



# Prisoner of War/Missing in Action CT Forget-Me-Nots, Inc.

February 4, 2022

## National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum in Jacksonville, Florida H.R. 5297

Prisoner of War / Missing in Action CT Forget-Me-Nots, Inc. is pleased to support H.R. 5297 to designate the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum in Jacksonville, Florida as the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum.

The history of our military personnel and civilians taken prisoner of war and those known only as missing in action must not be forgotten, but shared with our nation's citizens. Our POW/MIAs must never be delegated to a footnote in a history book. Rather, through this National Museum, POW/MIA families have the opportunity to bring their loved ones to light for current and future generations using a plethora of exhibits, programs, and technological opportunities. A National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum would become an invaluable resource for historians, genealogists, and all citizens to learn about the individuals who answered the call to serve our country to preserve our freedoms as well as the freedoms of others.

Only with knowledge and understanding will our nation be able to seek global peace. As a retired educator, I firmly believe this museum, enhanced with the POW/MIA Memorial and reflective areas, provides a necessary and easily accessible venue for the preservation of our often forgotten, yet significant chapter of America's history. A National POW/MIA Museum and Memorial in Jacksonville, Florida is an important vehicle to achieve this goal.

*Kathy Shemeley*  
Kathy Shemeley, President

Prisoner of War / Missing in Action CT Forget-Me-Nots, Inc.

KATHY SHEMELEY  
President  
Director  
22 Revere Rd.  
New Milford, CT 06776  
(860) 355-2567  
pow.mia.ctfinn@gmail.com

BILL SHEMELEY  
Vice President  
Director  
22 Revere Rd.  
New Milford, CT 06776  
(860) 355-2567

KAT WELLS  
Secretary  
Director  
32 Meetinghouse Terr.  
New Milford, CT 06776  
(860) 779-7762

February 21, 2022

Dear Folks,

I began the newsletter with a copy of the letter our organization sent to Pam Cain at the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum in Jacksonville, FL in support of their designation of the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum. We hope that you will follow through with a letter to your Congressional Representative to help to make this a reality. Visit their website at [www.powmiamemorial.org](http://www.powmiamemorial.org) to learn more about the plans for a POW Museum as well as the Memorial at Cecil Field to honor POWs and all **missing personnel** from WWII to the present. A copy of HR 5297 which was reintroduced to this Congress starts from the bottom of page 4 onto page 5.

Our 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Bell Ringing Ceremony to mark the 49<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Paris Peace Accord was held on January 27<sup>th</sup> in front of the St. Francis Xavier Parish Center in New Milford. Although it was still very cold, in the 20s, our small gathering soaked up the sunshine as we were grateful for the lack of wind, precipitation, and snow cover while we remembered our unrecovered POWs, our missing Americans, and their families! Thanks to those who braved the cold and to those who were with us in spirit. You'll learn more about CT's Major Larry A. Thorne from Jeff DeWitt's research later in the newsletter.

I did watch the *Doughboy MIA: Updates from France* Zoom presentation. The research, knowledge of necessary protocols to further their investigation, working with established partnerships, and the dedication of this private organization's goal of accounting for WWI's Doughboy MIAs was most impressive. Robert Laplander spoke of the importance of developing foreign contacts and their work in eastern France. He mentioned that the French still remember and honor the sacrifices made by the Doughboys. Children continue to place flags to honor the servicemen on French soil on Memorial Day. Laplander's organization has focused on three WWI cases: Edward Malone, John Curran, and James Uber. They currently plan to return to Europe in August 2022 to further investigate Malone and Curran, investigate 2 or more possible recovery sites, further develop contacts, and perhaps conduct an initial recon to Germany. I believe the following article best describes much of the information presented.

From: *Olean Times Herald* 2/20/22

**"Group closer to finding remains of WWI soldier from McKean County"**  
by MARCIE SCHELLHAMMER *The Bradford Era* January 29, 2022

BRADFORD, Pa. — Kane-area native James L. Uber has been missing in action since Oct. 8, 1918, and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in France in World War I.

However, since his dog tag made its way to the Pennsylvania National Guard Museum in 2019, a group of volunteers have a pretty good idea of where the young corporal is buried.

