



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIRMAN MISSING FROM VIETNAM WAR 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.

Air Force Capt. Virgil K. Meroney III, 25, of Fayetteville, Ark., will be buried June 9, in his hometown. On March 1, 1969, Meroney was a crew member aboard an F-4D Phantom II aircraft that crashed while carrying out a nighttime strike mission in Khammouan Province, Laos. Nearby U.S. aircrews reported seeing Meroney's aircraft hit by enemy fire. No parachutes were seen after the aircraft was hit. Heavy enemy presence in the area prevented recovery efforts.

In 1994, a joint U.S./Lao People's Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) team investigated the crash site in Khammouan Province, Laos. The team located aircraft wreckage of an F-4 and military equipment, which correlated with Meroney's aircraft.

From 2000 to 2011, additional joint U.S./L.P.D.R recovery teams investigated and excavated the crash site multiple times. Teams recovered human remains, and military equipment, including an engine data plate, a radio call-sign plate, and a military identification card bearing Meroney's name.

Scientists from the JPAC used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools including dental comparisons, and radiograph comparisons in the identification of Meroney.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, call (703) 699-1420 or visit the DPMO Web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo.

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