



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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MARINE MISSING IN ACTION FROM VIETNAM WAR 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.

U.S. Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Samuel E. Hewitt, 19, of Walkerton, Ind. will be buried Nov. 19 in Rittman, Ohio, at the Western Reserve National Cemetery. Hewitt's unit, Company I of the 9th Marines, had just returned from combat patrol on March 22, 1966, when he left a secured encampment near the village of Viem Dong in South Vietnam. He did not return by early evening, so a search party was dispatched the following morning. Unable to find him or any evidence associated with his disappearance, Company I declared him missing on March 23.

In 1992 a joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) team interviewed a Vietnamese woman in Da Nang who recalled that in 1966, three Americans had stopped by her house near Hewitt's encampment. Three days later, one of them returned and was killed by the Viet Cong when they attempted to capture him.

Between 1992 and 2010, in an effort to pinpoint a possible burial site, investigators from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command and the SRV conducted multiple interviews and re-interviews on nine different occasions in Quang Nam Province. Additionally, the SRV unilaterally investigated this case, but was unable to develop new leads. Among those interviewed by the joint teams were witnesses who had firsthand knowledge of Hewitt's burial location. Finally, in June 2010, JPAC conducted its second excavation and located his remains.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC made extensive use of Hewitt's dental records in the identification of his remains.

With the identification of Hewitt, 939 Americans who were once missing from the Vietnam War have been accounted-for and returned to their families. More than 1,700 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.

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