MIA, BNR), XO A-401, CCN, MACV-SOG, RVN.

Decorations: DSC (P), 2SS; LOM; 2BSV, AM, 2 ACM, PH (P).⁵⁸

MAJ Quamo led the CCN relief force to rescue the survivors of multiple NVA task force assaults (sapper-infantry-tanks) on the Lang Vei SF Camp during the night of 7-8 February 1968. He controlled air support and ground defenses that broke up several counterattacks designed to annihilate the assembled group and disrupt aero medical evacuations.⁵⁹



Supported by artillery, naval gunfire, and airstrikes, it took almost three months for American and Vietnamese Marines and Army forces to drive the Communists from the city. In the summer of 1974, the Vietnamese requested JCRC assistance as they exhumed the mass grave sites of 1968.⁶⁶

Given the relative security of Hue, the ambassador approved the temporary commitment of JCRC and CIL/THAI personnel. Before the field recovery teams arrived, Hue was blanketed with JCRC posters requesting assistance. When the combined teams arrived, local citizens came forward with information on two MIA: an American civilian and a U.S. soldier.⁶⁷

While the CIL/THAI technicians assisted the Vietnamese with the exhumations of mass graves in the Hue citadel, the SF FRTs interviewed claimants. The first recovery occurred on 8 August 1974 nearly 30 kilometers northwest of Hue.



JCRC Regional Liaison Offices

Military Region	Desk Officer	Operations Officer
MR I	MAJ Paul D. Mather Mr. John G. Rogers	CPT Rodger Urbaniak
MR II	Mr. Maurice J. Healy	CPT Roger Schjeldahl
MR III	Mr. Marvin Shelton Mr. William Hunt	CPT George Petrie
MR IV	Mr. James E. Tully	CPT Paul P. Mendes ⁴⁹

A grave site was confirmed by the Vietnamese interpreter accompanying the SF FRTs. Specialist Four (SP4) Valentine B. Vollmer, died on 16 February 1968, two days after his twentieth birthday. The young paratrooper was a rifleman in A Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division fighting to take Hue away from the Communists. CIL/THAI positively identified the Wisconsin native's remains on 23 March 1976.⁶⁸ The second recovery, a U.S. government civilian, had become a casualty early in Tet 1968.

Mr. Steven A. Haukness, a U.S. Information Agency (USIA) communicator from South Dakota, was assigned to Da Nang. He decided to take a short holiday with a colleague in Hue during Tet. His USIA friend, Steve Miller, was executed on 31 January 1968 shortly after being captured. Trying to escape the same fate Haukness was shot when he bolted away from the NVA captors. He collapsed and died in the small front courtyard of a Catholic priest's quarters. He was buried by the parochial high school teacher after the NVA gave him permission. The Catholic prelate simply showed the JCRC team where to dig. Caucasian remains were recovered on 16 August 1974. The CIL/THAI laboratory positively identified them as belonging to Haukness on 23 March 1975.⁶⁹

The ARVN were extremely gracious to support JCRC field recoveries while fighting the four NVA divisions advancing



Mr. Steven A. Haukness, a U.S. Information Agency (USIA) communicator from Da Nang, was killed in Hue by NVA forces on 31 January 1968.



SP4 Valentine B. Vollmer, A Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, KIA, Hue, South Vietnam, 16 February 1968



further south each day. While the U.S. had agreed to a ceasefire beginning 28 January 1973 and troop withdrawals by the end of the year, the North Vietnamese did not, and occupied abandoned American military bases, sharing control of the areas with the VC. U.S. military assistance to South Vietnam went 'full bore' until the Paris Peace Accords were signed. Despite monitoring of the 'ceasefire' by military observers from two Western and two Communist nations, NVA forces pushed further into the South. After the death of SF CPT Richard Rees in December 1973, MIA recovery operations in South Vietnam were almost all done by ARVN.

