

# THE MESSENGER BAG



*Mission Driven. Family Focused.*

**QUARTER 4 NEWSLETTER**

**OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2023**



## Letter from the President

As we close out 2023, I want to express the gratitude of the Board of Directors for all of you who have joined with us on our ongoing mission to recognize our POW-MIAs from all past conflicts. In this issue you will see that Mission: POW-MIA continues to grow its partnerships with other like-minded organizations.

The Special Operations Association Reunion was a great way for Mission: POW-MIA to highlight the work that we had accomplished since our March launch. For Mission to be able to stand with those who fought the fight and have never forgotten our missing was an amazing accomplishment. We thank the SOA for the invitation to be part of this very special reunion.

The special story written by our Treasurer Michael McPherson is a heartfelt tribute to a former POW as well as a tribute to Micheal's work in trying to locate his grandfather, still missing and unaccounted-for.

We'd also like to thank the family of SC1 Ward, a United States Navy sailor, killed in action on December 7, 1941. SC1 Ward was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on that fateful day and had been buried as an unknown until the DPAA was able to identify him through DNA.

We've accomplished a lot in just ten months and we are moving into 2024 with a fierce determination to continue to highlight our POW-MIAs and their families in the ongoing mission to bring our missing home!

Sincerely,



Jon C. Kreitz

Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

President, Mission: POW-MIA

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# OCTOBER

## Special Operations Association Reunion



## SOAR Banquet Dinner





# OCTOBER

## Special Operations Association Reunion

### SOAR XLVII

Mission: POW-MIA was honored to be invited to the 47th Annual Special Operations Association Reunion held in Las Vegas, Nevada from October 12-14, 2023. The event, known as SOAR, was attended by members of the Special Forces community that served during Vietnam and onward.

Executive Director Dave Huffman gave a briefing on Mission: POW-MIA during the POW-MIA Committee Meeting chaired by David Gordon. Principal Deputy Director Fern Sumpter-Winbush, Dr. Nicolette Parr and Matt Kristoff of the DPAA gave updates regarding DPAA's mission, laboratory activities and analytical research. Brad Taylor of the Defense Intelligence Agency gave an update on Stony Beach efforts. We were told that this was one of the largest attendance levels of the POW-MIA Committee meeting in recent years and judging by the numbers in attendance we would have to agree.

There were multiple posters in the front of the room depicting MACV-SOG operators still missing and unaccounted-for from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Posters also included other missing and unaccounted-for Special Forces members and aviators who supported Special Forces missions in Southeast Asia.

The posters were created by a joint effort between Jeanie Huffman of Mission: POW-MIA and David Gordon, Chairman of the POW-MIA Committee.

During downtime from meetings and events, Mission: POW-MIA had the opportunity of sitting and talking to many MACV-SOG operators. They told amazing stories of heroism and heartbreak during their time in country. These men are true American warriors. Mission: POW-MIA had the honor and privilege of having these brave Americans sign our POW-MIA travelling flag. Legends all.

We are looking forward to attending SOAR XLVIII in October of 2024 to provide another update on Mission: POW-MIA.

# OCTOBER

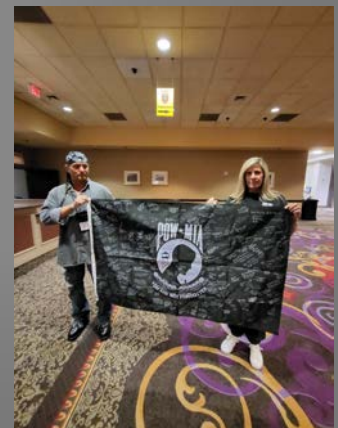
## Special Operations Association Reunion







Signatures  
of SOA





# MACV-SOG

"Missing but Not Forgotten in Southeast Asia"



## Cambodia



1ST WILLIAM ANTHONY LUNDS  
2ND HEROLD WILLIAM BRIDGES JR.  
3RD MICHAEL FREDRICK WATTS  
4TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY

