

## MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 178-M  
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The remains of seven 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 U.S. Air Force Maj. Thomas H. Amos, of Springfield, Mo.; U.S. Air Force Capt. Mason I. Burnham, Portland, Ore; U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class William S. Stinson, of Georgiana, Ala., and four other servicemen. Their names are not being released at the request of their families.

On April 20, 1972, Amos and Burnham were flying escort to an AC-130 on a night mission over Quang Nam Province near the Vietnam-Laos border. As another aircrew marked a target, Amos radioed that he was lining up his F-4D Phantom aircraft for the ordnance run. Shortly thereafter, the crew of the AC-130 reported seeing a large fireball on the ground. Subsequent attempts to contact Amos and Burnham were unsuccessful. Search efforts were continued for three days but proved unsuccessful.

In May 1993, a joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam team traveled to Quang Nam-Da Nang Province and interviewed two local villagers who claimed to have possession of remains collected from the crash site of a jet aircraft. At that time, the men also produced material evidence, including identification tags for both Amos and Burnham.

Two months later, a second team reinterviewed the two villagers who added that the remains in their possession had been turned over to the Vietnamese government the previous May. In January 1994, a third joint team took possession of those remains.

Other teams traveled to the supposed aircraft crash site in 1994, 1995, and 1998 to obtain additional evidence to support identification. Additional remains were recovered as were numerous crew-related items and aircraft wreckage. In June 1998, the site was closed to further excavation because of the presence of large amounts of unexploded ordnance.

On Jan. 8, 1973, Stinson and other crew members were on board a UH-1H Huey helicopter which was believed to have been hit by a surface-to-air missile over Quang Tri City, South Vietnam. Aerial searches of the area following the incident failed to locate the aircraft's crew or wreckage.

In August 1993, a joint team interviewed witnesses to a helicopter crash in a river near their village. Two of the witnesses provided information on the burial of several bodies near the crash site, but indicated several had been exhumed in subsequent years. In 1994, a second team interviewed other witnesses who led them to a cemetery in which he claimed to have buried remains, which the team recovered. Returning to the crash site in 1996, a team excavated a burial site and recovered human remains and personal effects from three separate graves.

Analysis of the remains and other evidence by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii confirmed the identification of each of these seven servicemen. With the accounting of these servicemen, there are currently 2,047 Americans still unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War. Since the release of American POWs in 1973, the remains of 536 Americans have been identified from the war in Vietnam and returned to their families.

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.