



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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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 returned his family for burial with full military honors.

Air Force Tech. Sgt. Allen J. Avery, 29, of Arlington, Mass.; will be buried April 6 at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. Exactly 40 years prior, on April 6, 1972, six airmen were flying a combat search and rescue mission in their HH-53C Super Jolly Green Giant helicopter over Quang Tri Province in South Vietnam, when they were hit by enemy ground fire and crashed.

In 1988, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (S.R.V) turned over remains they attributed to an American serviceman, however, the name provided did not match anyone lost or missing from the Vietnam War. The remains were held by JPAC pending improved technology which might have facilitated a later identification.

From 1989 to 1992, Joint U.S./S.R.V field investigations, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), found evidence leading to an aircraft crash site as well as two reported burial sites. Team members recovered human remains and personal effects as well as aircraft debris. As a result, the crew was accounted-for in 1997 and buried as a group at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington, D.C. Three of them were also individually identified at that time.

In the mid-2000s, JPAC's laboratory gained increased scientific capability to associate the 1988 remains to the correct loss. The Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) tested these remains against all servicemen who were MIA from the Vietnam War with negative results. Later AFDIL expanded its search to make comparisons with previously-identified individuals. In 2010, as a result of mitochondrial DNA testing, the remains were associated with four of the six airmen from the 1972 crash, including Avery.

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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