Vietnam was our longest war before GWOT. But more significantly, for the first time in our history, the families of the U.S. POWs and MIA formed a strong league to make Americans aware of the situation during the war. Their 'voice' became strident when President Richard M. Nixon advocated unilateral withdrawal from Vietnam like President Dwight D. Eisenhower had done during the Korean War. Nixon pledged "Peace with Honor" in his attempt to regain support from a society that was being ripped apart by deep racial unrest, rampant anti-war protests, urban terrorism, and anti-establishment movements. The Communists, as they did during Korea, played upon these domestic issues to control the peace process while DOD struggled to satisfy concerns of the Vietnam POW and MIA families with a well-resourced JCRC.⁷⁰

The PSYOP information solicitation campaign was always the key to JCRC recovery successes. The regional desk officers in the four consulates served to provide a visible JCRC presence in this predominantly rural country. It made information transfer much simpler and personal. The peasant population was more apt to talk directly to an American. This reduced 'sharing' (rewards) with local officials—a cultural norm. Focusing on the rural audience was correct. Grammar school language in posters and calendar-notebooks was appropriate. Value added of having American JCRC personnel in the MRs was demonstrated by the MAJ George Quamo and two Hue recoveries in 1974. North Vietnam (today's Socialist Republic of Vietnam [SRV]) has controlled MIA resolution since the United States government initiated unilateral peace negotiations more than thirty years ago. That situation delayed postwar 'healing' for Americans, but the relentless work of MAJ Paul Mather and Army LTC Joe B. Harvey spanning fifteen years developed the MIA recovery protocols used to this day. They are the 'unsung heroes' of JCRC.⁷¹ ▲

CHARLES H. BRISCOE, PhD

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations in Latin America, POW Recovery, and the Lodge Act.

Special thanks goes to Patty Dung Garrett, my Vietnamese translator of the JCRC PSYOP information solicitation products, Texas Aggie LTC Joe B. Harvey, COL William E. Jordan, the former JCRC and JTF-Full Accounting personnel who reviewed this article, and especially LTC Paul D. Mather, whose collection of JCRC documentation brought 'real life' to this article.



On 8 August 1974 Army of Vietnam (ARVN) soldiers carried the possible remains of SP/4 Valentine B. Vollmer, A Co, 1st Bn, 502nd Infantry, 101st Airborne Division (KIA 16 February 1968) to an Air America UH-1D Huey helicopter for positive identification at Central Identification Laboratory, Samae San, Thailand (CILTHAI).

