



News Release

Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office (Public Affairs)
Washington, DC 20301-2900

Phone: (703) 699-1169

Fax (703) 602-4375

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MISSING VIETNAM WAR SOLDIER 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 returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Donald M. Shue, of Kannapolis, N.C., will be buried May 1 in Kannapolis, N.C. Shue, two soldiers, and six Montagnards were part of a Special Forces reconnaissance patrol operating in Quang Tri Province, near the Vietnam-Laos border. On Nov. 3, 1969, the team was attacked and overrun by enemy forces, forcing them to withdraw. The team's survivors reported seeing the three Americans wounded on the battlefield. Due to enemy presence and poor weather conditions the search-and-rescue team was not able to survey the site until Nov. 11. At that time, they found web gear belonging to Shue, but no other signs of the three men. The soldiers were declared Missing In Action.

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. Finally, in April 2010, joint teams excavated a hilltop area near Huong Lap Village and recovered human remains, non-biological material evidence, a military identification tag for one of the missing soldiers, and a "Zippo" cigarette lighter bearing the name Donald M. Shue and the date 1969.

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

With the identification of Shue, 953 Americans who were once missing from the Vietnam War have been accounted-for and returned to their families. More than 1,693 are still missing in action from that conflict.

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.