

# Family Impact of a Lost Soldier



Plassmeyers and Hasenbecks of Freeburg, Missouri



POW-MIA Recognition Day

September 20, 2019

# **POW-MIA Recognition Day**

**“Observances of National POW/MIA Recognition Day are held across the country on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, schools and veterans' facilities. It is traditionally observed on the third Friday in September each year. This observance is one of six days throughout the year that Congress has mandated the flying of the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag. The others are Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day and Veterans Day.”**

**Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency**

# POW-MIA Recognition Day

We gather today to hold up and honor our Prisoners of War, those Missing in Action, and their families.

*This does not diminish in any way* the value of the service of those who served honorably and returned to continue life in uniform or in civilian pursuits.

# 72,674 Americans Unaccounted For





# Our Silent Heros

Here we pause to reflect, pray with, remember, and appreciate those among us who live daily with memories of things they did, should have done, could have done, failed to do...under the extreme pressure of their duty at the moment.



# 2289 Missourians Unaccounted For

## PERSONS UNACCOUNTED FOR

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**WWII**                      **2055 Missourians**

**Defeated German Nazis, Italian Fascists,  
Empire of Japan**

**Korea**                      **199 Missourians**

**Saved South Korea from Communists**

**Vietnam**                      **35 Missourians**

**Battle success lost to political weakness;  
many Vietnamese came to U. S.**

# Bernard H. Plassmeyer, b. May 4, 1945





# More Bernie Plassmeyer





# Bernie School Days

St. Joseph School

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Reader-Pat the Pilot

St. Thomas Seminary

After one year, Rector says Bernie not suited for priestly life

Fatima High School

Seen sitting in basketball goal playing his saxophone

Elected Class President

Graduated 1963





# Parks College of Aeronautical Technology, St. Louis University

**ALPHA PI SIGMA**, social fraternity at Parks since 1943, has as its primary purpose the development of sound character and fellowship among its brothers. Sigma also strives for the betterment of Parks College as a whole. The fraternity is active in all sports and numerous social functions and activities throughout the year. Through the cooperation of its membership, the fraternity has increased its enrollment noticeably since its foundation.

## ALPHA PI SIGMA

**ALPHA PI SIGMA**—First row: Corresponding Secretary R. Hermans, Vice-President M. Upton, President D. Mazzacavallo, Recording Secretary J. Batistini, W. Wattenbach.  
Second row: F. Floyd, D. Pettyjohn, B. Plassmeyer, T. Miller, J. Nestor, R. Vogler, R. Carter.



## KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS PARKS CHAPTER

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**—First row: Fr. Walsh, S.J., C. Genest, R. Cramsey, Grand Knight J. Flynn, J. Tedesco, R. Pigott.  
Second row: D. McEneaney, J. Manzo, J. Rauscher, R. Raffoul, R. Mathis, D. Mazzacavallo.  
Third row: P. Reeves, W. Wattenbach, W. Keldermans, B. Plassmeyer, F. Harla.

**SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY AND PARKS COLLEGE** **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS** serves as a link in the worldwide chain of councils in which over a million and a half Catholic men are enrolled. The main purpose is to provide programs for participating in Catholic Action in a chosen field. It also makes available an inexpensive life-insurance plan.

## Parks College Graduation, December 1966



**USMC, The Basic School Class of 6-67**  
**Top three out of 498 graduates**  
**Bernie Plassmeyer, Barry Jones, Bill Schultz**







# Telegram

1970 SEP 12 PM 13 42

KA036 SYA 188

SY WA3 21 EF XV GOVT PDB FAX WASHINGTON DC 12 108P EDT=  
MR AND MRS PAUL H PLASSMEYER, DONT PHONE CHECK DLY CHGS  
ABOVE 75 CENTS DONT DLR BETWEEN 10 PM AND 6 AM=  
RR #1 FREEBURG MO=1

I REGRET TO CONFIRM THAT YOUR SON FIRST LIEUTENANT  
BERNARD H PLASSMEYER USMC HAS BEEN REPORTED AS MISSING  
IN ACTION SINCE 4:10 A.M. ON 11 SEPTEMBER 1970 YOUR SON  
WAS THE PILOT OF ONE OF TWO A4E SKYHAWK ATTACK AIRCRAFT  
THAT WERE SCRAMBLED IN SUPPORT OF THE 101ST AIRBORNE  
DIVISION. DURING YOUR SON'S SECOND ORDINANCE DELIVERY  
RUN AGAINST A KNOWN ENEMY POSITION SPARKS WERE OBSERVED  
COMING FROM HIS AIRCRAFT FOLLOWED BY A LONG TRAIL OF  
FLAME. NO PARACHUTE OR OTHER INDICATION OF EJECTION WAS





