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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

Ronald Reagan Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
1. issue paper	re: Interment of an unknown from Vietnam War era (2pp)	n.d.	P-1 P-5
2. list	re: Service Precedent for Unknown (1p) <i>A 7/25/00 per NLSM 98-001(41)</i>	n.d.	P-1
3. memo	from Richard Childress to William Clark re: proposed interment of Unknown from Vietnam era (2pp)	8/9/82	P-5
4. memo	from John March to the Sec. of Defense re: unknown serviceman from Vietnam era (2pp) <i>open per P98-002</i>	6/16/82	P-5
5. memo	copy of item # 4 (2pp) <i>open per P98-002</i>	6/16/82	P-5
COLLECTION: CHILDRESS, RICHARD T.: Files			cas
FILE FOLDER: POW/MIA - Tomb of the Unknown [4 of 4] OA 92409			10/31/95

*KSB
10/17/00*

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(e)]

- P-1 National security classified information [(a)(1) of the PRA].
- P-2 Relating to appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA].
- P-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA].
- P-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA].
- P-5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA].
- P-6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA].

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- F-1 National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA].
- F-2 Release could disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA].
- F-3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA].
- F-4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA].
- F-5 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA].
- F-7 Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA].
- F-8 Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA].
- F-9 Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA].

INTERNAL NSC ROUTING

BAILEY	NAU
BLAIR	NORTH
BOVERIE	PIPES
<u>CHILDRESS</u>	RAYMOND
DEGRAFFENREID	REED
DOBRIANSKY	REGER
FONTAINE	RENTSCHLER
GOLD	ROBINSON
GUHIN	RUSSELL
HELM	RYE
KEMP	SAPIA-BOSCH
KIMMITT	SIGUR
KRAEMER	SIMS
LEVINE	SOMMER
LILAC	STEARMAN
LINHARD	TANTER
LORD	TEICHER
MARTIN	TYSON
MCGAFFIGAN	WEISS
MORRIS	WETTERING
MYER	WHEELER

24 Aug

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Quick attached
is pickup to
\$206,000

Thanks
Loretta

Discussions with key Congressional leaders and the leadership of prominent Veterans' organizations indicate a supportive attitude with a general comment that Defense should proceed with the Unknown initiative as soon as practical. Opposition has been expressed by the National League of Families, and recently members of your staff have expressed some interest in the subject.

Before final decisions are made, I believe it would be desirable to ascertain the President's views on the Unknown interment, knowing his very personal interest in our missing servicemen beginning when he was Governor of California. You may recall that he and Mrs. Reagan were among the first to welcome the returning POWs from Vietnam.

Perhaps you and I should discuss this matter at an early date.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "S. J. S.", is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.

19 August 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

SUBJECT: Selection of a Vietnam Unknown

This is an information paper regarding the selection of a Vietnam Unknown for interment in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. I will cover these points in my discussion with Will. You asked who supported the legislation on this subject, the National Cemeteries Act of 1973 (Act), P.L. 93-43, 87 Stat. 88. (Tab A) Attached at Tab B is a list of organizations supporting the legislation, Congressmen supporting the interment, and organizations opposing the interment.

You are correct. The Act makes selection and interment of a Vietnam Unknown mandatory. It reads, in pertinent part: "The Secretary of Defense is authorized and directed to cause to be brought to the United States the remains . . ." (emphasis added). The statute sets no time limit for accomplishing its mandate, but the legislative history (Tab C), sparse as it is, indicates that implementation "shall take place at such time as hostilities have been concluded in Southeast Asia." The use of the word "shall" supports the conclusion that the statute mandates interment of a Vietnam Unknown.

As for the extent of your responsibilities in this matter, the Act itself does not impose any duty on the Secretary of the Army. Even the 3 July 1977 memorandum from the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (MRA&L) (Tab D) designating of the Army as Executive Agent only specified that it was for the purpose of "chairing an ad hoc committee to undertake a thorough review of this subject, develop suitable alternatives and recommend a course of action to the Secretary of Defense," along with reviewing "the criteria to select an Unknown" We have not been able to find any broader written delegation. (See Tab E, however.) Nevertheless, it seems certain that the Department of Defense will continue to look to the Army to take the lead in implementing the decision reached.

