



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SOLDIER 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.

Army Chief Warrant Officer 3 George A. Howes, 19, of Knox, Ind., will be buried Aug. 5 in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. On Jan. 10, 1970, Howes and three aircrew members were returning to their base at Chu Lai, South Vietnam aboard a UH-1C Huey helicopter. Due to bad weather, their helicopter went down over Quang Nam Province, Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.). A search was initiated for the crew, but no sign of the helicopter or crew was spotted.

In 1989, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) gave to U.S. specialists 25 boxes that reportedly contained the remains of U.S. servicemen related to this incident. Later that year, additional remains and a military identification tag from one of the other missing servicemen were obtained from a Vietnamese refugee.

Between 1993 and 1999, joint U.S./S.R.V. teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), conducted three investigations in Ho Chi Minh City and two investigations in Quang Nam-Da Nang Province (formerly Quang Nam Province). A Vietnamese citizen in Ho Chi Minh City turned over a military identification tag bearing Howes' name and told the team he knew where the remains of as many as nine American servicemen were buried. He agreed to lead the team to the burial site. In 1994, the team excavated the site and recovered a metal box and several bags containing human remains. In 2006, the remains of three of the four men were identified and buried. No remains could be attributed to Howes given the technology of the time. In 2008, given advances in DNA technology, the remains were reanalyzed.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used dental comparisons and mitochondrial DNA – which matched that of Howes' sister and brother—in the identification of the remains.

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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