5TH ROBERT FRANCIS SCHMIDT  
6TH JERRY MICHAEL SHREVE  
7TH CHARLES EDWARD WHITE



## Laos



1ST GARY DANIEL MURPHY  
2ND WILLIAM ANTHONY LUNDS  
3RD HEROLD WILLIAM BRIDGES JR.  
4TH MICHAEL FREDRICK WATTS  
5TH ROBERT FRANCIS SCHMIDT  
6TH JERRY MICHAEL SHREVE  
7TH CHARLES EDWARD WHITE  
8TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY  
9TH WILLIAM ANTHONY LUNDS  
10TH HEROLD WILLIAM BRIDGES JR.  
11TH MICHAEL FREDRICK WATTS  
12TH ROBERT FRANCIS SCHMIDT  
13TH JERRY MICHAEL SHREVE  
14TH CHARLES EDWARD WHITE  
15TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY  
16TH WILLIAM ANTHONY LUNDS  
17TH HEROLD WILLIAM BRIDGES JR.  
18TH MICHAEL FREDRICK WATTS  
19TH ROBERT FRANCIS SCHMIDT  
20TH JERRY MICHAEL SHREVE  
21TH CHARLES EDWARD WHITE  
22TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY  
23TH WILLIAM ANTHONY LUNDS  
24TH HEROLD WILLIAM BRIDGES JR.  
25TH MICHAEL FREDRICK WATTS  
26TH ROBERT FRANCIS SCHMIDT  
27TH JERRY MICHAEL SHREVE  
28TH CHARLES EDWARD WHITE  
29TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY  
30TH WILLIAM ANTHONY LUNDS  
31TH HEROLD WILLIAM BRIDGES JR.  
32TH MICHAEL FREDRICK WATTS  
33TH ROBERT FRANCIS SCHMIDT  
34TH JERRY MICHAEL SHREVE  
35TH CHARLES EDWARD WHITE  
36TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY  
37TH WILLIAM ANTHONY LUNDS  
38TH HEROLD WILLIAM BRIDGES JR.  
39TH MICHAEL FREDRICK WATTS  
40TH ROBERT FRANCIS SCHMIDT



## Vietnam



1ST FRANK WIL BACALARI  
2ND BRUCE ALAN BRIDG  
3RD BLAKE SHERMAN BRIDGEMAN  
4TH JAMES TOSOLU BRIDGEMAN  
5TH DONALD C. CALICUT  
6TH RONALD JAMES PETER  
7TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY  
8TH HERBERT JAMES CALICUT  
9TH COL. J. J. KOSZAK  
10TH FREDERICK KNIPS  
11TH JAMES LAMONT TUTTLE  
12TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY  
13TH MICHAEL ALEXANDER STROUD  
14TH JAMES LAMONT TUTTLE  
15TH JERRY MICHAEL SHREVE  
16TH RONALD JAMES PETER  
17TH GARY DANIEL MURPHY



## MACV-SOG

Posters created by Mission: POW-MIA for the  
Special Operations Association Reunion  
October 12-14, 2023  
Las Vegas, NV

*Special Thanks to David Gordon for his joint effort  
assisting in the creation of these posters for the SOAR event.*





## OPERATION WHITE STAR

1959-1962

"Missing but Not Forgotten in Laos"



## SPECIAL FORCES MEMBERS MISSING IN ACTION



MSGT ROBERT ALLEN BARNES  
MSGT HAROLD DONALD BARNETT  
CPT JAMES BENNETT CONWAY  
SP4 DONALD THOMAS DEER  
SP4 EDWARD RAY DOOGUE  
CPT WILLIAM FORBES EISENBAUM  
SP4 LAWRENCE JESSE ENGLANDER  
SP4 STEVEN JOSEPH GERT  
SGT ROGER CORN HALLBERG  
SGT JAMES ARTHUR HAWWOOD  
MSG ROBERT DALE HERRICK  
CPT BARRY WAYNE HILBACH  
MSG WILLIAM RAY HUNT  
SGT DONALD FRANCIS KHAMMAN  
SP4 KARL WADE LAWTON  
CPT THOMAS ISAAC LEBETTER  
MSG DANNY LEONARD LITTLE  
MSG MICHAEL MILLER  
SP4 JAMES DONALD MONTZ  
SP4 THOMAS HEPLURA PERRY  
SP4 DANIEL RAYMOND PHILLIPS  
SP4 DALLAS REESE PRIDEMORE  
SP4 KENNETH M. RORABACK  
MSG BURT CHARNICK SMALL JR.  
MAJ JACK THOMAS STEWART  
SP4 JAMES LANE TALLEY  
SGT JAMES LAWRENCE TAYLOR  
CPT HUMBERT RODGER VERACE