I will brief you on my conversation with Will Taft.

(Signed) Delbert L. Spurlock, Jr.

Delbert L. Spurlock, Jr.
General Counsel

RONALD W. REAGAN LIBRARY

THIS FORM MARKS THE FILE LOCATION OF ITEM NUMBER 1 LISTED ON THE
WITHDRAWAL SHEET AT THE FRONT OF THIS FOLDER.

Public Law 93-43

AN ACT

To amend title 38 of the United States Code in order to establish a National Cemetery System within the Veterans' Administration, and for other purposes.

June 18, 1973
[S. 49]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "National Cemeteries Act of 1973".

National Ceme-
teries Act of 1973.

SEC. 2. (a) Part II of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new chapter:

72 Stat. 1117.
38 USC 301.

"Chapter 24—NATIONAL CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS

"Sec.

"1000. Establishment of National Cemetery System; composition of such system; appointment of director.

"1001. Advisory committee on cemeteries and memorials.

"1002. Persons eligible for interment in national cemeteries.

"1003. Memorial areas.

"1004. Administration.

"1005. Disposition of inactive cemeteries.

"1006. Acquisition of lands.

"1007. Authority to accept and maintain suitable memorials.

"§ 1000. Establishment of National Cemetery System; composition of such system; appointment of director

"(a) There shall be within the Veterans' Administration a National Cemetery System for the interment of deceased servicemen and veterans. To assist him in carrying out his responsibilities in administering the cemeteries within the System, the Administrator may appoint a Director, National Cemetery System, who shall perform such functions as may be assigned by the Administrator.

"(b) The National Cemetery System shall consist of—

"(1) national cemeteries transferred from the Department of the Army to the Veterans' Administration by the National Cemeteries Act of 1973;

"(2) cemeteries under the jurisdiction of the Veterans' Administration on the date of enactment of this chapter; and

"(3) any other cemetery, memorial, or monument transferred to the Veterans' Administration by the National Cemeteries Act of 1973, or later acquired or developed by the Administrator.

"§ 1001. Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials

"There shall be appointed by the Administrator an Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials. The Administrator shall advise and consult with the Committee from time to time with respect to the administration of the cemeteries for which he is responsible, and with respect to the selection of cemetery sites, the erection of appropriate memorials, and the adequacy of Federal burial benefits. The Committee shall make periodic reports and recommendations to the Administrator and to Congress.

Reports to Ad-
ministrator of
Veterans' Affairs
and Congress.

"§ 1002. Persons eligible for interment in national cemeteries

"Under such regulations as the Administrator may prescribe and subject to the provisions of section 3505 of this title, the remains of the following persons may be buried in any open national cemetery in the National Cemetery System:

73 Stat. 453;
85 Stat. 348.
38 USC 3505.

"(1) Any veteran (which for the purposes of this chapter includes a person who died in the active military, naval, or air service).

"(2) Any member of a Reserve component of the Armed Forces, and any member of the Army National Guard or the Air National Guard, whose death occurs under honorable conditions while he is

Repeals.

Ante, p. 82.

(60) The Act entitled "An Act to revise eligibility requirements for burial in national cemeteries, and for other purposes", approved September 14, 1959 (73 Stat. 547).

(61) The Act entitled "An Act to amend the Act of March 24, 1948, which establishes special requirements governing the selection of superintendents of national cemeteries", approved August 30, 1961 (75 Stat. 411).

(b) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to affect in any manner the functions, powers, and duties of—

(1) the Secretary of the Interior with respect to those cemeteries, memorials, or monuments under his jurisdiction on the effective date of this section, or

(2) the Secretary of the Army, the Secretary of the Navy, or the Secretary of the Air Force with respect to those cemeteries, memorials, or monuments under his jurisdiction to which the transfer provisions of section 6(a) of this Act do not apply.

73 Stat. 453.

SEC. 8. The first sentence of section 3505(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting immediately after the words "gratuitous benefits" where first appearing therein, the following: "(including the right to burial in a national cemetery)".