Robert Laplander and Mike Cunha of Doughboy M.I.A. have done the research, combed volumes of historical records, maps and photos, and even visited France, walking the ground of that deadly battle of more than a century ago.



A death statement uncovered through research read that Uber was struck in the temple about 11 a.m. Oct. 8, 1918, by a “(machine gun) bullet. He lived about 15 minutes and was on his way to dressing station when he died. His body was taken care of and buried by a detail from Co. B, 112th Inf.”

Laplander explained information from World War I is hard to track down. A massive fire in 1973 at the National Personnel Records Center destroyed much of the information.

“They didn’t throw anything away,” he said, adding that officials have been trying to rebuild the records ever since. “There is no list of what was salvaged and what was not.”

Uber’s file is thought to be among the lost. Laplander has a copy of his “grave location blank,” which is filled out by whoever oversees the burial of the lost soldier. Uber’s didn’t give the grave’s specific location.

When someone died in battle, they were buried in “private cemeteries,” of which about 1,700 were identified by the end of the war. The soldier’s dog tags were separated, one stayed with the body and one went on a makeshift grave marker.

It is Uber’s grave marker tag that Laplander believes was found and returned to the U.S.

The remains of most soldiers were retrieved and taken home. However, many of the burial spots were lost to time.

“There was still heavy fighting in that area for a few days after (Uber) was killed,” Laplander said. The marker was likely separated from the grave.

Because Uber’s remains were not located, he did not have a casualty record. So researchers looked for files of others who were killed in the same location during that battle “to give us more clues of what happened to those guys.”

A volunteer in their group lives in France, and has found maps and photos to help the search. Using Google Maps and photos taken by the Signal Corps in the 1930s, they were able to map out the area where Uber would have been killed.

Using plat books and all the information they were able to find, the volunteers marked everything on maps to show where people were buried, including the bodies of five unknown soldiers.

They were able to track down the young man in France who originally located Uber’s dog tag, and he showed them where he found it.

Then the volunteers went to France and took a look for themselves. They met with the mayor of the town and with a representative of the Ministry of Culture of France and were able to walk the site of the battlefield.

“Now we had even more of a starting point to look at,” Laplander said. Using information from files of other men who died in the vicinity, he was able to narrow the list down to four possible names for three sets of unknown remains that were found there.

Uber may have been one of them.

“We believe that Jim was picked up as an unknown and that his tag was not with his body,” Laplander said. “We’re about 75-percent sure that he’s buried as an unknown in the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery.”

Cunha said there are 486 unknown soldiers in that cemetery.

And that is as far as the Doughboy M.I.A. have been able to take the case, as the National Personnel Records Center has been essentially closed since the pandemic began.

“All the paperwork having to do with the unknowns, all of it is missing,” Laplander said. It may have burned in the 1973 fire, but Laplander is hopeful it may someday be recovered.

The search for Cpl. James Uber is suspended, Laplander said, “we’re not investigating it anymore until we can find the paperwork.”

Cunha said Doughboy M.I.A. is going back to France in August to investigate more cases.

“It’s not always about recovery,” he said. “Commemoration is the number one thing for us.”

Meanwhile, Uber has not been forgotten. The Ludlow American Legion is the James Uber Post 489, and a distant cousin of his was tracked down in Tennessee.



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The work of Doughboy MIA is extremely important and, according to the researchers, 99% of the time is spent in the library and archives as well as working with the French officials. For example, when they return in August 2022, the fields will be devoid of crops. Respect for the needs of the farmers and an understanding of the type of soil which may allow remains to last longer must be understood. When the research leads to a possible exhumation, the team will work with partnerships, such as DPAA, to proceed.

Visit [www.worldwarIcentennial.org](http://www.worldwarIcentennial.org) to learn more about the work of the World War I Centennial. Donations for their August trip are most welcome. Join us as we support Doughboy MIA.

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The DPAA has provided a link to the notes from the February 10th Quarterly Call Update. You may click on the following link <https://www.dpaa.mil/Resources/Family-VSO-Update-Notes/>. You can also access it directly from the DPAA website as well as read the previous quarterly notes. This provides the latest updates on identifications, disinterments, and field operations for the resolution of cases from WWII, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

**Introduced in House (09/20/2021)**

117<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS

1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

### **H. R. 5297**

To designate the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum in Jacksonville, Florida, as the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum, and for other purposes.