Endnotes

- 1 Department of Defense (DOD), HQ, Commander-in-Chief Pacific (CINCPAC). History of the U.S. Support Activities Group, 15 February – 31 March 1973 (MSgt Frank M. Whitacre), Chapter VI: Joint Casualty Resolution Center, 108-109, hereafter cited as USSAG Command History with dates; CINCPAC: Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 216 hereafter cited as CINCPAC Command History with appropriate volume and pages; Paul D. Mather, *M.I.A.: Accounting for the Missing in Southeast Asia* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1994), 10-11.
- 2 Retired Air Force LTC Paul D. Mather, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 25 June 2014, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 3 Walter Scott Dillard, *Sixty Days to Peace: Implementing the Paris Peace Accords, Vietnam 1973* (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1982), 175; LTC William H. Jordan, "Americans Missing in Southeast Asia: Perceptions, Politics, and Realities," Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Studies Paper, 1990:33 hereafter cited by author and short title.
- 4 Sybil Stockdale, wife of prisoner of war (POW) Navy Commander James B. Stockdale shot down on 9 September 1965, was determined to make the American people aware of the mistreatment of U.S. POWs and to improve U.S. policies concerning the treatment of and handling of POW families. She organized a group of POW/MIA wives in Coronado, California. Evelyn Grubb and Mary Crowe followed suit in Hampton, Virginia, in 1967 to press federal officials for more information. The League was incorporated in Washington, DC, on 28 May 1970. "National League of POW/MIA Families" at <http://www.pow-miafamilies.org/about-the-league>, accessed 1/22/2015
- 5 Jordan, "Americans Missing in Southeast Asia," 33.
- 6 USSAG Command History, 15 February – 31 March 1973, Chapter VI: JCRC, 108-109; CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 216; Mather, *M.I.A.*, 10-11.
- 7 Department of the Air Force, HQ, Pacific Air Forces. Office of History. Project CHECO (Contemporary Historical Examination of Current Operations): Joint Personnel Recovery in Southeast Asia, 1 September 1976, 3, hereafter cited as Project CHECO: JPR in SEA.
- 8 Jordan, "Americans Missing in Southeast Asia," 5.
- 9 U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), Command History, January 1972-March 1973, Vol. II: G-5, hereafter cited as MACV Command History with date, volume, and pages; CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 218; Jordan, "Americans Missing in Southeast Asia," 12; Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 7. BRIGHT LIGHT was resurrected in May 1973 as the unclassified codename for the JCRC data file and the active collection and transmission of information concerning U.S. and allied personnel in Prisoner of War (POW), missing in action (MIA), and deceased (body not recovered [BNR]) status, POW camps, aircraft crash sites, and grave sites. JCRC submitted a weekly status report to arrive at CINCPAC on Mondays. CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 218, 220. A thorough review of transferred JPRC ADP material by JCRC revealed large-scale deficiencies in both content and arrangement. Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 10, 11; Retired BG Joseph R. Ulatoski, interview by Briscoe, 18 August 2014, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 10 Jordan, "Americans Missing in Southeast Asia," 2. Armor LTC William H. Jordan served as Deputy Commander, JCRC from July 1987 to July 1989 and as a colonel commanded the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii, supporting Joint Task Force - Full Accounting (JTF-FA), 1994-1996. Jordan, interviews by Briscoe, 4 and 12 November 2013, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 11 MACV Command History, January 1972-March 1973, Vol. II: G-5; Joint Personnel Recovery Center (JPRC) File, Records of U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), Part I, Reel 20, Directorate of Intelligence, "Joint Personnel Recovery Center" dated 11 December 1972, hereafter cited as JCRC File, MACV with appropriate part and reel.
- 12 MACV Command History, January 1972-March 1973, Vol. II: G-7.
- 13 Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 13, 14.