SEC. 9. (a) The Secretary of Defense is authorized and directed to cause to be brought to the United States the remains of an American, who was a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, who served in Southeast Asia who lost his life during the Vietnam era, and whose identity has not been established, for burial in the Memorial Amphitheater of the National Cemetery at Arlington, Virginia.

(b) The implementation of this section shall take place after the United States has concluded its participation in hostilities in Southeast Asia, as determined by the President or the Congress of the United States.

Appropriation.

(c) There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this section.

Effective dates.

SEC. 10. (a) The first section and sections 2, 3, 4, and 8 of this Act shall take effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) Clause (1) of section 5(a) shall take effect on the first day of the second calendar month following the date of enactment of this Act.

Publication in Federal Register.

(c) Clause (2) of section 5(a) and sections 6 and 7 of this Act shall take effect September 1, 1973, or on such earlier date as the President may prescribe and publish in the Federal Register.

Approved June 18, 1973.

Public Law 93-44

June 18, 1973
[S. 38]

AN ACT

To amend the Airport and Airway Development Act of 1970, as amended, to increase the United States share of allowable project costs under such Act, to amend the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, as amended, to prohibit certain State taxation of persons in air commerce, and for other purposes.

Airport Development Acceleration Act of 1973.
84 Stat. 220.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Airport Development Acceleration Act of 1973".

SEC. 2. Section 11(2) of the Airport and Airway Development Act of 1970 (49 U.S.C. 1711) is amended by inserting immediately after "Federal Aviation Act of 1958," the following: "and security equipment required of the sponsor by the Secretary by rule or regulation

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SEC. 3. (Act of 1970

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SERVICE PRECEDENT FOR UNKNOWN

Recovered in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia.

Death occurred between August 1964 and March 1973.

Remains nearly complete.

Not commingled.

Personal effects establish that remains is military.

No possible identifying clues.

Circumstances must not lead to future identification.

Cremated remains eliminated.

DECLASSIFIED

NLS M98-001 #12

BY Amf, NARA, DATE 7/25/00

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MEMORANDUM

Sensitive
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

August 9, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR WILLIAM P. CLARK

FROM: RICHARD CHILDRESS *RC*

SUBJECT: Proposed Interment of an Unknown from the
Vietnam Era

On 16 June 1982, Secretary of the Army Marsh forwarded the memo at Tab III to Secretary Weinberger recommending the interment of an unknown from the Vietnam era in Arlington. The motivation is to "heal the wounds" from Vietnam and respond to an open-ended Congressional Resolution to inter a remain.

The memo contains several inaccuracies and ignores the impact on the accounting issue and substantial identification data in our possession on three of the four remains in the Central Identification Log in Hawaii.

Ann Griffiths of the National League forwarded the memo at Tab II to Secretary Weinberger and the Interagency Group pointing out the pitfalls. The IG considered the issue on 29 July and reached the consensus that the interment of remains would only be a logical outcome of the accounting process and that interment now would undermine the families' confidence in this effort. Further, though one of the remains might eventually be eligible, the last inquiry to the Vietnamese on this set of partial remains was in 1978!

I floated a compromise proposal with DOD which called for dedication of an empty vault with a plaque saying it was reserved for a Vietnam Era unknown, with the hope that it would never have to be used. The IG position on such a compromise was favorable.

DOD forwarded the IG consensus to Secretary Weinberger, and I was confident that the matter would be laid to rest. However, I just learned that the Marsh memo is being circulated to Veterans groups to gain their public support, an Army Brigadier has been appointed by Secretary Marsh to supervise the project, and make rounds in Congress and Vet groups. The most disturbing news I learned was the Army ordered all copies of the identification data on the four sets of remains in Hawaii be shredded and the Lab personnel certify no copies existed. The original is locked in a Pentagon Army safe. This effectively prevents the Lab from correlating any further information on these remains.

