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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VIETNAM WAR REMAINS IDENTIFIED

Two servicemen missing in action from the Vietnam War have been accounted for and are being returned to their families for burial in the United States.

They are identified as Navy Cmdr. James W. Hall, Los Angeles; and Marine Maj. Charles E. Finney, Saltillo, Miss.

On Oct. 28, 1972, Hall took off from the carrier USS America in his A-7C Corsair on a surface-to-air missile suppression mission. Over the target area in Nghe An province, North Vietnam, Hall was heard to radio to his wingman, "Two SAMs (surface-to-air missiles) lifting at 12 o'clock." No other radio messages were heard. The first missile missed his wingman, but the second struck Hall's aircraft. No parachute was observed, and no emergency radio beepers were heard.

In 1989, Vietnam repatriated to the United States 15 boxes allegedly containing the remains of U.S. servicemen. One was believed to be Hall, but forensic science at the time could not confirm an identification. His case was placed in a hold status pending the receipt of new evidence or the development of new forensic techniques that would assist in the identification.

Joint U.S.-Vietnamese teams, led by the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, conducted investigations and excavations at suspected crash sites in 1993 and 1994. They found no remains, but did recover several pilot-related items. Mitochondrial DNA testing assisted in confirming the identity of the remains recovered in 1989.

On March 17, 1969, Finney was flying in an A-6A aircraft on a night armed reconnaissance mission over Laos. Crewmen from other aircraft in the area observed an explosion in the vicinity of the target, then a second explosion nearby which was believed to be that of Finney's aircraft. There were no parachutes sighted and no emergency beepers were heard. Search and rescue efforts were terminated several days later when no signs of survivors were found.

In 1995 and 1999, joint U.S.-Lao teams interviewed local villagers in the area of the crash, then conducted an excavation in Savannakhet province. A local worker turned over a military identification tag relating to Finney's fellow crewmember. The team also recovered numerous pieces of aircraft wreckage, personal effects and possible human remains. This evidence aided in the final identification.

With the accounting of Hall and Finney, 2,029 servicemen remain missing in action from the Vietnam War. Another 554 have been identified and returned to their families since the end of the war. Analysis of the remains and other evidence by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii confirmed the identification of these two men.

The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic that resulted in the accounting of these servicemen. We hope that such cooperation will bring increased results in the future. Achieving the fullest possible accounting for these Americans is of the highest national priority.