



## News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **AIR FORCE PILOTS MISSING FROM THE VIETNAM WAR ARE IDENTIFIED**

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of two U.S. servicemen, missing from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Capt. James E. Cross, of Warren, Ohio; and Capt. Gomer D. Reese III, of Scarsdale, N.Y., both U.S. Air Force. Cross will be buried on Oct. 10 in Warren, and Reese will be buried in the spring in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington D.C.

On April 24, 1970, these men were flying a U-17B light aircraft on an orientation flight over Xiangkhoang Province, Laos. Their aircraft was struck by enemy ground fire, crashed and burned. Other U.S. aircraft in the area flew over the crash site and did not see any movement or receive any beeper signals or radio transmissions from the two men.

Between 1994 and 1998, joint U.S./Lao People's Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), conducted several investigations of the incident in Xiangkhoang Province and surveyed the crash site. Teams interviewed Laotian citizens who claimed to witness the crash, and the citizens turned over human remains they said were associated with this incident. The remains were consistent with human bone, but were too small to yield meaningful biological characteristics.

In 2004, another joint team re-surveyed the crash site and recovered life-support equipment, including a seat belt buckle consistent with those found in a U-17 aircraft.

In 2007, another joint team excavated the crash site and recovered human remains and crew-related items. In the spring of 2008, a team completed the excavation and recovered more human remains and non-biological material.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC 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 [www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo) or call (703) 699-1169.

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