Ann Griffiths knows this and doesn't want the families to find out or there would be a setback of enormous proportions between the USG and the families. Given Secretary Marsh's singleminded drive on the issue, however, the League would be prepared to go public as a last resort to prevent an interment under current circumstances. The League is prepared to support an interment, if all means of identification and recovery have been exhausted -- clearly not the current case.

This needs to be brought under control quickly or this attempt to unite the nation over Vietnam will do the opposite.

(Ironically, some 300-500,000 veterans are coming to Washington in November and want to see the Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated -- a perfect opportunity, but Secretary Watt will not allow dedication until the bronze statue is finished and apparently rejected a compromise of a prototype. Vietnam Vet groups are discussing the possibility of tearing down the fence when they arrive and dedicating it themselves!)

Recommendation

That you call Cap Weinberger, using the suggested talking points at Tab I.

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

Attachments

Tab I Proposed talking points

Tab II League memos

Tab III Marsh memo

Suggested Talking Points

- I understand you are aware of the POW/MIA interagency group consensus that interment of an unknown serviceman from the Vietnam era should not be pursued at this time, but should be a logical outcome of the accounting process.
- I understand that the Army is still pursuing this idea with exceptional energy to include informal lobbying with Veterans groups.
- Most recently it was brought to my attention that the Army ordered all copies of the research data for identification of the four sets of remains in Hawaii to be destroyed and the original sent to the Army.
- The National League of Families is aware of all of this and doesn't want the controversy exposed to the families, but the continued Army activity could drive them to go public. This could destroy the trust we have built with them over the last few months.
- The compromise formula agreed upon by the POW/MIA interagency group to dedicate an empty tomb to await the accounting process appears to hold the best hope to resolve this.
- We simply can't have the public believe we created an unknown for interment.
- Perhaps a national dedication of the Vietnam Memorial could serve as the symbol of healing the Vietnam wounds, as I understand 300,000 - 500,000 veterans are expected in town this November.



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1608 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 (202) 223-6846

July 26, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE / *IDENTICAL MEMO TO
Interagency Group - 22 July 82*

SUBJECT: Proposed Interment of an Unknown from the Vietnam Era

The subject of interring an unknown at the tomb in Arlington National Cemetery is repeatedly raised but must not be dealt with in isolation from current and relevant facts. You should know from the outset that based upon information the League has received, we are opposed to the interment of any remains now held.

The legal requirements, established by Congress, might be met by three of the four; however, there could be an adverse public reaction to the fact that substantial identification information already exists on each of the four remains now in U.S. possession.

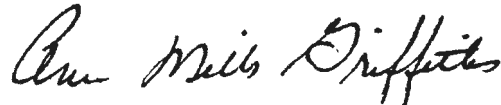
CIL personnel have stated that one of the four remains was recovered in Laos, is not known to be American and the identification may have been narrowed down to one of three individuals. Further, information on two of the other three remains includes dental and restoration data for which CIL has no comparison ability due to incomplete records. Minimal efforts have been made by the services but records are currently inadequate to meet the needs of those charged with identification.

Currently, there are fragmentary remains of only one person which might be considered "unknown." Even in this case, identification could possibly be made if the Vietnamese were requested to investigate the initial recovery site for additional remains or data.

The suggestion to bury at sea those remains not selected as the unknown, while based on precedent from World War II and Korea, would eliminate eventual identification, something which CIL has stated is certainly possible. Throughout the years, CIL has maintained great credibility with the families. Undermining their purpose and capability would serve only to raise questions concerning USG commitment to the accounting process.

Perhaps the Army should respond to Congressional inquiries with appreciation for good intentions and a clear statement that qualified remains are not available and may never be due to technical expertise attained. DA should not seek to eliminate the self-inflicted problem by interring an individual who may be identified at some point in the future, particularly if the lack of ability to identify lies, at least in part, with inadequacy of U.S. records.

I do hope that this proposal will not meet with your approval. Interment of an unknown should be a unifying effort to honor all Vietnam era veterans. Controversy over qualifications involved would nullify the purpose. Knowing that CIL, supported by the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, also opposes premature interment, the League cannot support the initiative at this time but would be willing to reconsider our position at any time circumstances change.



