



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

May 30, 2012

AIRMAN MISSING 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 are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Arden K. Hassenger, 32, of Lebanon, Ore., will be buried June 8 in his hometown. On Dec. 24, 1965, Hassenger, and the crew of the AC-47D aircraft nicknamed "Spooky" failed to return from a combat strike mission in southern Laos. After a "mayday" signal was sent, all contact was lost with the crew. Two days of search efforts for the aircraft and crew were unsuccessful.

In 1995, a joint U.S./Lao People's Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) team investigated a crash in Savannakhet Province, Laos. Local villagers recalled seeing a two-propeller aircraft, similar to an AC-47D, crash in December 1965. One man had found aircraft wreckage in a nearby field while farming, and led the team to that location. The team recovered small pieces of aircraft wreckage at that time and recommended further investigative visits.

Joint U.S./L.P.D.R. investigation and recovery teams re-visited the site four times from 1999 to 2001. They conducted additional interviews with locals, recovered military equipment, and began an excavation. No human remains were recovered, so the excavation was suspended pending additional investigation.

In 2010, joint U.S./L.P.D.R. recovery teams again excavated the crash site. The team recovered human remains, personal items, and military equipment. Three additional excavations in 2011 recovered additional human remains and evidence.

Scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command used dental records and material evidence to identify Hassenger.

With the accounting of this airman, 1,666 service members still remain missing from the Vietnam War.

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.

-end-