

## MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

No. 019-M  
March 17, 1999

The remains of three 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 Navy Cmdr. John C. Mape, San Francisco, Calif.; Air Force Maj. John E. Bailey, Minneapolis, Minn.; and Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class John F. Hartzheim, Appleton, Wis.

On April 13, 1966, Mape was flying an armed reconnaissance mission over Nghe Tinh Province North Vietnam when an enemy surface-to air missile struck his A-1H *Skyraider*, destroying it. Other pilots in the flight made a visual inspection of the crash site and concluded there were no survivors.

In May 1991 a joint U.S./Vietnamese team, led by the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, traveled to Nghe Tinh Province and interviewed several local witnesses who recalled the crash of a U.S. aircraft in April or May 1966. The witnesses also indicated that the site had been heavily scavenged for metal in the early 1990s. The initial visit to the crash site in 1991 and a subsequent visit in July 1993 provided little material evidence.

In August 1994 a U.S./Vietnamese team learned that a group of men had been arrested in Dong Nai Province in late 1992 for illegally excavating and taking remains from the crash site. Vietnamese authorities confiscated the remains and turned them over to U.S. anthropologists.

On May 10, 1966, Bailey was leading a combat strike mission over Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam. Shortly after expending his ordnance, Bailey's F-105D *Thunderchief* was seen to tumble end-over-end into the ground with its canopy in place. Other members of the flight circled the impact area but observed no survivor.

In 1990 a joint U.S./Vietnamese team interviewed several local villagers in Quang Binh Province who provided information including an F-105 aircraft data plate that appeared to correlate with Bailey's loss. The team visited the recorded crash site but saw no indication of wreckage. A second visit to that site in 1993 confirmed the absence of evidence there.

In July 1995 another joint team performed a preliminary survey of the crash site which led to an excavation a month later. The team located aircraft fragments, pilot-related personal equipment as well as human remains.

On Feb. 27, 1968, Hartzheim was on board an OP-2E *Neptune* flying a reconnaissance mission over Khammouan Province, Laos. While over the target area the aircraft was struck by an enemy 37mm antiaircraft round, causing the radar well and bomb bay to catch fire. Shrapnel from the explosion struck Hartzheim. He collapsed at the rear of the aircraft during evacuation and was presumed dead. The crew parachuted out of the aircraft as it entered a steep climb before crashing. A subsequent search and rescue team succeeded in rescuing only seven of the nine crew members.

In January 1985 a unilateral turnover from a Laotian source to the Joint Casualty Resolution Center Liaison Office in Bangkok consisted of several bone fragments, a compass and a plastic E-and-E (Escape and Evasion) map. The source indicated that the items were recovered near a 1968 crash site of an U.S. aircraft in Khammouan Province.

In October and December 1994 joint U.S./Lao teams traveled to the Khammouan Province to interview several villagers with information about the crash. While surveying the crash site the team found aircraft wreckage, a fragment of a possible knife sheath and human remains. Successive visits in 1995 and 1996 recovered more remains, life support equipment and other crew-related items.

Anthropological analysis of the remains and other evidence by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii confirmed the identification of Mape, Bailey and Hartzheim. With the accounting of these three servicemen, 2,069 Americans are listed as unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War.

The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the government 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.