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**IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2021**



Mr. LAWSON of Florida (for himself, Mr. RUTHERFORD, **Mrs. HAYES**, Ms. CASTOR of Florida, Mr. CARSON, Mr. WALTZ, Ms. SALAZAR, Mr. CRIST, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. WEBSTER of Florida, Mr. COSTA, Mr. GIMENEZ, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mr. GAETZ, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. MAST, Mr. BAIRD, Miss González-Colón, Ms. HERRELL, Mr. DUNN, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. DONALDS, and Mrs. RODGERS of Washington) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

## A BILL

To designate the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum in Jacksonville, Florida, as the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum, and for other purposes.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum Act”.

### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The POW/MIA Memorial and Museum is a civic landmark and cultural institution being built as of the date of the enactment of this Act in Jacksonville, Florida, to honor, connect, inspire, and educate all people about the 142,000 members of the Armed Forces who have been captured as prisoners of war since World War II and the approximately 82,000 members of the Armed Forces who are currently missing in action or unaccounted for since World War II.

(2) The POW/MIA Memorial and Museum is a unique and comprehensive project developed for the exclusive purpose of honoring former prisoners of war, those who were missing in action, those still missing and unaccounted for, and for providing a venue for families of these men and women to tell their stories.

(3) The POW/MIA Memorial and Museum will publicize the stories of such individuals, showcase the history of the POW/MIA logo, the history of the Naval Air Station Cecil Field as a master jet base, and will serve as a reflective facility for all.

(4) The POW/MIA Memorial and Museum will attract and educate a diverse group of people through visitor-centered, interactive, participatory exhibits, and will provide a place for educational programs, special events, and activities connecting all generations.

### SEC. 3. NATIONAL POW/MIA MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM.

(a) **DESIGNATION.**—The memorial and museum that is, as of the date of the enactment of this Act, being constructed on an approximately 26-acre area on POW-MIA Memorial Parkway, Jacksonville, Florida, shall be designated as the “National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum”.

(b) **REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National POW/MIA Memorial and Museum shall submit to Congress a report including—

(1) a budget for the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum for the five-year period beginning on the date the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum is expected to open to the public;

(2) a description of the organizational structure of the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum;

(3) a copy of any bylaws or rules implemented by the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum; and

(4) a list of any organization or entity that has accredited the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum.

(c) **WITHDRAWAL OF DESIGNATION.**—The designation under subsection (a) may be withdrawn if—

(1) the POW/MIA Memorial and Museum is not operational in a satisfactory manner on the date that is five years after the date of the enactment of this Act; or

(2) the report under subsection (b) is submitted to Congress after the date that is 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.



**Please visit [norwalkctheroes.org](http://norwalkctheroes.org) .**

I received permission from Jeff DeWitt to use his information and research about Norwalk's three Vietnam War POW/MIAs. The following information and photos on page 10 are from the website: [norwalkctheroes.org](http://norwalkctheroes.org).

**MAJOR LARRY ALAN THORNE; U.S. ARMY; ALSO FINLAND and GERMANY**

May 28, 1919 (Viipuri, Finland) – October 19, 1965; 46 years old

Unmarried

Last local address: unknown (see WEBMASTERS NOTE below)

Enlisted on December 31, 1956

MOS: 3154, Infantry Unit Commander & Special Operations

Tour Start Date: January 18, 1965

Service number: O-2287104

Unit: Military Assistance Command, Vietnam – Studies and Observations Group (MACV-SOG), Team SD-5891

**Casualty Location:** Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam [Larry is on The Wall at Panel 2E, Line 126](#)

**Awarded** the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star Medal, and Purple Heart Medal with 6 oak leaf clusters.



**WEBMASTER'S NOTE:** despite efforts to contact the authors of the two books below, and additional research, the only reference to why he claimed Norwalk as his hometown is from the book "Soldier Under Three Flags". On page 105, it says "Torni had used the Norwalk, Connecticut address of his boss and friend, a Mr. Frederickson, as his military home of record."

