

## MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 108-M  
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The human remains of five American servicemen previously unaccounted-for from Southeast Asia have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial in the United States.

They are identified as Lt. Col. Lewis H. Abrams, USMC, of Montclair, N.J.; Maj. Robert E. Holdeman, USMC, of Winchester, Ind., and Capt. John N. Flanigan, USMC, of Winter Haven, Fla. The names of two U.S. Air Force aviators will not be released at the request of their families.

On Nov. 25, 1967, Abrams and Holdeman were shot down flying a night strike mission near Haiphong, North Vietnam. A Radio Peking broadcast confirmed that a U.S. Marine Corps aircraft had been shot down in the vicinity of Haiphong.

In 1988, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam repatriated what they believed to be the remains of U.S. personnel lost during the Vietnam War. Included in the remains was a military identification card fragment with what appeared to be the name "Abrams." The condition of the remains precluded positive identification at that time.

In 1993 and 1995, joint U.S.-Vietnamese teams investigated and excavated a crash site in Hai Phong Province. Local villagers reported that remains had been previously recovered and turned over to higher authorities. They also turned over more bone fragments found near the crash site.

On Aug. 19, 1969, Flanigan and his pilot were flying an F-4B as escort for a photo reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. They lost contact with other aircraft in their flight, and never made it back to their base at Danang, South Vietnam.

In 1989, the Vietnamese government repatriated remains believed to be those of Flanigan. Four subsequent joint U.S.-Vietnamese investigations were able to locate their crash site in Quang Binh Province. The site was excavated in 1995 where aircraft wreckage, aircrew related items, and personal effects were located but no human remains were found. The remains of Flanigan turned over by the Vietnamese were positively identified and Mitochondrial DNA testing was used to confirm the identification.

With the identification of these five servicemen, 2,118 Americans remain unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War.

The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam which resulted in the accounting of these servicemen. 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.