



JOHN HENLEY

Every year, on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, the Virginia War Memorial hosts a display of the Missing Man Table.

The table at the Virginia War Memorial is set with a single place setting to remember those who are absent and cannot attend a meal because of their POW or MIA status. The setting uses official Commonwealth of Virginia china, which was presented as a gift to the Memorial exclusively for this purpose from Virginia's Executive Mansion. The table is round to show our everlasting concern. The cloth is white symbolizing the purity of their motives when answering the call to serve. The single red rose reminds us of the families and friends who keep the faith, while seeking answers about the missing. The red ribbon symbolizes our continued uncertainty, hope for their return, and determination to account for those still missing in action. A slice of lemon reminds us of the bitter fate of those captured or missing in a foreign land. A pinch of salt symbolizes tears of our missing and of their loved ones who long for answers. The glass is inverted to symbolize their inability to share a toast. The chair is empty because loved ones are still missing.

GOALS OF THE EXHIBITION

Virginia's *Missing in Action: The Search Continues* will educate visitors about the Virginians who are still listed as missing, and about the efforts to recover their remains and return them to their homes.

Using the exhibit and the individual stories represented, we will emphasize those values such as teamwork, optimism, courage, and sacrifice that have allowed all Americans to enjoy liberty, democracy, justice, and peace.

With this exhibition, we hope to highlight the sacrifices made by those Virginia veterans who are still lost, and the sacrifices made by their families who still await their return home.

By increasing the public awareness of these missing individuals and those who still search for them, we honor both veterans and active-duty service members, as well as their loved ones.

This exhibit will recognize and illustrate the commitment of DPAA and international partners working continuously around the world to find the missing and bring them home.

Whether the remains of the individuals remembered at the Virginia War Memorial rest in hometown graveyards, overseas cemeteries, or lie unidentified in foreign lands or seas, their stories are preserved here.

VIRGINIA'S MISSING IN ACTION: THE SEARCH CONTINUES

Our goal is to raise \$85,000 to support the exhibition, accompanying video interviews, and related educational programming. Events timed around the opening will provide additional opportunities for a broad audience to understand the valor and sacrifice required for freedom to flourish.

TO DISCUSS SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

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VIRGINIA'S MISSING IN ACTION: THE SEARCH CONTINUES

Exhibition opens September 19, 2025, to mark National POW/MIA Recognition Day

This exhibit is presented on behalf of the surviving family members of the more than 1,200 Virginia veterans who are still missing in action (MIA) and on behalf of the more than 700,000 veterans who call Virginia home.

Nationally, 72,103 Americans are still unaccounted for from World War II; 7,480 from the Korean War; 1,577 from the Vietnam War; 126 from the Cold War; and 6 from other conflicts. Out of the more than 81,000 still missing, 75% of the losses are in the Indo-Pacific, and more than 41,000 of the missing are presumed lost at sea.

This exhibit will feature photos, letters, and other archival materials related to those Virginians still MIA. Additionally, the exhibit will explore the scientific process behind searching for and recovering the remains of those individuals by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). The sacrifices made by those who never came home will be forgotten without the efforts of organizations like the Virginia War Memorial and DPAA, to keep their stories in the public consciousness.



