



News Release
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIR FORCE OFFICER MIA FROM VIETNAM WAR IS IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is Air Force Colonel Gregg Hartness of Dallas, Tex. He is to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C., on Sept. 14.

On Nov. 26, 1968, Hartness and 1st Lt. Allen S. Shepherd, III, took off from Da Nang air base in South Vietnam, on a forward air control mission. While flying over Salavan Province in Laos, their O-2A Skymaster was apparently struck by enemy fire and began to spin out of control. Lt. Shepherd bailed out and was rescued by an Air Force search and rescue team about nine hours later. He did not see Hartness bail out.

About 30 minutes after that rescue, the airborne team located the crash site of Hartness and Shepherd's aircraft about 200 meters south of the rescue pickup point. The aircraft had been burning, but no contact with Hartness could be established. Enemy forces in the area precluded further rescue attempts, and electronic searches of the loss location detected no signals from the lost aircraft or pilot.

Between 1993 and 2003, joint U.S.-Lao investigators interviewed more than 60 witnesses in 39 different settlements in Laos before selecting a site for excavation. In January and February of 2005, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, with assistance from the Lao government, excavated a site in Salavan Province. They recovered human remains, aircraft wreckage, life support equipment and personal effects.

Of the 88,000 Americans missing from all conflicts, 1,815 are from the Vietnam War, with 372 of those within the country of Laos. Another 756 Americans have been accounted for in Southeast Asia since the end of the Vietnam War. Of those, 197 are from losses in Laos.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO website at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.

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