



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 15, 2008

SERVICEMEN MIA FROM VIETNAM WAR ARE IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the group remains of six U.S. servicemen, missing from the Vietnam War, are soon to be buried with full military honors.

They are Maj. Bernard L. Bucher, of Eureka, Ill.; Maj. John L. McElroy, of Eminence, Ky.; 1st Lt. Stephen C. Moreland, of Los Angeles, Calif.; and Staff Sgt. Frank M. Hepler, of Glenside, Pa., all U.S. Air Force. These men will be buried as a group on Dec. 18 in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

Two other servicemen, who were individually identified in October 2007, are also represented in this group. They are Capt. Warren R. Orr, Jr., U.S. Army, of Kewanee, Ill., and Airman 1st Class George W. Long, U.S. Air Force, of Medicine, Kan.

Representatives from the Air Force and the Army Mortuary Offices met with the next-of-kin of these men to explain the recovery and identification process and to coordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force and the Secretary of the Army.

On May 12, 1968, these men were on board a C-130 Hercules evacuating Vietnamese citizens from the Kham Duc Special Forces Camp near Da Nang, South Vietnam. While taking off, the crew reported taking heavy enemy ground fire. A Forward Air Controller flying in the area reported seeing the plane explode in mid-air soon after leaving the runway.

In 1986 and 1991, U.S. officials received remains and identification tags from sources claiming they belonged to men from this incident. Scientific analysis revealed they were not American remains, but it was believed the Vietnamese sources knew where the crash site was located.

In 1993, a joint/U.S.-Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) team, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), traveled to Kham Duc and interviewed four local citizens concerning the incident. They led the team to the crash site and turned over remains and identification tags they had recovered in 1983 while looking for scrap metal. During this visit, the team recovered human remains and aircraft wreckage at the site. In 1994, another joint team excavated the crash site and recovered remains, pieces of life-support equipment, crew-related gear and personal effects.

JPAC scientists used forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence 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 www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1169.

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