



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIR FORCE OFFICER MISSING IN ACTION 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 Maj. Perry H. Jefferson, U.S. Air Force, of Denver, Colo. He will be buried April 3, 2008 in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

On April 3, 1969, Jefferson was an aerial observer on board an O-1G Bird Dog aircraft on a visual reconnaissance mission over a mountainous region in Ninh Thuan Province, Vietnam. The pilot of the aircraft, then U.S. Army 1st Lt. Arthur G. Ecklund, radioed Phan Rang airbase to report his location, but contact was lost soon after. An extensive, three-day search and rescue effort began, but no evidence of a crash was found. Hostile threats in the area precluded further search efforts.

In 1984, a former member of the Vietnamese Air Force turned over to a U.S. official human remains that he said represented one of two U.S. pilots whose aircraft was shot down.

In 1994 a joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) team, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), interviewed two Vietnamese citizens regarding the incident. The witnesses said the aircraft crashed on a mountainside, the pilots died and were buried at the site. They said two other men were sent to the site a few days later to bury the pilots. The team excavated the crash site described by the witnesses and found aircraft wreckage. No human remains were found.

In 2000, the remains turned over in 1984 were identified as Ecklund's.

In 2001, a Vietnamese national living in California turned over to U.S. officials human remains that he said were recovered at a site where two U.S. pilots crashed. These remains were identified in 2007 as Jefferson's.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA and dental comparisons in identifying Jefferson's remains.

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.

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