

## MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 043-M  
March 26, 1997

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The human remains of an American serviceman previously unaccounted-for from the war in Southeast Asia have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial in the United States.

He is 1st Lt. Gary P. Offutt, U.S. Air Force, of Stewartsville, Mo.

On October 1, 1965, Offutt was piloting the second of four F-100 Super Sabres on a strike mission 20 miles west of Can Tho, South Vietnam. As he was climbing out of a third strafing run at approximately 2,000 feet, Offutt's plane went into an inverted dive. The pilot of another F-100 in the flight radioed Offutt to eject. He saw that Offutt was able to jettison his canopy, but was unable to eject before the aircraft crashed in a near-vertical dive. Immediate attempts to recover the remains were hampered due to enemy activity in the area.

Four joint U.S.-Socialist Republic of Vietnam teams conducted investigations and excavations at the crash site in 1993, 1994, and 1995. They recovered aircraft wreckage, life-support and crew-related materials, as well as human remains.

With the identification of this serviceman, 2,127 Americans remain unaccounted-for from the war in Vietnam.

The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam which resulted in the accounting of this airman. We hope that such cooperation will bring increased results in the future. Achieving the fullest possible accounting for these Americans is of the highest national priority.