



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. SOLDIERS MIA FROM VIETNAM WAR IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of four U.S. servicemen, missing in action from the Vietnam War, have been identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kenneth L. Stancil, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jesse D. Phelps, Boise, Idaho; Spc. 5 Donald C. Grella, Laurel, Neb.; and Spc. 4 Thomas Rice, Jr., Spartanburg, S.C., all U.S. Army. The group remains of all four men are to be buried tomorrow at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. as well as the individual remains of Rice. Stancil, Phelps and Grella were buried individually last year.

The four men were aboard a UH-1D Huey helicopter which failed to return from a mission over Gia Lai Province, South Vietnam to pick up Special Forces soldiers on December 28, 1965. The exact location of the crash site was not determined during the war, and search and rescue operations were suspended after failing to locate the men after four days.

From 1993-2005 joint U.S.-Socialist Republic of Vietnam teams led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) attempted unsuccessfully to locate the site. But in April 2006 a joint team interviewed two local villagers, one of which said he had shot down a U.S. helicopter in 1965. The villagers escorted the team to the crash site where wreckage was found. Then in March 2009, another joint team excavated the area and recovered human remains and other artifacts including an identification tag from Spc. 5 Grella.

JPAC's scientists employed traditional forensic techniques in making these identifications, including comparisons of dental records with the remains found at the site.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1169.

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