



News Release
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIR FORCE PILOT MISSING IN ACTION FROM VIETNAM WAR IS 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 will be returned to his family for burial.

He is Maj. Russell C. Goodman, U.S. Air Force, of Salt Lake City, Utah. He is to be honored this week at Nellis AFB, Nev., home of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbird demonstration team. At the time of his loss, Maj. Goodman was assigned to the Thunderbirds and was flying with the U.S. Navy on an exchange program. He is to be buried in Alaska at a date determined by his family.

On Feb. 20, 1967, Goodman and Navy Lt. Gary L. Thornton took off in their F-4B Phantom from the USS Enterprise for a bombing mission against a railroad yard in Thanh Hoa Province, North Vietnam. They were struck by enemy anti-aircraft fire and their plane exploded. Thornton was able to eject at just 250 feet altitude, but Goodman did not escape. Thornton survived and was held captive until his release in 1973.

Search and rescue attempts were curtailed because of heavy anti-aircraft and automatic weapons fire in the area of the crash.

Between October 1993 and March 2008 joint U.S.-Vietnamese teams led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) investigated the crash site twice and conducted two excavations, recovering human remains and pilot equipment. The aircraft debris recovered correlates with the type of aircraft the men were flying.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA – which matched two of his maternal relatives -- in the identification of Goodman'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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