

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 129-M
August 5, 1998

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

They are identified as Maj. William H. Condit Jr., USAF, Worthington, Ohio; 1st Lt. Terry M. Reed, USAF, Randolph AFB, Texas; Cmdr. Danforth E. White, USN, State College, Pa.; and Lt. Ramey L. Carpenter, USN, Norman, Okla. A fifth American, a civilian missionary was captured and died in South Vietnam in 1968, but his name is not being released at the request of his family.

Condit and Reed were crew members aboard a C-130B Hercules aircraft on a resupply mission to Tay Ninh and Katum, South Vietnam on June 23, 1969, when it was hit by enemy fire. One wing burst into flames, the aircraft went into a flat spin and crashed amid flames.

In November 1993, a joint U.S./Vietnam investigation led by the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting interviewed a local informant and traveled to the site where the crash occurred. They found aircraft wreckage and life support equipment, but no human remains. In October 1994, another joint team excavated the site and recovered remains, aircraft wreckage, life support equipment and personal effects. The remains and personal effects were submitted to a forensic evaluation by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii. CILHI recommended that a group remains identification be made for Condit and Reed. The four other crewmembers on the aircraft had been identified in 1969.

White and Carpenter were crew members of a RA-5C Vigilante aircraft on March 31, 1969, on a reconnaissance mission over Laos. The pilot of an escort aircraft observed the aft section of White's aircraft explode, break into several pieces and crash. Search and rescue efforts were initiated, but met with negative results.

A joint U.S./Laos investigative team interviewed villagers in the area near the suspected crash site of the aircraft in 1994 where they found some aircraft wreckage. Another joint team excavated the site in 1997 and recovered human remains, personal effects and pilot-related items amid aircraft wreckage. After forensic review at CILHI, White's remains were identified individually, and a group remains identification was made for both White and Carpenter.

With the identification of these five men, 502 Americans have been identified since the end of the war in Southeast Asia, and 2,081 are still unaccounted-for.

The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic, which led to these identifications. It is hoped that such cooperation will lead to more identifications in the future.