

## MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 052-M  
April 1, 1998

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The remains of three Americans previously unaccounted-for from Southeast Asia have been identified and will be returned to their families for burial in the United States. One is identified as U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Donald V. Davis, of Salisbury, N.C. The other is Capt. Carey A. Cunningham, U.S. Air Force, of Collinsville, Ala. The name of a U.S. civilian lost in Laos will not be released at the request of his family.

On July 25, 1967, Lt. Cmdr. Davis left the USS Oriskany, flying an A4-E aircraft, on an armed reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. His wingman observed Lt. Cmdr. Davis' aircraft crash as it was attacking a truck convoy. The wingman reported there was no chance for survival. No search and rescue was initiated.

In 1988 and 1996, a joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam team visited the probable location of Lt. Cmdr. Davis' crashsite and interviewed local villagers for information on this loss incident. Witnesses reported finding a crashsite and burying the remains of a pilot found within the wreckage. Analysis of aircraft wreckage determined it to be from an A-4 aircraft.

In 1997, a joint U.S./Vietnamese team excavated a possible burial site identified by the villagers. The team recovered human remains, life support equipment, and aircraft wreckage. The remains were repatriated to the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii for analysis and subsequently identified as those of Lt. Cmdr. Davis.

On August 2, 1967, Capt. Cunningham and his crewmember were flying a daylight photographic reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. Their wingman stated that Capt. Cunningham's RF-4C Phantom banked into a hard right turn and crashed. No parachutes were seen exiting the aircraft before it crashed.

In 1989, the Vietnamese government repatriated two boxes of remains, one of which they claimed belonged to Capt. Cunningham's crewmate. In 1992 and 1994, a joint U.S./Vietnamese team interviewed villagers about a 1967 crash of an American aircraft in which both pilots died. The villagers reported that the remains of the pilots were turned over to central authorities. Personal effects belonging to the Americans were examined in two Vietnamese military museums. The remains repatriated in 1989 were subsequently identified as those of Capt. Cunningham. His crewmember is still unaccounted-for.

With this identification, 2,093 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 Americans. 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.