## MIA AVIATORS SUPPORTING SOG MISSIONS



SFC JOHN ROBERT ADAMS  
MSGT BRUCE RAYMOND BAXTER  
MSGT GEORGE PHILLIP BEND  
CPT BRUCE CARLTON BESSOR  
CPT RALPH WAYNE BROWER  
MSGT EUGENE LINTSFORD CLAY  
SP4 WALTER E. DENNEY, JR.

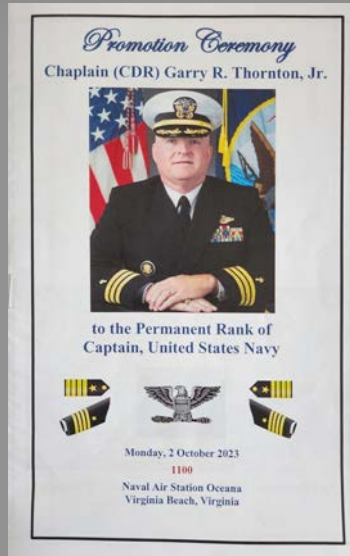
PFC JOHN N. HUNTLEY  
SP4 CARP LEE JOHNSON  
CAPT LEONARD C. LESER  
CAPT CARROLL REXTER LILLY  
SGT LARRY WAYNE MAYSEY  
CWO DALE ALLEN PEARCE

CAPT ROBERT "BOB" F. REY  
CAPT JOHN LESLIE RYDER  
CWO DAVID REGOR SODLAND  
MSG GENE PAUL STUIFBERGEN  
MSG DANIEL ARTHUR SULANDER  
CWO GERALD ERNEST WOODS



# OCTOBER

## NAS Oceana Chaplain Promotion Ceremony







Captain Gary Thorton invited Mission: POW-MIA to be present at his promotion ceremony on October 2, 2023 at Oceana Naval Air Station. Captain Thorton is a staunch supporter of the efforts to recognize America's POW-MIAs. A special Missing Man Chair of Honor was set up at his promotion ceremony along with the POW-MIA Flag. In the photo above, Captain Thorton welcomes Ocean NAS Commanding Officer, Captain Steve "Wang" Djunaedi into the reception held at the Oceana Officer's Club.



Mission: POW-MIA was honored to have World War II and Vietnam Veterans sign the POW-MIA Flag. One veteran served in WW II, Korea, and Vietnam flying 37 different aircraft for the US Navy.



# NOVEMBER



## Tidewater Veterans Day Parade & Luncheon







Mission: POW-MIA participated in the Tidewater Veterans Day parade and luncheon sponsored by the Hampton Roads Council of Veteran Organizations. We built a float depicting scenes from the Vietnam War to include a Huey pilot and a US Marine. Chewing gum as packaged in Vietnam rations along with plastic army men were handed out to the crowds as we marched the parade route. For the luncheon, Mission: POW-MIA set up a large Missing Man Table with uniform service caps from the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and civilian representation.





# NOVEMBER



## The Wall That Heals, Nags Head, NC



Mission: POW-MIA set up a display on a very windy day in Nags Head, NC as the traveling Vietnam Memorial known as the Wall That Heals made a stop. We spoke with many visitors about the Missing from the Vietnam War. Many youngsters tried on the helmets and equipment worn by their grandfathers who had brought them to see the Wall. We also pinned several Vietnam Vets and "Welcomed" them home.







