

# President Clinton Site Excavation Visit

Socialist Republic of Vietnam



## Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office

The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) establishes and oversees U.S. government policies on accounting for missing Americans from all conflicts.

Established in 1993, the DPMO is led by Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs Robert L. Jones. The staff of approximately 120 military and civilian personnel exercises policy control and oversight within the Department of Defense of the entire process and of personnel recovery and accounting for missing Americans. This includes matters related to search, rescue, escape and evasion, as well as investigations and remains recovery operations. The DPMO coordinates for DoD with other departments and agencies on matters concerning missing persons and establishes procedures to be followed by DoD boards of inquiry related to those missing.

The remains recovery work done in Southeast Asia by several DoD agencies is to achieve the fullest possible accounting for Americans missing from the Vietnam War. The work includes negotiating with the host nations and facilitating technical talks which lay out the details of each year's joint operations. Approximately 500 men and women, military and civilian, work each day around the world to account for missing Americans. Some are supporting operations in field excavations, some are analyzing and investigating potential crash sites, some are interviewing local nationals or reviewing military archives and some are at work in laboratories applying the latest techniques to identify recovered remains.

The following pages provide background on the two primary units whose work contributes to the recovery and identification of remains in Vietnam: The U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CILHI); and the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA). Included are details about the crash site excavation scheduled to be visited by the President as well as biographies of key DoD personnel directing the excavation.

For additional information about the U.S. government work to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at: **[www.dtic.mil/dpmo](http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo)**.



## **U. S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI)**

The CILHI mission is multifaceted: 1) to search for, recover, and identify remains of American military personnel who are missing in action from World War II, the Korean War, the Cold War as well as the Vietnam War and other conflicts and contingencies. 2) to conduct humanitarian missions and provide technical assistance in these matters as requested; 3) to recover and catalog records that will contribute to the recovery and identification process; 4) to provide support in the areas of search, recovery, and identification to the Military Services and the Departments of Defense and State.

CILHI is an agency of the U.S. Army's Casualty and Memorial Affairs Operations Center. The Army is the executive agent in DoD for recovery and forensic identification of U.S. war dead from World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War. The CILHI mission is worldwide in scope, ranging from the rainforests of South America to the deserts of the Middle East, from the glaciers of Tibet to the tropical jungles of Papua New Guinea.

In recent years, much of CILHI's emphasis has focused on the former battlefields of the Vietnam conflict – Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. CILHI has recovery operations on-going in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia under the operational control of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA). These include eight Indochina losses in territory belonging to the People's Republic of China. However, with the collapse of the former Soviet Bloc, CILHI personnel now have greater access to sites involving Cold War losses.

Recent breakthroughs in negotiations with North Korea are allowing increased access to sites associated with the more than 8,100 MIAs from the Korean War. The CILHI teams have recovered 107 sets of remains believed to be those of Americans since the joint recovery operations began in 1996 in North Korea. CILHI's operations in other regions of the world are coordinated with American embassies in-country, generally through the Defense Attaché office.

Major achievements have included identifying remains from the Tomb of the Unknown, casualties from the Marine Corps barracks bombing in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983, the Arrow Air crash which involved the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division in Gander, Newfoundland in 1985, the missile

attack on the USS Stark in the Persian Gulf in 1987 and the explosion on the USS Iowa. Also, CILHI has provided expert scientific and technical assistance to State and Federal law enforcement agencies to include the FBI.

During the past year, CILHI conducted recovery/investigative operations in Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, North Korea, South Korea, China, Germany, Turkey, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Vanuatu, United Kingdom, South Korea and Palau. Teams are currently conducting operations in Vietnam, North Korea and Papua New Guinea.

CILHI was established in March 1973 at Camp Samae San, Thailand, following the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Vietnam and the closing of Army mortuaries at Tan Son Nhut and Danang. Working with the South Vietnamese Government until its fall in 1975, CIL-THAI was responsible for search, recovery and identification of remains of U.S. servicemen killed in Southeast Asia only. In May, 1976, CIL-THAI moved to Honolulu, Hawaii and was renamed CILHI. With the move to Hawaii the unit's mission greatly expanded.

Currently, there are more than 78,000 unaccounted for U.S. servicemen from WWII, 8,100 from the Korean War, 120 from the Cold War and more than 1,900 from the Vietnam War.



## JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING

The mission of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA) is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans still unaccounted-for as a result of the war in Southeast Asia. JTF-FA operations include case investigations, archival research, an Oral History Program, and remains recovery operations. The task force was created in response to Presidential, Congressional, and public interest, as well as increased opportunities for case resolution. The opportunities included an increased willingness by the governments of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia to share information they have regarding unaccounted-for Americans, as well as increased access to files, records, and witnesses in their countries.

The task force grew out of the previously established Joint Casualty Resolution Center, an organization that began spearheading U.S. government accounting efforts in 1973. As cooperation on the part of the Southeast Asian nations and opportunities for issue resolution increased, Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command, established Joint Task Force-Full Accounting on January 23, 1992.

