



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MISSING VIETNAM WAR AIRMAN IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a serviceman, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Air Force Capt. Darrell J. Spinler, 29, Browns Valley, Minn., will be buried on June 18 near his hometown. On June 21, 1967, Spinler was aboard an A-1E Skyraider aircraft attacking enemy targets along the Xekong River in Laos when villagers reported hearing an explosion before his aircraft crashed. The pilot of another A-1E remained in the area for more than two hours but saw no sign of Spinler.

In 1993, a joint U.S./Laos People's Democratic Republic team, led by Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), interviewed villagers who witnessed the crash. They claimed Spinler's body was on the river bank after the crash but likely washed away during the ensuing rainy season. The team surveyed the location and found wreckage consistent with Spinler's aircraft.

In 1995, the U.S. government evaluated Spinler's case and determined his remains unrecoverable based on witness statements and available evidence. Teams working in the area revisited the location in 1999 and 2003 and confirmed Spinler's remains had likely been carried away by the Xekong River. However, in 2010, JPAC conducted a full excavation of the location and recovered aircraft wreckage, human remains, crew-related equipment and personal effects.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command used dental x-rays in the identification of Spinler's remains.

With the accounting of this airman, 1,689 service members still remain missing from the conflict.

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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