Lauri Alan Törni was born in Viipuri, Viipuri Province, when it was controlled by Finland. In 1945 the region was finally ceded to the Soviet Union following the Winter War and Continuation War. He served with the Finnish and German armies in the wars against the Soviet Union. In 1950, he immigrated to the United States and joined the US Army in 1954 while residing in Connecticut. At that time, he changed his name to Larry Thorne. He joined the army Special Forces (Green Berets) and was commissioned in 1957. In 1963, Thorne was a captain serving as an advisor to the Army of South Vietnam. Thorne died while on a clandestine mission in Laos.

Lauri Torni was known as the Soldier that fought under three flags. Lauri was born into a prosperous family in Viipuri, Finland. He was a Finnish Army Captain who led an Infantry Unit in Finnish Wars and moved to the United States after the War, changing his name to his new American name of Larry Thorne. He fought for Finland, Germany during World War II. And America in the Viet



Nam War. He entered military service in 1938, at the age of 19. He continued his service in the Non-Commissioned Officers Reserve in Hamina until the beginning of the Winter War. Torni originally was assigned to supply troops, but during the battles at Lake Ladoga, he was transferred to the front lines. He took part in the annihilation of the encircled Russian Troops in Lemetti. After the War, in 1941, Torni was one of the men who was sent to Germany to train with Waffen-SS, but he soon returned home.

In 1943 he was assigned to an Infantry Unit that fought behind enemy lines. One of his men would be the future President of Finland, Mauno Koivisto. The Soviet Army had a Bounty on Lauri Torni's head, worth 3 million Finnish Marks. On July 9th, 1944, he was decorated with the Mannerheim Cross. Torni was dissatisfied with the Peace Treaty and went back to Germany in 1945 for additional training. He was hoping to organize resistance against Russia if they tried taking Finland. He surrendered to British Troops in the last stages of the War and eventually escaped the British POW Camp, returning to his homeland of Finland. When he returned, the ValPo (State Police), arrested him and he was sentenced to 6 years in prison, eventually pardoned by President Paasikivi of Finland in December of 1948.

In 1949, Torni traveled to Sweden, where many Finnish settled after the War. From Sweden he traveled on the SS Bolivia to Venezuela. In 1950 he was hired on a Norwegian Cargo Ship, the MS Libre Villaan, his destination was the United States. In the Gulf of Mexico, near Mobile, Alabama, he jumped overboard and swam to shore. He traveled to New York where he got a job as a Carpenter and a Cleaner, with help from Finnish Settlers. In 1953 he was granted permit of residence.

Lauri Torni joined the U.S. Army in 1954, where he changed his name to Larry Thorne. He ended up as a Special Instructor in the Special Forces Unit and taught skiing, survival, mountaineering, and guerrilla tactics, he also took up parachuting. From 1958-1962 he served in the 10th Special Forces Unit in West Germany. In November of 1963, he joined another Special Forces Unit, A-734, and was sent to Vietnam to fight in the Mekong Delta. He was decorated twice while there. In 1965 he was transferred to MACV-SOG, a training unit in Vietnam as a military advisor. On October 18, 1965, he left on a routine mission and his helicopter crashed 25 miles from the Da Nang. When the rescue crew arrived, they did not find his body. He either died in the crash or in battle the next day with the Vietnamese. He was 46 at time of death. His remains weren't handed over until March 15, 2002. He was formally identified in June 4, 2003, 38 years after his death. He was buried with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery along with the remains of the South Vietnam Air Force personnel who died with him.