## Knights of Columbus Veterans Dinner Yorktown, VA



Mission: POW-MIA was invited to set up a display and speak at a dinner for veterans who reside at the Hampton VA Medical Center sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Following the dinner and talk, Mission: POW-MIA pinned many Vietnam Veterans and "Welcomed" them home.



Special thanks to the St Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Church in Yorktown, VA for providing the venue and to Mr. Rick Gausmann for inviting us to set up our POW-MIA display and conduct our talk.

# Virginia War Museum



Mission: POW-MIA attended the 100th Anniversary of the Virginia War Museum in Newport News.



Mission: POW-MIA set up the Missing Man Table and had the honor read the Missing Man Table description for the guests in attendance. We also displayed a poster for the event depicting the missing and unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War.







Part of the event included the honor of presenting the Vietnam Lapel Pin from our partnership with the Vietnam War Commemoration to Vietnam and Vietnam era veterans present at the event and to officially 'Welcome' them home.



Executive Director Dave Huffman pins Mr. Doug McDougal, US Air Force Vietnam War veteran and Founder of London Bridge Trading Company with the VWC Lapel pin.

# FORMER POW SPOTLIGHT

## STORY BY MICHAEL MCPHERSON

### **A Mission: POW/MIA Tribute to former Vietnam War captive Douglas Kent Ramsey.**

I had the honor of interviewing Douglas Kent Ramsey on several occasions prior to his passing in 2017. In my research on my grandfather's case (Tanos E Kalil, Refno: 1375), I found that they were held at the same location—the location where my grandfather died. I am very grateful to Doug, and I hope to honor him in this short tale of his life and how his own efforts to document his captivity could very well lead to the repatriation of my grandfather's remains, and those of several other missing Americans held in what is loosely referred to as the National Liberation Front's (NLF) B-2 Front.

Doug Ramsey was a brilliant mind, extremely unique, and holds the dubious honor of being held longer than any other American in the South Vietnamese and Cambodian jungles by the NLF (or VC, if you prefer). US Army Colonel Jim Thompson was held for nearly nine years but was brought to the North Vietnam during his captivity. Ramsey studied at Occidental College and Harvard before serving in the Air Force as an Intelligence Officer. In 1960, he joined the State Department in the Foreign Services, eventually being assigned to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Landing in Vietnam in May of 1963, Doug was assigned as a public affairs officer for the U.S. Information Service in Dalat, then transferred to duty as assistant security officer at the American Embassy in Saigon. In February of 1965, Doug was assigned field duty as USAID deputy provincial representative in Hau Nghia province northwest of Saigon. A tough assignment, Doug was to work with the locals to improve economic development, but the reality was that the Hau Nghia province was full of revolutionary activity.

Though Doug worked with the local village chiefs, he felt the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's 25<sup>th</sup> Division was doing much more harm than good in the region. There seemed to Doug to be complete disregard for the people in the countryside—the very people the 25<sup>th</sup> ARVN was supposed to be protecting. Doug's luck ran out on January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1966, as he and a Vietnamese USAID driver were delivering some emergency food to a village. A few local guerilla fighters opened fire on their truck, wounding the driver. Though Doug returned fire, his vision was soon impaired when a round struck an oil can at his feet causing some to splash into his eyes. In extreme fear, he surrendered.





Since he was not a military advisor, Doug did not think he would be held very long. Because Doug spoke fluent Vietnamese his captors believed him to be a CIA operative and considered him a high value prisoner. John Paul Vann, one of Doug's superiors at USAID, and one of the Vietnam War's most intriguing characters, tried to use Buddhist back channels to negotiate Doug's release. These efforts probably reinforced the NLF's idea that Doug was "high value." Doug would be held captive in the jungles of South Vietnam and Cambodia for more than seven years. Doug's background and understanding added to his suffering in many ways, yet he was able to practice keeping his mind sharp through what he termed "mental masturbation."

