

MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 198-M
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The remains of three American servicemen previously unaccounted-for from the war in Southeast Asia have been identified and are being returned to the United States for burial. Two are identified as Capt. Thaddeus E. Williams Jr., Mobile, Ala., and Spc. 4 James P. Schimberg, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, both U. S. Army. The name of the third, a U.S. Navy officer lost in North Vietnam in 1965, is being withheld at the request of his family.

On Jan. 9, 1966, Williams, with crew member Schimberg, was flying his OV1-C *Mohawk* on a night combat surveillance mission over Phu Yen province, South Vietnam when radio contact was lost at midnight. He was forced to fly "dead reckoning" as the navigation system on the aircraft was inoperable. Weather in the area was marginal, with dense cloud cover over the mountains when their last radio contact was heard. Their aircraft never returned to home base. Search attempts discovered no evidence of either the aircraft or the crew.

In August 1993 a joint team of specialists from the U.S. Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and from Vietnam interviewed two Vietnamese informants in a local village near the suspected crash site. One of the villagers said he had recovered bone fragments, two identification tags and Williams' identification card in 1979. He recalled that one of the identification tags contained a name beginning with "S." The joint team flew an aerial survey of the suspected crash location, but found no evidence of the loss.

The following month, one of the informants met with the team again and presented them with identification tags with both Williams' and Schimberg's name affixed. He also turned over the bone fragments he claimed were those from the crash.

Anthropological analysis of the remains and other evidence by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii established the identification of both Williams and Schimberg. Mitochondrial DNA testing was used to help confirm the identifications.

With the identification of these three servicemen, the remains of 510 Americans have been accounted for since 1973, and 2,073 are still unaccounted-for from the war in Southeast Asia. The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that led to 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.