



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOLDIER MISSING IN ACTION FROM THE VIETNAM WAR IS IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is Sgt. 1st Class Lewis C. Walton, U.S. Army, of Cranston, R.I. He was buried Saturday at Rhode Island Veterans Cemetery in Exeter.

Representatives from the Army met with Walton's next-of-kin in her hometown to explain the recovery and identification process and to coordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the Secretary of the Army.

On May 3, 1971, Walton was part of a reconnaissance patrol inserted into a remote area of South Vietnam near Da Nang. The next day, forward air controllers could not locate the team and subsequent attempts to find the patrol over the next few days were unsuccessful.

The two other American soldiers on the patrol, Staff Sgts. James M. Luttrell and Klaus Y. Bingham, are still unaccounted-for.

Between 1992 and 1999, joint U.S.-Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), traveled to Quang Nam-Da Nang Province three times to investigate the incident. They interviewed Vietnamese citizens who supplied details of a 1971 firefight in which enemy forces killed Walton and the other American members in the reconnaissance patrol. The citizens said the Americans were not buried. In 1993, one U.S.-S.R.V. team surveyed the incident site and found military-style artifacts. Another team surveyed the site in 1999 and found a cargo belt strap.

Between 2004 and 2006, joint U.S.-S.R.V. teams, led by JPAC, conducted three excavations of the site. The teams recovered remains and additional material evidence including a U.S. Army badge and uniform buttons.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA in the identification of Walton's 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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