

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

My cousin, Air Force Lt. Danny Thomas, went missing July 6, 1971. On that day, his aircraft disappeared in Vietnam, 15 miles outside Laos.

To this day, he is still listed as a POW/MIA, along with Army Capt. Donald G. "Butch" Carr, who also was aboard the reconnaissance mission. They remain among the more than 1,600 Americans who disappeared in Vietnam, Laos or elsewhere in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

Danny's story is close to my heart, of course. His story is similar to tens of thousands of missing American service members. I feel a special bond with their family members, sealed with the tears we shed for our missing loved ones.

My personal connection made **my recent trip to Vietnam and Laos** incredibly moving. I was fortunate to be able to meet with excavation teams and assist them by shoveling the hallowed ground where it is believed a pilot's remains lay. I sincerely hope that the team is able to discover his remains and bring some closure to his loved ones.

The American Legion has long honored and advocated for our comrades who have been unaccounted for or listed as missing. **Legionnaires approved a resolution** during the 67th National Convention that calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion. These chairs and table settings honor every single one of the 83,000 American service members who are still unaccounted for after serving in World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War or the Gulf War.

To their families, their memories will be kept alive for future generations to honor. And to veterans like us, they are comrades whose sacrifice will never be forgotten.

For God & Country

Mike Helm
National Commander