



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIR FORCE PILOT 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 returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

He is Col. Elton L. Perrine, U.S. Air Force, of Pittsford, N.Y. He was buried last week at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C.

On May 22, 1967, Perrine and Capt. Kenneth F. Backus completed a nighttime strike against the Cao Nung Railroad Yard near the town of Kep in North Vietnam. Seconds after the bomb run, a nearby aircrew reported seeing an isolated explosion approximately three miles east of the target, thought to be Perrine's F-4C Phantom aircraft crashing. Search and rescue attempts were not initiated due to heavy antiaircraft fire in the area.

Analysts from DPMO developed case leads with information spanning more than 28 years. Through interviews with eyewitnesses and research in the National Archives, four locations in Lang Son Province were pinpointed as potential crash sites, separated by as many as 10 miles.

Between 1999 and 2008, U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V.) teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), further analyzed leads, interviewed villagers, conducted two surveys and four excavations. The teams recovered small pieces of aircraft wreckage, human remains, personal effects and life-support equipment from the four locations.

Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory also used mitochondrial DNA – which matched that of his mother -- in the identification of Perrine's remains. No remains that can be connected to Backus were recovered at the locations.

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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