



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PILOTS MISSING FROM THE VIETNAM WAR ARE IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of two U.S. servicemen, missing from the Vietnam War, have been identified.

They are Maj. Robert F. Woods, of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Capt. Johnnie C. Cornelius, of Maricopa County, Ariz., both U.S. Air Force. Cornelius was buried with full military honors on Nov. 10 in Moore, Texas, and Woods' burial is being set by his family.

On June 26, 1968, Woods and Cornelius were flying a visual reconnaissance mission over Quang Binh Province, Vietnam, when their O-2A Skymaster aircraft crashed in a remote mountainous area. The crew of another aircraft in the flight saw no parachutes and reported hearing no emergency beeper signals. Immediate search efforts were unsuccessful.

Between 1988 and 1993, joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), investigated the incident and surveyed the crash site. The team interviewed several Vietnamese citizens, two of whom turned over human remains and the pilots' identification tags.

Between 1994 and 1997, joint teams re-surveyed the site two times to find a landing location to support a helicopter and recovery team. During their survey, one team found additional wreckage and life-support material.

Between 2000 and 2004, joint teams excavated the site four times. They recovered additional human remains, personal effects and life support materials.

In 2006, a joint team interviewed two former North Vietnamese soldiers who recalled the crash. The soldiers said that Woods and Cornelius were buried near the crash site. In 2007, another joint team excavated the burial site identified by the Vietnamese soldiers. The team recovered additional human remains.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA and dental comparisons in the identification of the remains.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.

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