



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 3, 2006

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 will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is Colonel Eugene D. Hamilton of Opelika, Ala. Final arrangements for his funeral have not been set.

On January 31, 1966, Hamilton was flying an armed reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam when his F-105D Thunderchief was hit by enemy ground fire over the Ha Tinh province. His mission was part of a larger operation, known as Operation Rolling Thunder, which attacked air defense systems and the flow of supplies along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Airborne searches for his crash site that day were unsuccessful. A radio broadcast from Hanoi reported an F-105 had been shot down but did not provide any details.

Between July 1993 and November 2000, joint U.S.-Vietnam teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), conducted four investigations and one excavation searching for the pilot and his plane.

An investigation team in March 2000 learned from a Vietnamese villager that an area excavated in 1997 was not the location of the pilot's burial. A second location was then excavated Aug.-Sept. 2000, which did yield aircraft wreckage, personal effects and human remains.

In 2004, three Vietnamese citizens turned over to a JPAC team remains they had found at the same crash site a year earlier.

In late May 2005, the JPAC team recovered fragments of possible human remains and life support equipment from the 2000 crash site. Personal effects found there also included a leather name tag with the name "HAMILTON" partially visible on it.

JPAC scientists and Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory specialists used mitochondrial DNA as one of the forensic tools to help identify the remains. Laboratory analysis of dental remains also confirmed his identity.

Of those Americans unaccounted-for from all conflicts, 1,807 are from the Vietnam War, with 1,382 of those within the country of Vietnam. Another 839 Americans have been accounted-for in Southeast Asia since the end, with 599 from Vietnam.

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.