# Telegram

WITNESSED BY THE OTHER TWO AIRCRAFT ON THE SCENE.  
SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONS ARE IN PROGRESS AND EVERY  
EFFORT IS BEING EXERTED IN THIS RECD. NO OTHER  
INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR SON'S DISAPPEARANCE IS  
AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, I WISH TO ASSURE YOU  
THAT WHEN ANY SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE  
YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY INFORMED. I EXTEND TO YOU ON BEHALF  
OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS SINCE REST CONCERN  
DURING THIS TIME OF GREAT ANXIETY AND UNCERTAINTY. YOUR  
SON'S WIFE HAS BEEN NOTIFIED=

L W WALT GENERAL USMC ACTING COMMANDANT OF THE  
MARINE CORPS.

# **Conversation with Col. Bannan (Bernie's VMA 311 CO) and Capt. George Focht (Flight leader) January 21, 1971**

at home of Marty and Chris Plassmeyer, Arlington, Virginia

Col. Bannan: There is no doubt Bernie is gone.

He participated in athletics with Bernie and they went to Mass and Communion together every Sunday.

There is no doubt Bernie was in the state of grace when he died. He had high regard for Bernie. He asked him to stay in the Marine Corp, but Bernie said he was going back to the farm.

Captain Focht: his ordnance would not release, so he did nothing but observe Bernie as he was making his run.

He saw sparks like a 4<sup>th</sup> of July sparkler, then a sheet of flame that went into the target area.

He knows what an ejection seat rocket looks like. He did not see one.



# Carol: A True Hero

Raises two sons: Bernie, investment manager; Matt, Army doctor serving numerous deployments

Early leader in POW-MIA recovery organizations

Director of a Nursing School

Leader in the Nursing Profession

Marathon runner; completed

Ironman twice

## Uncertainty haunts MIA families

By LESLIE JOHNSON

Amid the cheers and tears of joy that accompanied the return of America's prisoners of war, 1,300 families across the United States continue to wait in the same uncertainty they have known for the past several years.

Near Westphalia, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Plassmeyer wait for word concerning their son, Bernard. Mrs. Plassmeyer's silver POW-MIA bracelet testifies that they've been waiting since Sept. 11, 1970.

In Belleville, Ill., Mrs. Carol Knaus Plassmeyer waits in her parents' home, taking care of her son, Bernard William. Born Sept. 27, 1970, the toddler has never seen his father, who may not even know he has a son.

Marine Capt. Bernard H. Plassmeyer was pilot of a plane shot down over South Vietnam on Sept. 11, 1970. No word concerning his whereabouts, or even if he is alive or dead, has been available to his parents and wife except that he is "missing in action."

Plassmeyer graduated from Fatima High School in 1963. He majored in aeronautical engineering at Park Air College, part of St. Louis University, and graduated in 1966.

Plassmeyer entered Officer Candidate School in early 1967. After he was commissioned, he married Carol Knaus, of Belleville, Ill.

Mrs. Paul Plassmeyer says, "we're not looking for publicity for ourselves. But there are

to stop the wondering and waiting of all the people here with relatives missing in action."

The Plassmeyers have been in contact with several other MIA families through the League of Families, a national group which is seeking information about MIA's.

Mrs. Plassmeyer continues, "We need public support now to try to get these men home, or at least to get an accounting of their fate."

She went on to say, "The returned POW's have reported that prison conditions improved in 1969 after a massive letter writing campaign hit North Vietnam. We're hoping public pressure of this sort will encourage them to let us know where our men are."

The national organization suggests a letter which might read: "I have been greatly heartened to see the release of our returning prisoners of war. I hope that North Vietnam, the PPRG, and others will help with the most thorough possible accounting procedures for Americans who are missing."

According to material from the national league, letters should be addressed to Ton Duc Than, president of DRV, or Pham Van Dong, premier of DRV, both at Hanoi, North Vietnam.

Additional information about the projects of the national organization obtained from The League of Families, 1100 St., NW, Washington, D. C. 20006.

League of Families address is 1100 St., NW, Washington, D. C. 20006.

