



News Release

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (Public Affairs)
Washington, DC 20301-2400

Phone: (703) 699-1169

Fax (703) 602-4375

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 25, 2007

NAVY AVIATOR MISSING IN ACTION FROM THE 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 Cmdr. Peter Mongilardi, Jr., U.S. Navy, of Haledon, N.J. He will be buried on April 11 at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington D.C.

On June 25, 1965, Mongilardi departed the USS *Coral Sea* in his A-4C Skyhawk on an armed reconnaissance mission over North Vietnam. His flight encountered bad weather and enemy fire over Thanh Hoa Province, causing the wingman to lose visual and radio contact with Mongilardi. Contact was never re-established and the aircraft failed to return to the carrier.

In 1993, a joint U.S.-Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) archival team, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), obtained information concerning the crash while researching documents, artifacts and photographs at the Central Army Museum in Hanoi. Later that year, another joint U.S./S.R.V. team conducted an investigation in Thanh Hoa Province. The team interviewed two local Vietnamese citizens who recalled the crash and said the pilot died in the impact. The men then led the team to the crash site.

In 1994, another joint team excavated the crash site and recovered human remains and pilot-related items, including a belt tip, boot heel, pieces of flight boot and other items worn by the pilot.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used nuclear DNA in the identification of the 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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