

No. 296-99
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 1999

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE APPROVES RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE VIETNAM UNKNOWN

Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen has approved the recommendation of a Department of Defense working group that no remains should be interred as the Vietnam Unknown in the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery unless, and until such time as, it can be unequivocally assured, in perpetuity, that the remains of the American serviceman would be forever unidentifiable. Extensive study by the working group since last summer has determined that there are no qualifying candidate remains at this time.

Cohen approved as well the recommendation that the words "Honoring and Keeping Faith with America's Missing Servicemen" be inscribed on the tomb cover above the existing dates (1958-1975). The recommendations were made after a thorough consultative process which solicited input from members of Congress, the Cabinet, and representatives of veterans and family service organizations.

"In making this decision, I want to renew the Department of Defense's pledge to the loved ones of those still missing from the Vietnam conflict that the federal government and the Department will continue to strive for the fullest possible accounting for all our servicemen who fought for our nation in that conflict and did not return," Cohen said.

On National POW/MIA Day, Sept. 17, Cohen will participate in a ceremony at the Tomb to dedicate the new inscription formally.