

## MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. \_\_\_\_-M  
March 5, 1998

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The remains of an American serviceman previously unaccounted-for from Southeast Asia have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial in the United States.

He is identified as U. S. Army Sgt. Douglas Alan Ross, of Temple City, Calif.

On Jan. 22, 1969, Ross's unit came under heavy enemy sniper and grenade attack in South Vietnam. He was reportedly struck in the head by enemy fire and died on the battlefield. The other members of his unit were forced to take cover in nearby caves and did not rejoin friendly forces until the following day. At that time, a search of the battlefield did not locate his remains.

In 1994, a joint U. S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam team visited surrounding villages and was told that no one lived in the vicinity of the battlefield during the war and none of the local villagers had any firsthand knowledge of the incident. The team also visited the battle site where they found evidence of defensive positions, but no other pertinent information. The investigators had no further leads to pursue.

But in 1997, Vietnamese villagers were searching a wooded area for scrap metal near the battlefield and discovered the remains of a U. S. soldier. They reported to their provincial officials who, in turn, passed the information to central government officials. These remains and some personal artifacts were passed to U. S. officials, and subsequently identified by the U. S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii as those of Ross.

With this identification, 2,096 Americans remain unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War.

The U. S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam which resulted in the accounting of this serviceman. 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.