### ***Distinguished Flying Cross Citation***

AWARDED FOR ACTIONS DURING Vietnam War      Service: Army      Rank: Major

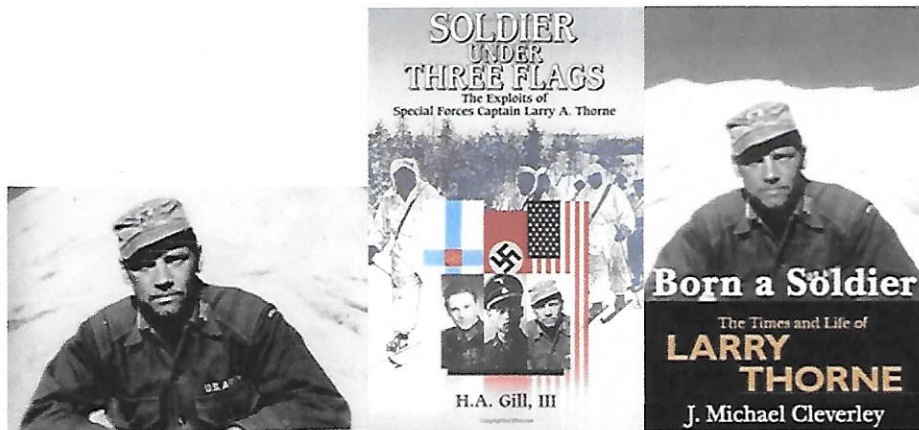
GENERAL ORDERS: Department of the Army, General Orders No. 33 (July 26, 1967)

#### **CITATION**

*The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 2, 1926, takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Flying Cross (Posthumously) to Major (Infantry), [then Captain] Larry Alan Thorne (ASN: O-2287104), United States Army, for heroism while participating in aerial flight heroism against a hostile force while participating in aerial flight on 18 October 1965, in the Republic of Vietnam. Major Thorne was operations officer responsible for launching a small, combined reconnaissance patrol on an extremely hazardous mission into a suspected Viet Cong*



*stronghold. Due to the extreme hazards attending this mission, including weather and enemy action, Major Thorne volunteered to accompany submission aircraft during the introduction of the patrol in place of the assigned individual. After delivering the patrol to the landing zone, Major Thorne remained with one aircraft in the immediate area to receive an initial report from the patrol on the ground. This report was mandatory since only the vaguest information was available about enemy disposition near the landing zone. If the patrol were immediately confronted by a superior force, Major Thorne would land and extricate the patrol under fire. This was done with total disregard for the inherent dangers and with selfless concern for the ground forces. In so doing, he exposed himself to extreme personal danger which ultimately led to his disappearance and the loss of his aircraft. He had, however, guaranteed the safe introduction of the patrol into the area, the successful accomplishment of this mission and had positioned himself to react to any immediate calls for assistance from the patrol. Due to Major Thorne's efforts, the mission was accomplished successfully and contributed significantly to the overall mission of interdicting Viet Cong activities within the area. Major Thorne's actions were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.*



The following is a story on Larry Thorne (Finnish Lauri Torni) sent by Jari Salo

*Remains of victim on 1965 helicopter crash will be interred simultaneously* By Asko Temmes

Lauri Torni (1919-1965) was a World War II hero and a recipient of the Mannerheim Cross – the highest award for gallantry on the field - in his native Finland. After the end of hostilities, the fiercely anti-Communist Torni found life at home difficult, and he emigrated to the United States. There he entered the U.S. Military and became a decorated and much-revered Vietnam War hero in Special Forces.

Torni, by now better known to his colleagues as Larry Thorne disappeared after the helicopter he was in went down close to the Laos border in 1965.

At long last, his remains have been formally identified, and he will be laid to rest in the Arlington National Cemetery on June 24 of this year. Torni's remains will be Buried in the same coffin with those of three other victims of the same helicopter crash.

When the crash site was finally located four years ago, the U.S. military made inquiries concerning Torni's final resting place. In Finland, hopes were raised for the national hero's possible burial in his home country.

Separating the remains of the crash victims, however, turned out to be an impossible task, which led to a pragmatic decision to organize a joint burial at Arlington.

The day before the interment, a memorial service will be arranged. Larry A. Thorne, the name by which Torni is remembered in the United States, was a captain and a Green Beret in the U.S. Special Forces. Special Forces will also organize a tribute to their hero.