Louis, Mo., 63112.



### Missing

In happier days, Marine Capt. and Mrs. Bernard Plassmeyer shared a proud moment when he received his flight training wings in March, 1969. Plassmeyer has been missing in action in southeast Asia since Sept. 11, 1970.

1,300 families across the nation who have a right to know what has happened to their sons, fathers, brothers, and husbands."

"Some of the men are certainly dead," his father asserts, "But not all of them are. It is time

# Report of the August 2012 Site Investigation Case 1660 Plassmeyer

## Page 1-Cover Page

UNCLASSIFIED

CASE 1660

PLASSMEYER, BERNARD H. - Y

*Report of August  
2012 Site  
Investigation*

R 070042Z NOV 12 ZYB

FM CDR JPAC HICKAM AFB HI

TO RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI

INFO RHEFLGX/SAFE WASHINGTON DC

RUETIJS/CSG JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

ZEN/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

RUEKJCS/CDR USPACOM LO WASHINGTON DC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC

RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

BT

CONTROLS

UNCLAS

BODY

MSGID/GENADMIN/MIL-STD-6040(SERIES)/B.0.01.00/CDR JPAC HICKAM AFB HI  
SUBJ/DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OF CASE 1660//

GENTEXT/REMARKS/SUBJ/DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OF CASE  
1660(SITE VM-01488) CONDUCTED DURING JOINT FIELD ACTIVITY 12-4VM (108TH  
JFA).

AKNLDG/COMMENTS IN THIS REPORT ARE BASED ON FIELD ANALYSIS AND ARE  
NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE FINAL ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS.

REF/A/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/021244Z JUN 94.

REF/B/RMG/JCRC LIAISON BANGKOK TH/151126Z FEB 91.

REF/C/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/052203Z AUG 94.

REF/D/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/302037Z OCT 12.

REF/E/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/022026Z NOV 12.

REF/F/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/302025Z OCT 12.

REF/G/DOC/1:50,000 SCALE MAP.

REF/H/DOC/1:50,000 SCALE MAP.

NARR/REFERENCES:

A. REF A IS THE DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION (DRI) OF CASE 1660 (VM  
01488) CONDUCTED DURING JOINT FIELD ACTIVITY (JFA) 94-4VM (29TH JFA).

B. REF B IS THE DRI OF CASE 1660 CONDUCTED DURING JFA 91-2VM (13TH JFA).

C. REF C IS THE DETAILED REPORT OF EXCAVATION (DRE) OF CASE 1660  
CONDUCTED DURING JFA 94-5VM (30TH JFA).

D. REF D IS THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REPORT (AIR) 12 4 18 CONDUCTED  
DURING THE JFA 12-4VM (108TH JFA).



# Report of the August 2012 Site Investigation Case 1660 Plassmeyer

U. S. Contingent

11 Members

VNOSMP Contingent

6 Members

(C) RE-SURVEY THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED CRASH SITE IN HONG THAI VILLAGE (XAX HOONGF THAIS), A LUOI DISTRICT (HUYEENJ A LWOIS), THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE, FOR EVIDENCE OF AIRCRAFT DEBRIS, LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT, REMAINS OR PERSONAL EFFECTS. EXPAND THE SURVEY FROM THE OUTER BOUNDARY OF THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED CRASH CRATER 50 METERS IN EACH CARDINAL DIRECTION (NOT ACCOMPLISHED, ONLY COMPLETED 30 METERS IN EACH CARDINAL DIRECTION; SEE PARA 4.A., BELOW).

B. ON 29 AUGUST 2012, IT1 ARRIVED IN HUE CITY TO INVESTIGATE CASE 1660 IN THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE.

## C. TEAM COMPOSITION:

### (1) U.S. CONTINGENT:

(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (A) [REDACTED] JPAC, TEAM LEADER/LINGUIST.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (B) [REDACTED] JPAC, SURVEY ANTHROPOLOGIST.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (C) [REDACTED] JPAC, ASSISTANT TEAM LEADER/LINGUIST/INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (D) [REDACTED] JPAC, SENIOR ANALYST/INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (E) [REDACTED] JPAC, INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (F) [REDACTED] JPAC, INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (G) [REDACTED] JPAC, LEAD INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (H) [REDACTED] JPAC, INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (I) [REDACTED] JPAC, MEDIC.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (J) [REDACTED] JPAC, EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL (EOD) TECHNICIAN.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (K) [REDACTED] JPAC, LIFE SUPPORT INVESTIGATOR (LSI).

