



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 (DPMO) announced today that the remains a U.S. serviceman and 12 Vietnamese citizens, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

Army Master Sgt. Ralph J. Reno, 36, of Chicago, will be buried on Sept. 8 in Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C., along with 12 Vietnamese citizens. The remains representing the group will be buried together, in a single casket. On July 3, 1966, with three U.S. soldiers from 5th Special Forces Group, three Vietnamese aircrew and nine Vietnamese passengers took off from Kham Duc, South Vietnam, on board an H-34 helicopter. The aircraft crashed in the mountains of Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam, after they encountered severe air turbulence. Three search and rescue missions conducted in the days after the crash recovered the remains of two U.S. soldiers and seven Vietnamese.

Between 1993 and 1997, joint U.S.-Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), attempted to survey the crash site but the hazards of the steep mountainous terrain and dense foliage forced them to turn back. In September 1999, a team successfully located the wreckage of the helicopter and recommended the site for excavation. Excavation of the location started in 2000 and a joint team recovered human remains and military equipment. Another joint team returned to the site in 2007 and recommended a second excavation. In 2010, the second excavation recovered human remains and more military equipment.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA – which matched that of his brother -- in the identification of Reno's remains.

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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