

## MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 023-M  
February 25, 1997

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The human remains of five American servicemen previously unaccounted for from the war in Southeast Asia have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial in the United States.

They are Capt. William C. Clay, III, U. S. Marine Corps, of Henderson, N.C., and Lt. Cmdr. Roger G. Emrich, U. S. Navy, of Miami, Fla. The names of three additional U. S. Army soldiers are being withheld at the request of their families.

On April 12, 1967, Capt. Clay was piloting an A-4E Skyhawk on a close air support mission over South Vietnam. His aircraft was hit by enemy fire, exploded and crashed. No ejection seat or parachute was sighted by his fellow airmen as the plane crashed. Two joint investigations with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1993 and 1995 failed to locate his remains. However, as one U. S. team prepared to leave Vietnam in 1995, they were approached by a local farmer who turned over human remains and associated artifacts. These remains were later identified as those of Capt. Clay, and DNA testing was one of the forensic techniques used in the process.

Lt. Cmdr. Emrich, a radar intercept officer aboard an F-4B Phantom, was flying a combat air patrol mission over North Vietnam on Nov. 17, 1967 when enemy surface-to-air missiles were fired at his aircraft. The wingman lost sight of Lt. Cmdr. Emrich's aircraft momentarily, then observed it spinning toward the ground. The wingman radioed "bail out," but the plane crashed with its canopies still in place. While evading more SAMs, the wingman circled the crash area twice and observed local Vietnamese surrounding the wreckage. Search and rescue attempts were discontinued the next day because of lack of contact with the crew members. Three joint U.S.-Vietnamese investigations in 1994 and 1995 located witnesses to the crash site, and later found aircraft wreckage and the remains of Lt. Cmdr. Emrich.

With the identification of these servicemen, 2,128 Americans remain unaccounted for from the war in Vietnam.

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 airmen. 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.