

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 177-M
October 1, 1997

The remains of seven American servicemen previously unaccounted-for from Southeast Asia have been identified and were returned to their families for burial in the United States.

They are identified as Capt. Peter H. Chapman, Centerburg, Ohio; 1st Lt. John H. Call III, Potomac, Md.; Tech. Sgt. Allen J. Avery, Auburn, Mass.; Tech. Sgt. Roy D. Prater, Tiffin, Ohio; and Sgt. William R. Pearson, Webster, N.H., all U.S. Air Force personnel. The names of one U.S. Air Force airman and one U.S. Army aviator will not be released at the request of their families.

On April 6, 1972, Chapman, Call, Avery, Prater, and Pearson were flying an H-53C Super Jolly helicopter on a search and rescue mission over Quang Tri, South Vietnam. While trying to evade enemy ground fire, Chapman, the pilot, flew the helicopter to an altitude of 200 feet. Subsequently, the helicopter crashed into the ground and burst into flames. Other aircraft in the area did not see anyone exit the aircraft prior to impact.

In 1989, 1992, and 1994, joint U.S.-Vietnamese teams investigated and excavated a crash site in Quang Tri Province. During the 1992 investigation of this loss incident, a local villager reported finding remains and burying them in his garden. The U.S. investigators excavated the garden and recovered possible human remains. Later, in 1994, a joint team found numerous bone fragments, personal effects, and aircraft wreckage. The remains were repatriated to the United States.

The remains of Chapman, Call, and Pearson were identified individually, and along with Avery and Prater, are part of a group remains identification. Mitochondrial DNA testing was used to confirm the identifications.

With the identification of these seven servicemen, 2,109 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.