

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 192-M
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The remains of five 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 Maj. Thomas R. Allen, Woodward, Okla.; Capt. Ronald L. Packard, Canon City, Colo.; Maj. John C. Clark, Brownfield, Texas; Capt. Patrick K. Harrold, Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.; and Maj. Bobby G. Huggins, Montgomery, Ala., all U.S. Air Force.

On July 31, 1967, Allen and Packard were flying an F-4C aircraft on a night armed reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. Shortly after their aircraft began its attack on a suspected enemy truck, the flight leader observed a large explosion near the target. The ground station coordinating the attack reported that the F-4C had disappeared from the radar screen at precisely the same moment the explosion was seen. The presence of enemy forces in the area precluded any search and rescue efforts.

In 1991, 1992, and 1993, joint U.S.-Vietnamese teams investigated and excavated a crash site in Quang Binh Province. During the 1991 investigation, local villagers reported a shoot down of an American aircraft and provided documentary evidence to correlate this to the loss of Allen and Packard's aircraft. Later, in 1994, a joint team excavated a crash site and recovered possible human remains. Remains uncovered by villagers during a 1982 scavenging of the crash site were also turned over to U.S. authorities. The remains were repatriated to the United States.

On Dec. 5, 1969, Clark and Harrold were flying a night strike mission over Xiangkhoang Province, Laos. Their F-4E aircraft entered into a steeper than normal attack dive, from which it was unable to pull out. The aircraft impacted the ground amid a large fireball. No one was observed to have ejected.

In 1994 and 1995, a joint U.S.-Laotian team of investigators excavated a crash site believed to be that of Clark and Harrold. The team found numerous human remains, aircraft wreckage, life support equipment, and a military identification tag belonging to Clark. These remains were also repatriated to the United States.

On June 4, 1970, Huggins and his crew member were flying a RF-4C on a night, photo-reconnaissance mission over Vietnam. A forward army fire support base later reported seeing a low-flying aircraft crash and explode. The next day, a search and rescue team located the crash site and were able to locate minimal human remains. These were subsequently identified as those of Huggins' crewmember.

In 1992, 1994, and 1995, a joint U.S.-Vietnamese team thoroughly excavated Huggins' crash site and successfully recovered human remains, pilot equipment, and personal effects. These remains were subsequently identified as those of Huggins.

With the identification of these five servicemen, 2,104 Americans remain unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War.

The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the governments of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic 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.