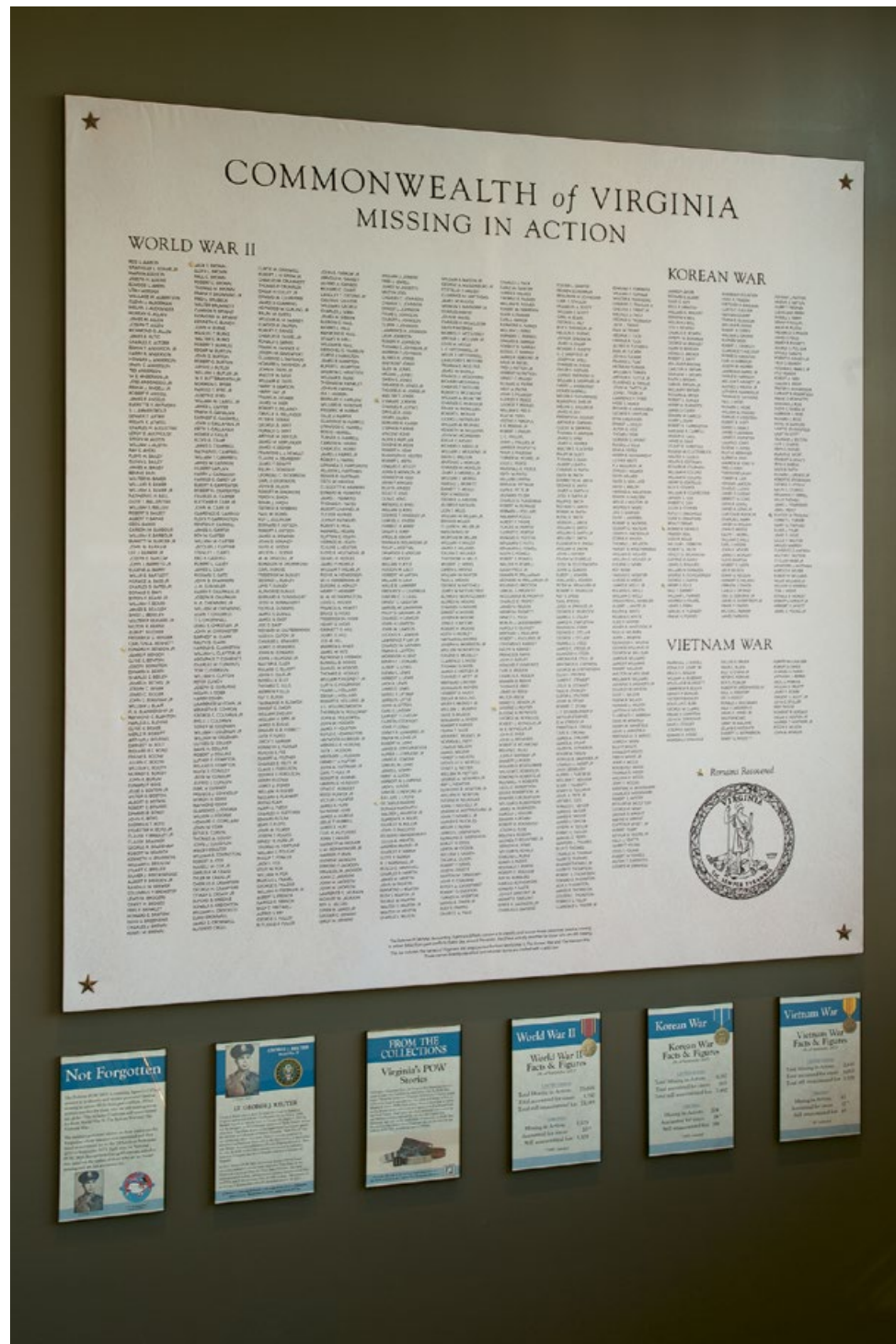
OUR MISSION
To preserve the stories of veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice, to honor all veterans and active-duty military, and to inspire love of country through education.

HOW THE DPAA BUILDS A CASE

The forensic anthropologists, medical examiners, and historians who work together to identify lost soldiers are in a race against time and deterioration of remains. Advances in DNA technology, combined with innovative techniques, mean the labs can identify more of the missing soldiers each year.

DPAA historians and analysts comb through historical records on every Soldier, Sailor, Marine, and Airman who has been reported missing and is recorded on their master list of those missing. DPAA staff then travel the globe to talk with potential witnesses, investigate environmental factors over time, and evaluate the area for any safety concerns or logistical challenges before they send out a recovery team.

Once on site, the recovery teams begin an archeological dig to recover remains or indicators that will lead the team to the remains. If remains are found, they are gathered for multiple tests to prove the identity of the remains. The gathered evidence consists of DNA, forensic analysis, dental analysis, and, if available, radioisotope testing. It's a similar process when evaluating the remains of an unidentified person buried in one of the many military cemeteries across the world. Once they have gathered enough evidence, they must present their findings to the responsible authorities to authorize the disinterment of the remains. From start to finish, cases take years to build and may require travel to areas where the U.S. military would typically not be allowed to enter. North Korea is the only country with fallen U.S. service members with which DPAA does not have diplomatic relations, but in 2018, 55 boxes of Korean War remains were repatriated to the U.S., yielding 250 sets of DNA sequences.