- 14 JCRC File, MACV, Part I, Reel 20; CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 215, 212, 216. In 1973, CINCPAC plans and activities associated with the recovery of U.S. and other allied personnel were in several programs: HOMECOMING, the return of U.S. POWs from North Vietnam; CONPLAN 5100, contingency employment of U.S. ground, air, and naval forces for personnel recovery (PR) operations in Southeast Asia (SEA), and for the encouragement and support of friendly indigenous military forces for PR operations in their respective countries (FREEDOM FERRY); and CONPLAN 5119 (VALOR HOME) on casualty resolution, which provided for the location, recovery, identification, and evacuation of remains of deceased body-not-recovered U.S. personnel and the resolution of the status of missing U.S. personnel. CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 212, 216; MACV Command History, January 1972-March 1973, Vol. II: G-8.
- 15 Mather interview, 25 June 2014.
- 16 USSAG History, 15 February – 31 March 1973, Chapter VI: JCRC, 108-109; CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 216; Mather, *M.I.A.*, 10-11; Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 19. When the Americans left South Vietnam, Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base was turned over to the South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF) and the site became Tan Son Nhut Air Base.
- 17 CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 216-217; Jordan, "Americans Missing in Southeast Asia," 13. Under U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) Contingency Plan (CONPLAN) 5119, Nakhon Phanom (NKP) was selected as future home of JCRC. Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 17, 18.
- 18 USSAG Command History, 15 February – 31 March 1973, Chapter VI: 125. Grave registration is a function of the Army Quartermaster Corps (QM). Hence CIL/THAI was commanded by a QM lieutenant colonel.
- 19 Mather interview, 6 October 2014; MACV Command History, January 1972-March 1973, Vol. II: G-7; CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 217. Approximately 70 percent of the JCRC manning came from MACV resources. USSAG Command History, 15 February – 31 March 1973, Chapter VI: 115; Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 19.
- 20 CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 217, 218.
- 21 Dillard, *Sixty Days to Peace*, 175.
- 22 Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 5.
- 23 The wartime U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) headquarters, staff billeting, exchange, clubs, and recreational facilities on Tan Son Nhut Air Force Base provided ample office space and quarters for the Defense Attaché Office, Saigon, the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) Liaison Office, the Vietnamese Army (ARVN) Liaison Office, Four Party Joint Military Team (FPJMT), and the International Commission for Control and Supervision (ICCS). Co-location of these disparate groups on Tan Son Nhut did not intimate close coordination nor cooperation. Office of the President of the U.S. Protocol to the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet-Nam: Concerning The Cease-Fire in South Viet-Nam and the Joint Military Commissions, Articles 2-17: 104-118, 27 January 1973 (Saigon: United States Information Service, 1973).
- 24 LTC Karl P. Piotrowski, "Negotiating with the Enemy," *Air University Review*, September-October 1977, 3; Mather, *M.I.A.*, 8-9; Mather interview, 6 October 2014.
- 25 As a tenant unit the JCRC Liaison Office personnel counted against the DAO, Saigon personnel 'cap' of fifty U.S. military personnel. DAO, Saigon continued the former Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) mission to train, equip, and resupply the South Vietnamese military forces, according to MAJ Paul Mather. Mather interviews, 20, 25 and 30 June and 6 October 2014; Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 26.
- 26 USSAG Command History, 1 April – 30 June 1973, Chapter VI: 152-153.
- 27 MACV Command History, January 1972-March 1973, Vol. II: G-6; Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 8, 9.