During Doug's captivity he was held at many different locations, but largely by the same captors the entire time. Because his captors were suspicious of him and knew he spoke their language, at first, they held him in solitary confinement for more than 5 months. According to the statements of other Americans held at the camp, when Doug was eventually allowed to join the rest of the captives during a memorial service for Army Captain John Schumann, he had been severely impacted by the experience—he had begun speaking to himself and had not been given the opportunity to practice basic hygiene. The guards at the camp made comic skits about him and performed them in front of the entire camp. Soon after being allowed to join the rest of the group though, Doug began to socialize with the other Americans and the guards, which helped bring him back to an improved state of mental health.

There were several different POWs held together with Doug, many of which did not have his level of education, understanding of the situation in Vietnam, or his ability to communicate with the guards. Because of this, some of his fellow prisoners distrusted him to the point of utter contempt—to them he came off as a snobbish sympathizer, if not an outright traitor. Paper was provided to the men for different reasons—to write forced statements to be used as communist propaganda, letters home (though few were ever sent), and to write to pass the time. According to returned civilian captive James Newingham, Ramsey "was constantly writing."



After more than seven years in captivity, Doug was released with the remaining POWs February 12, 1973. After a short period, convalescing from malnutrition and jungle diseases, Doug returned to work in the foreign services until he retired in the 1990s. Doug said that he had written his manuscript over the time since he returned and that he was constantly revising it. By 2009 he had finished but was still editing in his spare time. He entitled his work of over 1000 pages, "Flies to the Carrion, Moth to the Flame." In 2020, two of his colleagues from the foreign services, Frank Scotton and Bruce Kinsey, donated his manuscript to the special collections at Occidental College, where Doug attended as an undergraduate.

# FORMER POW SPOTLIGHT

Rare documents like Doug Ramsey's "Moth to the Flame," very well may contain the keys to finding the remains of several American missing who Doug and others were with during captivity—especially when bringing other information to bear—like the POW/MIA casefiles which family members have access. In 2008, when I asked for Doug's help in locating my grandfather's remains, he did not hesitate and spoke with Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) researchers providing his understanding of where he believed they were held in June of 1969. Though JPAC personnel did not follow-up on Doug's lead, their antecedent agency is in possession of the coordinates. I will forever be grateful to Doug and his willingness to speak with me about his time in captivity and the last moments of my grandfather's life. Doug did ask that I help with other cases should I come across useful information while researching my grandfather's case, and I promised him I would. Doug was especially close to Marine Colonel Donald Cook, who I believe helped restore Doug to sanity after his cruel experience in solitary confinement.

The best way to narrow down our leads is for families and interested parties to compare notes and resources. Should any of the family members of the following missing Americans wish to discuss their case please email me at [michael.mcpherson@missionpowmia.org](mailto:michael.mcpherson@missionpowmia.org) as they were all held by the same group of captors:

Army Master Sargent Kenneth Roraback

Army Staff Sargent Harold Bennett

Army Captain John Schumann

Marine Colonel Donald Cook

Civilian Tanos Kalil



Bringing families together, connecting resources, and helping research these tough missing cases are the reason Mission: POW/MIA exists. The following resources are some of the materials and conversations that led to the information in this tribute to Douglas K. Ramsey. These resources contain insights into the B-2 Prison Front maintained by the NLF during the Vietnam War, how prisoners held in the South were treated, and specifics related to Doug and the men held with him.



## Books

Bell, Garnett, and George J. Veith. (2004). *Leave No Man Behind: Bill Bell and the Search for American POW/MIAs from the Vietnam War*. Goblin Fern Press.

Hastings, Max. (2018). *Vietnam: An Epic Tragedy, 1945 – 1975*. Harper.

Price, Donald L. (2007). *The First Marine Captured in Vietnam: A Biography of Donald G. Cook*. McFarland.

Ramsey, Douglas K. (2000?) *Flies to the Carrion, Moth to the Flame*. Unpublished Memoir. Held by the Special Collections Library at Occidental College. Accession Ref: ARCH-2020-001.

Rochester, Stuart I., and Frederick T. Kiley. (1999). *Honor Bound: American Prisoners of War in Southeast Asia, 1961 – 1973*. Naval Institute Press.