### (2) VNOSMP CONTINGENT:

(A) MR. NGUYEN HONG CHIEN (NGUYEENX HOONGF CHIEENS), TEAM LEADER.

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**Report of the  
August 2012 Site  
Investigation  
Case 1660  
Plassmeyer**

Province Peoples Committee

5 Members

District Peoples Committee

2 Members

Village Peoples Committee

1 Member

8 Peoples Committee Members

**UNCLASSIFIED**

(B) MR. DANG LE HOANG (DAWNGJ LEE HOANGF), TEAM MEMBER.

(C) MS. LE THU HA (LEE THU HAF), TEAM MEMBER.

(D) MR. TONG NGOC KHANH (TOONGS NGOCJ KHANH), TEAM MEMBER.

(E) MR. NGUYEN NGOC MINH (NGUYEENX NGOCJ MINH), TEAM MEMBER.

(F) MR. CAO XUAN THANH (CAO XUAAN THANH), TEAM MEMBER.

(3) THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CONTINGENT:

(A) MR. NGUYEN LE NHIEEN (NGUYEENX LEE NHIEEN HWONG), TEAM LEADER.

(B) MR. TRINH NGOC THAI (TRINHJ NGOCJ THAIS), TEAM MEMBER.

(C) MR. LE DINH THANH (LEE DINHF THANH), TEAM MEMBER.

(D) MR. NGUYEN TRUNG MINH (NGUYEENX TRUNG MINH), TEAM MEMBER.

(E) MR. HO SY TOAN (HOOF SYX TOANF), TEAM MEMBER

(4) A LUOI DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CONTINGENT:

(A) MR. HO THIN (HOOF THINF), TEAM LEADER.

(B) MR. HO VAN ZON (HOOF VAWN ZOON), TEAM MEMBER.

(5) HONG THAI VILLAGE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CONTINGENT: MR. NGUYEN VAN HUY (NGUYEENX VAWN HUY), TEAM LEADER.

D. ON 29 AUGUST 2012, IT1 MET WITH THE VNOSMP CONTINGENT AT THE INDOCHINE PALACE BEST WESTERN HOTEL IN HUE CITY TO DISCUSS THE INVESTIGATION PLAN. THE VNOSMP TEAM LEADER INFORMED IT1 THAT THEY LOCATED TWO OF THE REQUESTED WITNESSES, MR. HO VAN HONG AND MR. NGUYEN VAN HUY, WHO WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW.

5

2

1



# Paul A. Hasenbeck

Born May 11, 1947,

Son of Linus and Erma  
Hasenbeck

6th of 8 Children

Graduated Fatima High School

Worked at Missouri Department  
of Health

Drafted into the U. S. Army



# Paul A. Hasenbeck

Date of Birth: 11 May 1947

Home City of Record: Freeburg MO

Loss Date: 21 April 1967

SYNOPSIS: April 21, 1967

SP4 Thomas A. Mangino, squad leader; PFC Paul Hasenbeck, PFC David M. Winters and PFC Daniel R. Nidds, riflemen

Were returning from a combat patrol in the second of two sampans 100 meters apart near Chu Lai, Quang Ngai Province, South Vietnam.

Just before arriving, a Vietnamese civilian was seen moving in his sampan toward the sampan carrying SP4 Mangino's squad.

Another sampan with 3 Vietnamese women was moving toward the first sampan, in which the platoon leader rode.

The first sampan started to leak, so proceeded faster around and headed toward the beach. The Vietnamese women were still following the first sampan. The distance between the two sampans carrying the Americans was 200-250 meters.

The last time the platoon leader saw Mangino's sampan, the Vietnamese civilian was talking with SP4 Mangino's squad.

The platoon leader's sampan arrived at the beach 45 minutes later, and waited 20 minutes, then reported to the command post that Mangino's sampan had not yet arrived.





# Telegram delivered to Mr. and Mrs. Linus J. Hasenbeck, 27 April 1967

I regret to inform you that no additional information concerning your son...has been obtained.

...the board may recommend a change in...status to deceased should the evidence...support such a finding.

...should any new development occur I shall inform you immediately.