- 28 The Media Development Element (MDE) was the forward-based element of 7th PSYOP Group (POG). The 7th POG, having the strategic PSYOP mission for U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), covered Southeast Asia (SEA) during the war in Vietnam. It was stationed in Okinawa. U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) gave 7th POG \$1.5 million dollars to support JCRC. Mather interview, 6 October 2014; USSAG Command History: 15 February – 31 March 1973, Chapter VI: 111, Figure 28 and 1 April – 30 June 1973, Chapter VI: 156; Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 41. The JPRC Leaflet and Reward Programs, against the wishes of Ambassador Graham A. Martin, were continued. The payments for Vietnamese were almost double that paid to Laotians. JCRC determined the value of the information furnished and/or assistance given and directed payment of rewards. Whenever possible, the payment was given maximum publicity except that which led to the recovery of Americans. This was done to reduce 'bone' scams. American and South Vietnamese military were not eligible for rewards. MACV Command History, January 1972-March 1973, Vol. II: G-6, Figure G-2.
- 29 Mather interview, 6 October 2014. USSAG Command History: 15 February – 31 March 1973, Chapter VI: 111, Figure 28 and 1 April – 30 June 1973, Chapter VI: 156; MACV Command History, January 1972-March 1973, Vol. II: G-6, Figure G-2.
- 30 Mather interviews, 6 and 30 June 2014; Chris Peterson, "Remains," *Reuters News Service*, Binh Chanh, South Vietnam, 19 December 1973.
- 31 Mather interviews, 6 October 2014 and 7 January 2015. On 13 October 1973, BG Kingston vented his frustration about Embassy restraints on the JCRC publicity program. He said that the low profile approach denied opportunities to solicit information on perishable grave and crash sites. It was May 1974 before the Ministry of Communications responded to a U.S. Information Service (USIS) request to assist JCRC with country-wide radio and television spot announcements. Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 42, 43. Since the U.S. Army Counter Insurgency Support Office (CISO) on Okinawa had supplied 'throwaway' transistor radios to the Joint Personnel Recovery Command (JPRC), Special Operations Group (SOG), MACV during the war, it had sources available. CISO supported JCRC until 1976. Retired DAC Conrad B. Baker, interview by Briscoe, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 32 Former CPT John M. McClellan, interview by Briscoe, 8 September 2014, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 33 CINCPAC Command History, 1973, Vol. I: 224; Mather *M.I.A.*, 14.
- 34 Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 60.
- 35 Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 72, 73, 79.
- 36 Retired USMC COL Richard H. Esau, interviews by Briscoe, 30 April and 6 May 2014, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 37 Retired LTC Albert C. Welch, interviews by Briscoe, 16 and 29 April 2014, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date. Field Team Recovery (FRT) 6 consisted of CPT Richard M. Rees, SSGs Allen D. Weicksel, Peter A. Holmberg, and Edgar L. Blakemore and SGT Herman C. Ballard. The members of FRT 10 were CPT Albert C. Welch, SSGs Stephen L. Chaffins and Richard Reiman, SGT Lloyd S. Kayser, and SP4 Paul J. Stoskus. Attached to the FRTs were two Air Force EOD (Explosive Ordnance Demolition) S/SGTs Richard B. Burrman and Robert L. Diekman, and six personnel from CIL/THAI. All were volunteers: ILT Ben C. Ellfrink, SFC Frank Cade, SSGs John Boyd and Ronnie L. Watson, and SGTs J. Crauswell and Randall J. Nash. Personal records, LTC Albert C. Welch.
- 38 Welch interview, 29 April 2014.
- 39 Welch interview, 29 April 2014.
- 40 Ten members of Control Team (CT) B had gone to Saigon to support the operation. MAJ Richard E. Laritz, the CT B operations officer, was in charge 12-15 December. LTC Sully A. De Fontaine, there initially, returned to Saigon on 15 December after the incident. Welch interview, 29 April 2014; Retired COL Larry A. Redmond (JCRC) email to Briscoe, 2 June 2014, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. SF CPT Richard M. Rees was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously on 2 December 1975 (Department of Army General Order No. 24). How two other JCRC personnel (MAJ Richard E. Laritz [DA GO No. 56 dated 31 December 1974] and SSG Allen D. Weicksel [DA GO No. 51 dated 25 October 1974] and one dead and three wounded VNAF helicopter crewman (Nguyen Nam, Than Van Hien, Tan Khai Tri, and Ha Van Nung [DA GO No. 10 dated 2 April 1975]) were awarded Silver Star medals for the same action remains unknown. BG Kingston was gone. BG Ulatoski only recommended a DSC for Rees. He decided that the most appropriate award for others involved was the Joint Service Commendation Medal (JSCM). Silver Star award