After Torni's status was changed from "missing in action" to "presumably killed in action", a memorial service was already organized in Helsinki back in 1967. \*\*\*

*[The above was retyped for spacing in this newsletter.]*



**PRISONER OF WAR MISSING IN ACTION, CT FORGET-ME-NOTS, INC.**

**\*\* \*Connecticut residents must add 6.35% state tax to all items. \*\*\***

**AMERICAN & POW FLAG PIN \$3.00**

**AMERICAN POW/MIA FLAG PIN above FREEDOM banner \$3.00**

**POW/MIA DECALS 3" X 4.5" inside application - free upon request**

**POW/ MIA FLAGS \* ALL WEATHER \* DOUBLE EMBLEM \* Made in the USA**

**3 FEET x 5 FEET \$40.00**

**4 FEET x 6 FEET \$50.00**

I only have bracelets for Sgt. Jimmy Ray. Jean Ray had Jimmy's bracelets sent to me before she died. They are still \$5.00. You would have to bend the flat engraved stainless steel bracelets.

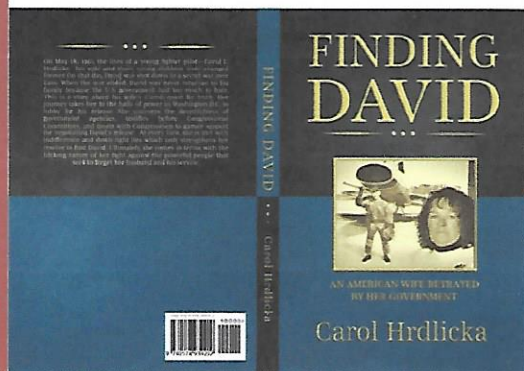
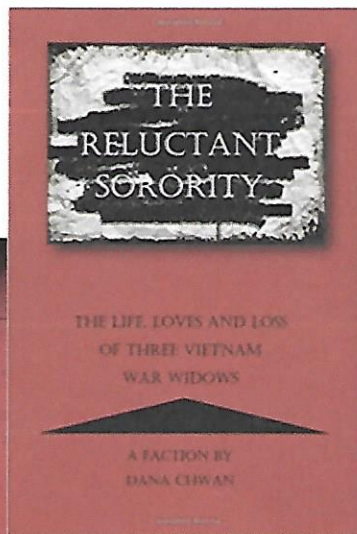
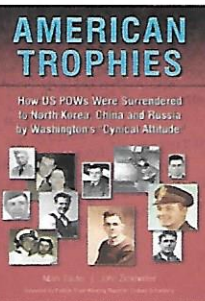
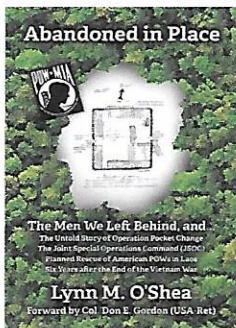
**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES still only \$10.00**

**Mail membership and/or orders with a check or money order  
payable to and mail to: POW / MIA CT FORGET-ME-NOTS, INC.**

**Kathy Shemeley, 22 Revere Road, New Milford CT 06776-3908**

**We are a non-profit, all volunteer organization.**

**ALL PROCEEDS ARE USED SOLELY FOR THE POW ISSUE.**



Dana Chwan's book is available on Amazon.

Many thanks to Shari Barron of J & J Printing in New Milford for taking care of our printing needs.  
Many thanks to Patrick Maguire, our personal bagpiper.



**PRISONER OF WAR / MISSING IN ACTION**  
**CT FORGET-ME-NOTS, INC.**  
**22 REVERE ROAD**  
**NEW MILFORD, CT 06776-3908**

If your renewal date is highlighted, please send in your \$10.00 dues. Thank you!

Family members do not pay dues. Be sure to notify us of any changes in address ASAP.



— AP Photo

**MILITARY HONORS:** A military honor guard prepares to bury the remains of the crew of a Vietnam Air-Force H-34 helicopter, Maj. Larry Thorne, Lt. Bao Tung Nguyen, 1st Lt. The Long Phan and Sgt. Vam Lanh Bui, that crashed in 1965 over the Laos-Vietnam border. The funeral service was Thursday at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. Thorne, originally from Finland, became a U.S. citizen in 1954.



In October 2021, the City of Norwalk has added Major Thorne's name to the plaque of those who died during service in Vietnam. It's a fitting final tribute to an exceptional Soldier. The City of Norwalk would appreciate anyone with any knowledge of living descendants of Major Thorne, to contact us via e-mail at [mvlc@norwalkct.org](mailto:mvlc@norwalkct.org).