Ann Mills Griffiths
Executive Director



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

16 June 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Unknown Serviceman from the Vietnam Era --
ACTION MEMORANDUM

Over the last several months I have been closely examining the situation concerning the selection of a Vietnam Unknown and have visited the laboratory in Hawaii where identification efforts have been made.

We have remains which meet the legal requirements for the Unknown. After careful consideration, I have concluded that the interests of the Nation are served best by proceeding with the anonymous selection and subsequent interment of a Vietnam Unknown from these candidates. This coming Veterans' Day, November 11, 1982, would be an appropriate date since the World War I Unknown was also interred on Armistice Day, now Veterans' Day, 1921.

I propose that the Army remain the lead service in the effort and that we implement the following sequence of activities;

- o Anonymous selection of the Unknown in Hawaii by a highly decorated enlisted Vietnam Veteran, preferably a recipient of the Medal of Honor.
- o Non-selected remains buried at sea.
- o Navy ship transport the Vietnam Unknown to San Francisco with a Coast Guard cutter in escort.
- o Air Force fly the Vietnam Unknown from Travis Air Force Base to Andrews Air Force Base.
- o Army will be the lead service for reception of the Unknown at Andrews Air Force Base; lying in state in the Capitol Rotunda for about 48 hours; followed by the procession, funeral service and interment. All services will participate in these activities.

I recommend you approve these proposals. Upon your approval, I shall initiate implementation and prepare correspondence for your signature to announce the decision.



John O. Marsh, Jr.



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

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John O. Marsh, Jr.



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1608 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 (202) 223-6846

July 22, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTERAGENCY GROUP

SUBJECT: Proposed Interment of an Unknown from the Vietnam Era

The subject of interring an unknown at the tomb in Arlington National Cemetery is repeatedly raised but must not be dealt with in isolation from current and relevant facts. Based upon information the League has received, we are opposed to the interment of any remains now held.

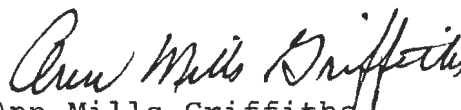
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CIL personnel have stated that one of the four remains was recovered in Laos, is not known to be American and the identification may have been narrowed down to one of three individuals. Further, information on two of the four remains includes dental and restoration data for which CIL has no comparison ability due to incomplete records. Minimal efforts have been made by the services but records are currently inadequate to meet the needs of those charged with identification.

The suggestion to bury at sea those remains not selected as the unknown, while based on precedent from World War II and Korea, would eliminate eventual identification, something which CIL has stated is certainly possible. Throughout the years, CIL has maintained great credibility with the families. Undermining their purpose and capability would serve only to raise questions concerning USG commitment to the accounting process.

Perhaps the Army should respond to Congressional inquiries with appreciation for good intentions and a clear statement that qualified remains are not available and may never be due to technical expertise attained. DA should not seek to eliminate the self-inflicted problem by interring an individual who may be identified at some point in the future, particularly if the lack of ability to identify lies, at least in part, with inadequacy of U.S. records.

I do hope that Secretary Marsh's proposal will not meet with approval. Interment of an unknown should be a unifying effort to honor all Vietnam era veterans. Controversy over qualifications involved would nullify the purpose. Knowing that CIL, supported by the Joint Casualty Resolution Center, also opposes premature interment, the League cannot support the initiative at this time but would be willing to reconsider our position at any time circumstances change.



Ann Mills Griffiths
Executive Director



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

August 3, 1982

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

Ms. Ann Mills Griffiths
National League of Families of
American Prisoners and Missing
in Southeast Asia
1608 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Ms. Griffiths:

Pursuant to our telephone conversation of August 3, 1982, I have enclosed a copy of the section of the "National Cemeteries Act of 1973," P.L. 93-43 which you requested.

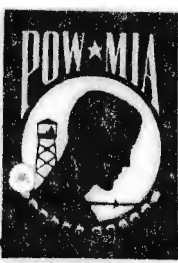
I hope that this information is helpful to you.