The possible remains of SF MAJ George Quamo were loaded aboard an *Air America* C-46 at Da Nang Airfield on 28 June 1974. L to R: Army MI CPT Stuart A. Herrington, FPJMT, U.S. Marines from the Da Nang Consulate, ARVN Military Police, JCRC Air Force MAJ Paul D. Mather, and Air Force LTC Lawrence Robson, FPJMT.

- authority rested with a major general (MG) and the nearest Army MG was the DAO, Saigon. Though MG Homer D. Smith did not leave South Vietnam until 30 April 1975 it is hard to imagine that approval of awards and decorations were a priority. <http://valor.militarytimes.com/recipient.php?recipientid=4504>, accessed 6/22/2015; Welch interview, 29 April 2014; Ulatoski interview, 18 August 2014.
- 41 Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 32.
 - 42 Ulatoski interview, 18 August 2014.
 - 43 Ulatoski interviews, 22 June 2011 and 18 August 2014.
 - 44 Ulatoski interviews, 22 June 2011 and 18 August 2014.
 - 45 The first two SF detachment commanders were MAJ James E. Yaden (Camden Military School '37) and COL C. Vincent Lang, a former SF FANK (French acronym for *Forces Speciales Khmères* [Khmer National Armed Forces] training commander. McClellan interview, 8 September 2014.
 - 46 Ulatoski interview, 18 August 2014.
 - 47 Providing SF captains to serve as Assistant Desk/Operations Officers in these regions took a little longer because not all JCRC captains were sufficiently mature and experienced to work independently in an American consulate. Retired USMC COL Anthony A. Wood, interview by Briscoe, 5 December 2014, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
 - 48 Ulatoski interview, 18 August 2014. After assuming command on 8 January 1974, BG Ulatoski abided by BG Kingston's end-of-tour recommendation to reduce the number of field recovery teams based on U.S. Embassy-imposed restrictions in South Vietnam and the status of the war. Launch units were consolidated with FRTs. Initial expectations of expanding responsibilities never materialized. Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 24, 25, 47, 50.
 - 49 Mather interview, 15 October 2014.
 - 50 Ulatoski interview, 18 August 2014; Retired COL William F. Prince (JCRC), interview by Briscoe, 9 September 2014, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date; Mather interview, 15 October 2014.
 - 51 USSAG Command History, 1 April – 30 June 1973, Chapter VI: 159-160; Zerox copies of Polaroid photos taken at aircraft crash site (MIA Army MAJ George Quamo), Mather personal files.
 - 52 USSAG Command History, 1 April – 30 June 1973, Chapter VI: 159-160; Zerox copies of Polaroid photos taken at aircraft crash site (MIA Army MAJ George Quamo) and JCRC-LNS Personnel Roster dated 24 Mar 75, Mather personal files.
 - 53 Zerox copies of Polaroid photos taken at aircraft crash site (MIA Army MAJ George Quamo), Mather personal files.
 - 54 Mather interviews, 15 October and 3 December 2014; declassified AMEMBASSY SAIGON confidential message 151143Z DEC 73, SUBJECT: COMMUNIST ATTACK ON FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY TEAM HELICOPTERS; USDAO SAIGON, RVN, unclassified message 151037Z DEC 73, SUBJECT: GVN STATEMENT-ATTACK ON JCRC TEAM MEMBERS; CDR JCRC NKP ARPT THAI/JCRC-OPS unclassified message 190645Z DEC 73, SUBJECT: JCRC OPS SUMMARY 1-73, Mather personal files.
 - 55 The Four Party Joint Military Team in Saigon had Two Party Joint Military Teams (ARVN and Viet Cong) in the regions. After the Communist delegates were stoned by irate South Vietnamese villagers, they refused to populate Two Party Joint Military regional teams. Mather interview, 19 November 2014.
 - 56 About 80 U-17A /B models were used by the South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF). They were provided under the Military Assistance Program (MAP). The civilian version was the *Cessna 185E Skywagon*. John Andrade, *Militair* 1982 (London: Aviation Press Limited, 1982); "South Viet Nam Air Force – VNAF – Aircraft Deliveries" at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/vietnam/rvn-vnaf-equipment-data.htm>, accessed 1/23/2015.
 - 57 Mather, *M.I.A.*, 16, 32 (endnote 12); Zerox copies of Polaroid photos taken at aircraft crash site (MIA Army MAJ George Quamo), Mather personal files; "Quamo, George" at <http://www.pownetwork.org/bios/q/q001.htm>, accessed 11/20/2014.