Rowe, James R. (1971). *Five Years to Freedom*. Little Brown.

Scotton, Frank. (2014). *Uphill Battle: Reflections on Viet Nam Counterinsurgency*. Texas Tech U Press.

Smith, George. (1971). *P.O.W.: Two Years with the VietCong*. Ramparts Press.

Veith, George J. (1998). *Code Name Bright Light: The Untold Story of US POW Rescue Efforts During the Vietnam War*. Free Press.

Waugh, Billy. (2009). *Isaac Camacho: An American Hero*. LWCW.

Wagaman, Winnie, and Norman J. Brookens. (1990). *Civilian POW: Terror and Torture in South Vietnam*. Warm Welcomes Designs & Publications.

## Interviews & Discussions

Ramsey, Douglas K., with Michael McPherson by phone in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

Newingham, James “Rowdy,” with Michael McPherson and Glenn Hines in August of 2019 at his home in Texas.

Donald Price with Michael McPherson by phone and email in 2019 and 2020.

## Other Resources

The Tanos E Kalil Family case file.

The Library of Congress online materials.

# DECEMBER

## VIRGINIA PATRIOT GUARD

### CHRISTMAS DINNER



Mission: POW-MIA was invited to be the guest speakers at the Virginia Patriot Guard Annual Christmas Dinner held in Virginia Beach, VA. The Patriot Guard sponsored many active duty service members to this wonderful meal and fellowship. The Virginia Patriot Guard became an organizational sponsor of Mission: POW-MIA at the event.



Executive Director Dave Huffman spoke to the crowd of about 100 attendees about our missing service members from the Vietnam War. Photos of the missing were passed around the room as their stories were told. In the photo on the far right above, a West Point alumni and US Army Ranger stood up and approached, advising us that he had been a classmate of Captain Rocky Versace, the only US Army Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam War still missing. We were telling the story of Captain Versace following his capture while as a POW when the photo passed into his classmate's hand. It was a very moving experience for all.



# WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA



Mission: POW-MIA attended the Wreaths Across America event laying wreaths throughout St Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Norfolk, VA.

In attendance were members of the VA Patriot Guard, American Girls, active duty military and the Hampton Roads Council for Veterans Affairs.



Albert G. Horton  
Veteran's Cemetery,  
Suffolk, VA.  
The photos for  
Wreaths Across America  
were sent in by  
Michael Adams,  
founding member of  
Mission: POW-MIA.





# MOH ARLINGTON FUNERAL SC1 JAMES WARD

At the invitation of the family of SC1 James Ward, Mission: POW-MIA was honored to attend the funeral service in Arlington National Cemetery on December 21, 2023. SC1 Ward was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions and ultimate sacrifice on the USS Oklahoma, December 7, 1941.

SC1 Ward was identified by DPAA as part of the Oklahoma Project. In attendance was the Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Lisa Franchetti, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Honea, DPAA Director Kelly McKeague, Justin Lehew of History Flight, representatives from the American Legion and Medal of Honor recipients.







The playing of TAPS and the firing party salute.



Family greeted by Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, James Honea and DPAA Director Kelly McKeague.



Admiral Lisa Franchetti greets the family along with Medal of Honor recipients in attendance.

# NEXT ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

*January 2024*

Masters of the Air  
Hollywood, CA  
Air Force Celebration of  
Character & Courage  
Washington, DC

*February 2024*

Marine Corps  
League

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A Visit to a  
Middle School

*March 2024*

Vietnam War Veterans  
Day  
Washington, DC



# MEMBERSHIP INFO



Haven't become a  
member yet?  
What are you waiting for?

**Join Today!!!**

[www.missionpowmia.org/  
membership](http://www.missionpowmia.org/membership)

*Reach out to Mission: POW-MIA*

Do you know of an upcoming POW/MIA event?

Have you spoken or written about the POW/MIA issue and would you like to share the story?

Do you have photos or a family story you would like others to know about?

Contact us at [info@missionpowmia.org](mailto:info@missionpowmia.org)

# THANK YOU!

*Mission Driven. Family Focused.*

