



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 23, 2011

MISSING VIETNAM WAR SOLDIER IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office 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.

Army Sgt. 1st Class William T. Brown, 24, of Lahabra, Calif., will be buried Sept. 26 in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On Nov. 3, 1969, Brown, two other American soldiers, and six Vietnamese soldiers were part of a Special Forces reconnaissance patrol operating in Quang Tri Province, near the Vietnam-Laos border. That afternoon the patrol was ambushed by enemy forces and all three Americans were wounded. Brown was reported to have suffered a gunshot wound to his side. Search and rescue teams were not able to reach the site until eight days later. At that time, due to enemy presence and poor weather conditions, they found military equipment but no other signs of the three men.

Between 1993 and 2010, in an effort to pinpoint a possible burial site, investigators from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Lao's People's Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R) and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) conducted multiple interviews and re-interviews on nine different occasions in Quang Tri Province. Additionally, the L.P.D.R. and S.R.V. unilaterally investigated this case, but were unable to develop new leads. Among those interviewed by the joint teams were former Vietnamese militiamen who claimed that sometime in 1969 they ambushed three Americans in the area near the Laos-Vietnam border. In 2007, a Vietnamese citizen led investigators to human remains that he had discovered and buried near the site of the ambush. In 2008, Brown's identification tags were turned in to the U.S. Government from a U.S. citizen with Vietnamese ties. Finally, in April 2010, joint teams excavated a hilltop area near Huong Lap Village and recovered additional human remains, and non-biological material evidence that indicated the identities of the three Americans.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA – which matched that of Brown's cousin—in the identification of the remains.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, call (703) 699-1169 or visit the DPMO Web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo.

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