Sincerely,

Henry J. Shea

Henry J. Shea
Assistant to the General Counsel

Enclosure



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1608 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 (202) 223-6846

July 26, 1982

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*IDENTICAL MEMO TO
Interagency Group - 22 July 82*

SUBJECT: Proposed Interment of an Unknown from the Vietnam Era

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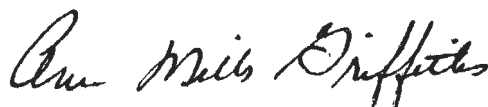
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Ann Mills Griffiths
Executive Director



NATIONAL LEAGUE OF FAMILIES
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS AND MISSING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

1608 K STREET, N.W., WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 (202) 223-6846

November 24, 1981

Sent to Bd w/ minutes 11/30/81

Honorable John O. Marsh
Secretary of the Army
The Pentagon, 3E718
Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Mr. Secretary:

On November 16, I had a lengthy conversation with your Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, William R. Gianelli, concerning the potential interment of a Vietnam era unknown serviceman at Arlington National Cemetery.

The National League of Families is opposed to any ceremony at this time, primarily due to the Central Identification Laboratory's findings that there are no qualified remains in U.S. possession.

Members of Congress supporting the earliest possible interment may be unaware of the CIL findings. Were the Army to make this information available, the issue would undoubtedly be reconsidered. Congressional interest in waiving the existing criteria, largely for political purposes, is unworthy of those whom we all rightfully wish to honor.

The League further opposes premature interment of an unknown which would be highly publicised as the "end of a sad chapter in American history" and otherwise promoted to "put the war behind us."

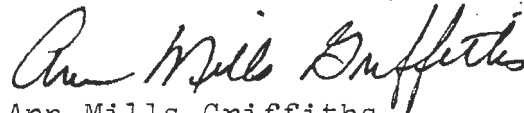
High priority is now being assigned by the U.S. government to collecting POW/MIA intelligence. The weight of the evidence is convincing that Americans are still held captive in Indochina. Defense Intelligence Agency has substantiated data that the Vietnamese are withholding the remains of over 400 American servicemen. Dealing with these important issues should precede a ceremony which historically has occurred after such problems have been resolved.

Honorable John O. Marsh
Page 2

Enclosed is a copy of Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger's remarks during the 61st National Convention of The American Legion. His comments provide evidence of present U.S. government commitment to resolving the POW/MIA problem.

It is our hope that you will carefully consider this issue and recommend against waiving the criteria, determining instead to issue a statement in support of the CIL and its technical expertise which has developed to the point where there may never again be an unknown serviceman to inter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ann Mills Griffiths".

Ann Mills Griffiths
Executive Director

Enclosure

Special read file



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

WASHINGTON

27 JAN 1982

Mrs. Ann Mills Griffiths
Executive Director
National League of Families
of American Prisoners and
Missing in Southeast Asia
1608 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

107 2/4

Dear Mrs. Griffiths:

Thank you for your recent letters to Secretary Weinberger and me urging that we delay the interment of a Vietnam Unknown until there is a full accounting for all unrecovered servicemen from the Vietnam era.

I have conferred with Secretary Weinberger about this matter and we have been briefed on the selection process as well as the current status of this effort.

I have been advised there are unknown candidate remains still undergoing the identification process. Scientific identification techniques and the rapid recovery of casualties from Southeast Asia have substantially reduced the number of remains that are still unidentified. This contrasts with our experience in both World Wars and Korea where a great many remains were available for the selection process.

Last July at the Pentagon's POW-MIA Recognition Day Ceremonies which you attended, President Reagan reaffirmed his commitment to the POW/MIAs. His message stated "My Administration is determined to obtain the fullest possible accounting for these brave Americans". Our efforts regarding the POW/MIAs are completely independent of the Vietnam Unknown issue. The interment of a Vietnam Unknown would be a demonstration of the honor this Nation has for its men and women who died in Southeast Asia. It would not be a signal that the Government is closing out the book on Vietnam.

We are continuing to review the situation on how best to proceed. Thank you for expressing your views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

John O. Marsh, Jr.
John O. Marsh, Jr.

Pleasure seeing you at the Special Forces dinner.
JAM