



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIR FORCE SERGEANT MIA 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 with full military honors.

He is Tech. Sgt. Patrick L. Shannon of Owasso, Okla. Funeral arrangements are yet to be set by his family.

Shannon and 18 other servicemen operated a radar installation atop Pha Thi Mountain in Houaphan Province, Laos, approximately 13 miles south of the border with North Vietnam. The site, known as Lima Site 85, directed U.S. bombing missions toward key targets in North Vietnam.

In the early morning of March 11, 1968, the site came under attack by a force of North Vietnamese commandos. The enemy force had scaled the sheer mountainsides in the hours before the attack and overran the site. During the attack, some Americans made their way down to ledges, but survivors reported that several were killed.

Several hours later, U.S. aircraft attacked enemy positions around the site, enabling helicopters to rescue eight of the 19 Americans, though one of the survivors died en route to a base in Thailand. Later that day, and for four additional days, U.S. air strikes bombed the site to destroy technical equipment left behind.

Beginning in 1994, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) began interviewing witnesses in both Laos and Vietnam to gather information on the fates of the Americans. Some of those interviewed were villagers who lived near the site, while others were former enemy soldiers who carried out the attack. In 2002, one of the enemy soldiers stated that he helped throw the bodies of the Americans off the mountain after the attack as they were unable to bury them on the rocky surface.

Between 1994 and 2004, 11 investigations were conducted by both JPAC and unilaterally by Lao and Vietnamese investigators on both sides of the border. During one of the investigations, several mountaineer-qualified JPAC specialists scaled down the cliffs where they recovered remains and personal gear on ledges. JPAC and Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory scientists used mitochondrial DNA and other forensic techniques to identify the remains as those of Shannon.

Of the 88,000 Americans unaccounted-for from all conflicts, 1,812 are from the Vietnam War. Another 771 Americans have been accounted for in Southeast Asia since the end of the war. Of the Americans identified, 199 are from losses in Laos.

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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