



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MARINE MISSING FROM VIETNAM WAR TO BE BURIED WITH CREW

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced today that the remains of one U.S. serviceman, missing from the Vietnam War, were recently accounted for and will be buried along with the 12 other servicemen who were lost in the same crash.

U.S. Marine Pfc. Daniel A. Benedett, of Seattle, will be buried May 15, at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C., along with Air Force 2nd Lt. Richard Vandeger, of Cleveland; Navy Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Bernard Gause, Jr., of Birmingham, Ala.; Hospitalman Ronald J. Manning, of Steubenville, Ohio; Marine Corps servicemen Lance Cpl. Gregory S. Copenhaver, of Lewistown, Pa.; Lance Cpl. Andres Garcia, of Carlsbad, N.M.; Pfc. Lynn Blessing, of Lancaster, Pa.; Pfc. Walter Boyd, of Portsmouth, Va.; Pfc. James J. Jacques, of La Junta, Colo.; Pfc. James R. Maxwell, of Memphis, Tenn.; Pfc. Richard W. Rivernburgh, of Schenectady, N.Y.; Pfc. Antonio R. Sandoval, of San Antonio; and Pfc. Kelton R. Turner, of St. Louis.

On May 12, 1975, Khmer Rouge gunboats captured the S.S. Mayaguez in the Gulf of Thailand, approximately 60 nautical miles off the coast of Cambodia. The vessel was taken to Koh Tang Island. U.S. aircraft began surveillance flights around the island. After efforts to secure the release of the ship and its crew failed, U.S. military forces began a rescue mission.

Three days after the Mayaguez seizure, six Air Force helicopters were dispatched to the island. One of the helicopters came under heavy enemy fire and crashed into the surf with 26 men on board. Thirteen of the men were rescued at sea, leaving Benedett and 12 other service members unaccounted-for from the crash.

Between 1991 and 2008, investigators conducted more than 10 investigations and excavations, led by Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC). On three occasions Cambodian authorities turned over remains believed to be those of American servicemen. In 1995, U.S. and Cambodian specialists conducted an underwater recovery of the helicopter crash site where they located remains, personal effects and aircraft debris associated with the loss. Between 2000 and 2004, all of the missing service members from this helicopter, except Benedett, were accounted-for.

On Jan. 30, 2013, Benedett was accounted-for. Scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and DNA process of elimination to account for his remains.

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