



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAVY PILOT MISSING 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 Lt. Michael T. Newell, U.S. Navy, of Ellenville, N.Y. He will be buried tomorrow in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

On Dec. 14, 1966, Newell was flying an F-8E Crusader aircraft as wingman in a flight of two on a combat air patrol over North Vietnam. During the mission, the flight leader saw a surface-to-air missile explode between the two aircraft. Although Newell initially reported that he has survived the blast, his aircraft gradually lost power and crashed near the border between Nghe An and Thanh Hoa provinces in south central North Vietnam. The flight leader did not see a parachute nor did he hear an emergency beacon signal. He stayed in the area and determined that Newell did not escape from the aircraft prior to the crash.

Between 1993 and 2002, joint U.S./Socialist republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), visited the area of the incident five times to conduct investigations and survey the crash site. They found pilot-related artifacts and aircraft wreckage consistent to an F-8 Crusader

In 2004, a joint U.S./S.R.V. team began excavating the crash site. The team was unable to complete the recovery and subsequent teams re-visited the site two more times before the recovery was completed in 2006. As a result, the teams found human remains and additional pilot-related items.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and also used dental comparisons 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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