JTF-FA is comprised of more than 160 investigators, analysts, linguists, and other specialists representing all four military services and civilian employees. The task force's operations are supported by casualty resolution specialists, archaeologists, and anthropologists from the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI); representatives of the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office; and augmentees from U.S. Pacific Command component commands. JTF-FA is headquartered at Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii, with three detachments located in Bangkok, Thailand; Hanoi, Vietnam; and Vientiane, Laos. The detachment in Thailand also supports operations in Cambodia.

As of 1975, there were 2,583 Americans unaccounted for in Vietnam 1,923 (425 were lost over water off the Vietnamese coast), 569 in Laos, 81 in Cambodia, and 10 in China.

Not since the release of 591 American prisoners of war during "Operation Homecoming" in 1973 has an American -- whose fate was unknown to the U.S. -- returned alive from Southeast Asia. Over the years, however, numerous first-hand reports have surfaced concerning Americans alleged to be alive in Southeast Asia. Intelligence organizations have resolved most of those reports through correlation with accounted-for personnel; others have proven to be fabrications. Support of Defense Intelligence Agency investigation and resolution of these live sightings is JTF-FA's first priority. Although the U.S. government has thus far been unable to obtain definitive evidence that Americans are still being detained against their will in Southeast Asia,

the information available precludes ruling out that possibility. Therefore, actions to investigate live-sighting reports have and will continue to receive the highest priority.

Archival research is conducted by JTF-FA analysts to determine if any of the materials contained in host-nation files can be correlated to unaccounted-for Americans. Another aspect of JTF-FA's responsibility is investigating incident-of-loss sites. JTF-FA investigators and linguists examine areas where unaccounted-for Americans were known to be lost or last known to be alive. They also interview local villagers and provincial officials to determine if witnesses are available to support the investigation.

The Oral History Program was established to identify and interview higher-ranking individuals who may possess information related to specific cases. Often these individuals provide names of other persons who have knowledge of incidents involving Americans. Information obtained through this program has lead investigators to unresolved crash or burial sites.

Task force specialists also locate and examine crash sites. Many of the unaccounted-for Americans were pilots or other aircrew members who were lost when their aircraft crashed or was shot down. These excavations are much like archaeological digs; their aim is to recover remains and material evidence, which could help confirm the fate of the aircraft occupants. If a site investigation, witness interview, or crash site survey results in the discovery of remains or material evidence associated with a loss, a recovery operation will be conducted by JTF-FA and CILHI casualty resolution and other operations specialists. The remains are then transported to CILHI, located at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, where they undergo forensic examination. Positive identification of remains are made through anthropological and odontological analysis.

Currently, JTF-FA conducts ten Joint Field Activities annually in Southeast Asia; four in Vietnam, five in Laos, and one in Cambodia. Depending on the requirements, team composition can range from 30 to almost 95 personnel. Counting deployment and redeployment time, each Joint Field Activity lasts approximately 35 days.

Since its inception in 1992, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting has conducted more than 3,300 case investigations and nearly 570 recovery operations which have led to the repatriation of more than 500 sets of remains believed to be unaccounted-for Americans. JTF-FA investigators and analysts have also responded to countless inquiries about many of those whose fate was previously unknown. Many questions remain, some of which may never be fully answered, but Joint Task Force-Full Accounting is resolved to continue the investigation and recovery efforts until the fullest possible accounting is achieved.

## **Repatriation of Remains November 18, 2000**

During the month-long 62<sup>nd</sup> Joint Field Activity in Vietnam that recently ended, U.S. and Vietnamese teams excavated several crash sites and potential grave sites and conducted investigations of a few dozen cases throughout the country.

The teams recovered possible human remains at several sites. They are to be repatriated to U.S. control on November 18 at Hanoi's Noi Bai airport. Prior to the turnover, U.S. forensic scientists in Hanoi will examine the remains and recommend repatriation of those believed to be human to the Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI).

The remains are escorted with dignity and respect by a joint military honor guard throughout their journey to the laboratory in Hawaii. At Hickam AFB in Hawaii, they will be met by another U.S. military honor guard as well as by U.S. veterans who always pay their respects to these returning servicemen.

The fragmentary nature of the remains mandates a lengthy identification process at CILHI. This process can take months or years and may require additional investigation or excavations.

Although there is considerable circumstantial (non-biological) evidence related to each case, we do not associate the name of a missing serviceman to these remains until the identification process is completed. At the conclusion of each of the excavations, detailed reports of the findings are provided through the military service's casualty offices to the appropriate families.

**Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence G. Evert**  
**United States Air Force**

On November 8, 1967, Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Evert (promoted posthumously from Captain) participated in a bombing mission against the Phuc Yen railroad bridge approximately 17 miles northwest of Hanoi. Lieutenant Colonel Evert was flying the number four aircraft in a flight of four F-105D *Thunderchiefs*. During the bombing attack, his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft artillery fire and crashed. Other members of his flight were not aware of his loss until he failed to check in during their departure from the target area. However, a member of another nearby flight observed Lieutenant Colonel Evert's aircraft sustain a hit on the left rear fuselage and reported hearing a radio transmission stating "I'm hit hard." No ejection seat or parachute was observed, but members of the second flight reported seeing an explosion that appeared to be caused by a crashing aircraft. Because the loss occurred over a heavily defended area, a search and rescue operation could not be initiated.

This loss was first investigated in October 1993 by a joint U.S.-Vietnamese team. Subsequent investigations in 1995, 1998 and 2000 finally narrowed the search to Tien Chau Village, where residents reported in interviews that an aircraft crashed in the vicinity of the village in approximately December 1967. Witnesses and local farmers recalled seeing a crater and aircraft wreckage strewn around the crash site and in their fields. The joint U.S.-Vietnamese team inspected the reported crash site area and, with the aid of a metal detector, found numerous pieces of wreckage and identified the crash crater. The probable site area lies between a railroad embankment and a rice field. To ensure the site could be excavated without hazard and to ensure the safety of the railroad line, a special team of U.S. and Vietnamese engineers inspected the site in July 2000 and developed a plan for the safe excavation of the crash site.

All human remains, life support equipment or personal effects recovered at this site will be thoroughly documented during the detailed excavation process. Upon completion of the recovery operation, a team of U.S. and Vietnamese scientists will review all recovered items. Any human remains recovered at the site will be repatriated to the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii for detailed analysis and possible identification.

**Team Members, Site Excavation, Vietnam  
November 2000**

Recovery Leader  
Team Leader  
TM NCOIC  
Medic  
MA Specialist  
MA Specialist  
MA Specialist  
Photographer  
Life Support Tech  
Linguist  
Explosive Ordnance Tech  
Communications Specialist

Mr. Dennis Danielson  
CPT Mark Thomson  
SFC Michael Swam  
SSGT Leo Macareg  
SSG Tami Rawls  
SSG Carlos Roman  
SGT Terrance James  
SPC Christopher Licking  
SMSGT Gina Noland  
SGT Danh Dinh  
GYSGT Alberto Gomez  
ET3 Lacy Burrhus

**Dennis R. Danielson M.A.**  
**Lead Forensic Anthropologist**

Denny Danielson was born in Burlington Iowa and grew up in Grandview and Letts, Iowa. He received his BA from the University of Iowa and MA from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in archaeology. His masters thesis focused on the utilization of phytoliths in reconstructing prehistoric diet and their effects on dental attrition.

Previous professional work experience includes numerous survey and excavations of prehistoric and historic sites in several national parks within the Rocky Mountain and Desert Southwest areas for the National Park Service/Midwest Archaeological Center in Lincoln, Nebraska. Beginning in April 1994, Mr. Danielson has been employed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District as an augmentee anthropologist to the CILHI.

Mr. Danielson worked at the CILHI for four years and was hired on as a permanent staff member in September 1999. He has lead archaeological excavations with MIA recovery teams on more than 30 missions to Vietnam, Laos and one excavation of a WWII site in Papua New Guinea.

He has published one book chapter on the role of phytoliths in dental attrition of prehistoric Native American populations.

**US Army Central Identification Laboratory****310 Worchester Avenue  
Hickam AFB, Hawaii 96853****Captain Mark Thomson  
Team Leader**

CPT Mark Thomson was born in Portland, Oregon in 1968. He enlisted in the Regular Army in 1986 and served for four years in West Germany and Fort Irwin, California.

Following his enlistment, CPT Thomson attended Oregon State University, graduating in 1993 with a Bachelor's in Business (Management Information Systems) and a commission as a Quartermaster Officer.

His first tour as an officer was with the Division Support Command (DISCOM), 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Light), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. He served as a Supply Platoon Leader, Executive Officer in HHC DISCOM, and as a Task Force Property Book Officer. During this tour he deployed to Operation Uphold Democracy (Haiti) and the Multinational Force and Observers (Sinai).

Following attendance at the Combined Logistics Officer Advanced Course, CPT Thomson commanded HHC 262d Quartermaster Battalion at Fort Lee, Virginia.

Following command, CPT Thomson served as a Logistics Plans Officer for Defense Logistics Agency-Pacific in Taegu, Republic of Korea.

After completion of his tour in Korea, CPT Thomson reported to the US Army Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii as an MIA Recovery Officer.

His military education includes the Quartermaster Officer Basic Course, Combined Logistics Officer Advanced Course, Joint Course on Logistics, Airborne, Air Assault, and Mortuary Affairs Officer Course.

His awards and decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (four oak leaf clusters), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, and Multinational Force and Observers Medal.