 - 58 Department of Army (DA) Form 20, Enlisted Qualification Record, and DA Form 66, Officer Qualification Record, MAJ George Quamo official records, U.S. National Records Center (USNRC), St. Louis, MO.
 - 59 "George Quamo" at <http://projects.militarytimes.com/citations-medals-awards/recipient.php?recipientid=5121>, accessed 12/1/2014; "Rensselaer County 2006 Honor A Veteran Ceremony: George Quamo" at <http://www.rensselaercounty.org/2006%20honor%20a%20veteran.htm>, accessed 12/1/2014; "Local War Veteran Remembered," *Hamlin Clarkson Herald* (NY) at <http://westsidenewsny.com/pastarchives/OldSite/westside/news/2005/0529/features/localwar.html> accessed 12/1/2014; "QUAMO, GEORGE" at <http://www.pownetwork.org/bios/q/q001.htm> accessed 11/20/2014.
 - 60 Retired COL Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., interview by Briscoe, 22 January 2015, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 61 Mather interviews, 18 December 2014 and 7 January 2015; Mather email to Briscoe, 12/21/2014; "Charles P. Warren, 66, Anthropology Professor" at http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1987-12-28/news/8704060463_1_service-award-black-a- accessed 1/12/2015; Wilhelm G. Solheim II, "Charles Preston Warren 1921-1987," at http://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/bitstream/handle/.../AP-v27n2_orbit.pdf accessed 1/12/2015. Charles P. Warren, the Big Ten's first black quarterback (Northwestern University, B.S. 1947) helped identify military dead following WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. His specialty was skeletal changes associated with age, sex, and race. After joining the University of Illinois, Chicago faculty in 1955, he worked for CIL/THAI from 1973-1975 and published research on tropical plant growth effects on human body decomposition. U.S. Army CIL (Central Identification Laboratory now in Hawaii) has become one of the premier forensic facilities in the world. Robert B. Pickering and David Bachman, *The Use of Forensic Anthropology: 2nd Edition* (Boca Raton, LA: CRC Press, 2009): 4, 5. The Adjutant General, Department of Army, MG Verne L. Bowers, released a preliminary confirmation message to notify Mr. James Quamo (brother) on 28 June 1974. "Information has been received in this office from the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, NKP, Thailand...the wreckage and type of aircraft indicate a strong possibility that this is the wreckage of your son's aircraft. As soon as the remains can be positively identified, you will be further advised." 001 XV GOVPT PD Western Union telegram, Washington, DC 28 June 1974 to Mr. James Quamo. George Quamo official records, USNRC.
 - 62 Letter of Condolence, Phan Heong (Danang) to Quamo Family dated 5 September 1974, MAJ George Quamo official records, USNRC.
 - 63 Retired MG Thomas F. Needham, interview by Briscoe, 29 January 2015, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 64 Department of Army. DCRB-DRY (Major Scott W. Grant) Letter to Mr. James Quamo, 133 Coolidge Avenue, Spencerport, New York 14559, dated 9 October 1974, SUBJECT: Travel Expense Reimbursement. MAJ George Quamo official records, USNRC.
 - 65 Letter, James Quamo to John W. Mullen, undated. George Quamo official records, USNRC.
 - 66 Mather interviews, 3 December and 18 December 2014; Wood interview, 16 January 2014; DOD. Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). Vietnam War Missing Personnel Report, 7/11/2014, hereafter Vietnam War Missing Report.
 - 67 Mather interviews, 3 December and 18 December 2014.
 - 68 Mather interviews, 3 December and 18 December 2014.
 - 69 Mather interviews, 3 December and 18 December 2014; Vietnam War Missing Personnel Report, 7/11/2014; "Haukness, Steven Andrew 'Steve'" at <http://www.taskforcemegainc.org/h600.htm>, accessed 1/21/2015; Department of State. Douglas Ramsey, "POW/MIA Recognition Day," *State Magazine* (September 1999) No. 428: 22; J.R. Bullington, "Religion and Romance in Wartime Vietnam" in *American Diplomacy* at http://www.anc.edu/depts/diplomat/AD_Issues/amdipl_8/bullington_tet.html, accessed 1/21/2015.
 - 70 Project CHECO: JPR in SEA, 50-52.
 - 71 Jordan, "Americans Missing in Southeast Asia," 3; Jordan email to Briscoe, subject: Casualty Resolution Article dated 23 November 2015; Needham interviews, 29 January and 25 November 2015.