



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAVY PILOT FROM VIETNAM WAR IDENTIFIED

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

Navy Lt. Richard L. Laws, 26, of West Sacramento, Calif., will be buried May 10, in Annapolis, Md. On April 3, 1966, Laws was strafing enemy targets in Thanh Hoa Province, North Vietnam, when his F-8E Crusader was struck by enemy ground fire. His mission commander saw his aircraft crash into a nearby hillside and explode. As a result, Laws was declared killed in action.

From 1994 to 2003, joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams conducted interviews and excavations of the crash site in Thanh Hoa Province, based on an investigative lead from the Vietnam Central Armed Forces Museum in Hanoi. The teams recovered human remains, U.S. aircraft wreckage, personal effects and life-support equipment; however, no remains could be attributes to Laws given the technology of the time.

In 2006, another U.S./S.R.V. team expanded the excavated site in Thanh Hoa Province. The team recovered additional human remains, aircraft wreckage, life-support equipment, and personal effects from the site.

In the identification of the remains, scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, such as mitochondrial DNA—which matched Laws' mother.

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