



News Release
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIETNAM WAR MISSING IN ACTION SERVICEMAN 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.

He is U.S. Air Force First Lieutenant Lee A. "Larry" Adams of Willits, Calif. A memorial service with full military honors will be held at Beale AFB, Calif. on June 1, and he will be buried in Willits at a later date.

On April 19, 1966, Adams was attacking enemy targets in Quang Binh Province, North Vietnam when he rolled his F-105 *Thunderchief* in on the target. As other pilots in the flight watched, his plane failed to pull out of the dive, crashed and exploded.

U.S. specialists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) conducted a number of investigations as they sought information on Lt Adams' loss. In September 1993, joint U.S.-Vietnamese team members interviewed three villagers who said they witnessed the shootdown in 1966. They led the team to a supposed crash site, but no aircraft debris or human remains were found. Another informant turned over a skeletal fragment he had found near the site of the crash.

In October 1994 another joint team interviewed two other Vietnamese citizens who recalled the shootdown and the burial of the remains of a pilot nearby. A third team re-interviewed four Vietnamese in 1998 who had supplied information earlier.

Then in November 2004, a joint team excavated the suspected burial and crash sites, but found neither aircraft debris nor other material evidence. However, a villager living nearby gave the team a fragment of a wristwatch and a signal mirror he claimed to have recovered from the crash site. The wristwatch and mirror are consistent with items issued to, or used by, U.S. military aviators in the mid-1960s.

Scientists of the JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA as one of the forensic tools to identify the remains as those of Adams.

Of the 88,000 Americans missing in action from all conflicts, 1,833 are from the Vietnam War, with 1,397 of those within the country of Vietnam. Another 750 Americans have been accounted for in Southeast Asia since the end of the war. Of the Americans identified, 524 are from within Vietnam.

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