One of the more poignant charges of the Virginia War Memorial in the Code of Virginia is to honor the memory of those missing in action and, as remains are officially identified, to accord them the Gold Star designation.
Photograph by John Henley

“The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten.”

— Calvin Coolidge

AMONG THE MISSING

U.S. Army Captain Humbert Roque “Rocky” Versace

Humbert Versace was the first Army POW awarded a Medal of Honor for actions during captivity in Vietnam. Following in his father's footsteps, Versace attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and graduated as a second lieutenant in 1959. After a series of postings, Versace volunteered for duty in Vietnam.



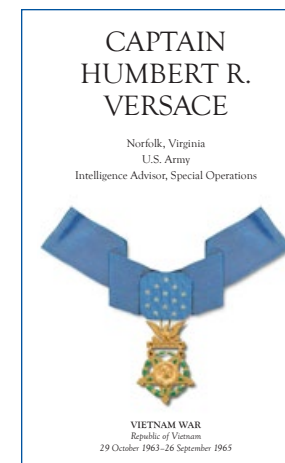
Versace felt a calling in Vietnam, especially with the children, and extended his tour for six months. Versace planned to attend seminary to become a Catholic priest and return to Vietnam as a missionary after his Army career. Two weeks before the end of his tour, Versace was advising the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) on a mission to remove a Viet Cong unit in the U Minh Forest. The unit came under attack and engaged in heavy combat. Despite his own injuries, Versace protected two injured comrades, 1st Lt. Nick Rowe and Sgt. Dan Pitzer, and provided cover fire to allow the rest of the CIDG to escape. Versace, Rowe, and Pitzer were soon captured by the Viet Cong.

Versace remained a prisoner of war for two years. Because of his repeated attempts to escape and resistance to torture, the Viet Cong separated Versace from his comrades and bound him in a bamboo cage six-feet long, three-feet wide, and two-feet high. Versace resisted Viet Cong attempts to get him to admit to war crimes, telling his captors to “go to hell” in English, Vietnamese, and French.

The last time Versace was seen by an American, he was singing “God Bless America” from his isolation cage.

After 23 months of captivity, on September 26, 1965, the Viet Cong announced over radio that Captain Versace had been executed. Versace's remains were never recovered.

President George W. Bush presented the Medal of Honor to Versace's surviving siblings on July 8, 2002.



Virginia Medal of Honor Gallery at the Virginia War Memorial

FROM THE IDENTIFIED

★ U.S. Army Sergeant Mayburn L. Hudson

Mayburn Hudson, of Lynchburg, Virginia, killed during World War II, was officially accounted for December 14, 2023.

In August 1944, Hudson was assigned to Company F, 2nd Battalion, 330th Infantry Regiment, 83rd Infantry Division in the European Theater. On August 7, Hudson's unit came under heavy German fire in the vicinity of Saint-Malo, in Brittany, France. Company F was given the order to assault a heavily fortified German position atop a hill, called “The Citadel.” Facing harsh fire from well-defended forces, the 330th Infantry Regiment suffered heavy losses,



including Hudson. His body could not be recovered because of the intense fighting and he was initially listed as Missing in Action. Just a few months later as his remains were still unaccounted for in January 1945, the War Department issued a “Report of Death.”

In November 1944, the American Graves Registration Command (AGRC), the organization that searched for and recovered fallen American personnel in the European Theater, received notification from a French citizen that several Americans were buried near Paramé, close to where SGT Hudson was reportedly killed. AGRC searched the area around Paramé and Saint-Malo, finding several sets of American remains, but it was unable to identify one of them as Hudson. The unidentified remains (designated X-172) were then buried in the U.S. Military Cemetery at St. James, France, now known as the Brittany American Cemetery.

DPAA historians had been conducting on-going research into Soldiers missing from combat around Saint-Malo and found that Unknown X-172 could be associated with Hudson. Department of Defense and American Battle Monuments Commission workers exhumed X-172 in June 2019 and transferred the remains to the DPAA Laboratory for analysis where they were identified.