KENNETH G. WICKHAM, MAJOR GENERAL, USA

<b>DOMESTIC SERVICE</b> Check the class of service desired otherwise this message will be sent as a fast telegram TELEGRAM DAY LETTER NIGHT LETTER		<b>WESTERN UNION</b> W P MARSHALL CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD R W McFALL PRESIDENT		<b>INTERNATIONAL SERVICE</b> Check the class of service desired otherwise this message will be sent at the full rate FULL RATE LETTER TELEGRAM SHORE SHIP					
NO	WD	CL	OF SVC	IN	OR LOSS	FAIR NO	CHAR TO THE A	JUNE 19	TIME FILED
							SIG - GOVT PD CAS MSG	WASH DC	

Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof which are hereby agreed to  
REPORT DELIVERY - DON'T PHONE - DON'T DEL. RTWN 10PM & 6AM 27 April 1967 P 16

Mr and Mrs Linus J Hasenbeck, Box 34, Freeburg, Missouri

I regret to inform you that no additional information concerning your son Private First Class Paul A Hasenbeck has been obtained. The search is continuing. In those instances where a member's fate is not definitely ascertained the circumstances surrounding his disappearance are thoroughly investigated. Our regulations require the organization commander to convene a Board of Officers to conduct the investigation within ten days after the incident. The board will examine all available evidence, interrogate associates and those who can contribute information which will assist them in arriving at a sound and logical conclusion. The board may recommend a change in Paul's status to deceased should the evidence be adequately conclusive to support such a finding, however, in the absence of conclusive evidence it is normal that he be continued as missing.

The report of the proceeding of this Board of Officers should be in my office within 60 days. However, I will correspond with you again during the month of Mayx June and of course should any new development occur I shall inform you immediately.

# **Gary R. Kremer, Executive Director The State Historical Society of Missouri**

A fifth-generation Missourian, Gary R. Kremer earned his PhD from American University in Washington, DC. Kremer has written, coauthored, and co-edited 12 books. Previously, Kremer taught history at Lincoln University in Jefferson City (1972-1987) and William Woods University in Fulton (1991-2004). He also served as the state archivist of Missouri from 1987 to 1991. He has been SHSMO's executive director since 2004.



## **Statement of Dr. Gary Kremer about his friend, Paul Hasenbeck**

In many ways he was a “typical” Vietnam-era soldier. Like me, he was a small-town Missouri boy who had hardly been out of his home state. Like me, also, he was raised in a firmly Catholic family of German ancestry. And, like me, he was taught as a child to think of Communism as a real and imminent threat to the American way of life.

Paul was not eager to be in the U.S. Army. Like thousands of others of our generation, he was drafted and he responded to the call to serve without anger or bitterness. He saw his service as a responsibility, one he sought to carry out to the best of his ability. At the time he was drafted (late 1966), neither he nor I were particularly political. We never had philosophical conversations about the Vietnam War, but we certainly had lots of conversations about our anxiety over the prospect of being drafted.

Paul and I graduated from Fatima High School together in 1965. We were friends in high school, but became even closer when I went to work at the Missouri Division of Health in December 1965. Paul had gone to work there immediately following our graduation. We spent a lot of time together during 1966, in the months preceding his leaving for basic training in the late summer/fall of 1966. I think we attended virtually every Catholic parish picnic within driving distance during the summer of 1966.



## **Dr. Gary Kremer, continued**

After Paul entered the U.S. Army, he and I corresponded regularly until he went missing in April 1967. We had a lot in common, including the fact that our parents' homes did not have indoor plumbing! In one of his letters to me, Paul indicated that he was saving up his military pay so that he could pay for the installation of indoor plumbing in his parents' home. The last letter I wrote to Paul never reached him; it was returned to me by the officer who led the search for Paul after he went missing.

Paul was a typical 18/19-year-old! He laughed easily, loved practical jokes and good-natured kidding, and was a very well-liked and responsible co-worker. He had a girlfriend who was from Loose Creek and who I knew as well (I was dating a girl from Loose Creek at the time also).

When I think of Paul, which I often do, I think of him as this kid who was just beginning his adult life, who felt as though he had his entire life before him. He was curious, happy and fun-loving. He was also 19, the average age of the young American serviceman killed in Vietnam.

Paul's mother was in a nursing home with my mother before the two of them passed. I would often visit with her and always felt the keen loss that I know she felt in not knowing what happened to her son, and not being able to watch him mature, have a family, and grow old.

Paul's death still haunts me more than fifty years later. I still miss him.

# ***Public Health Personalities,*** **December 1968**

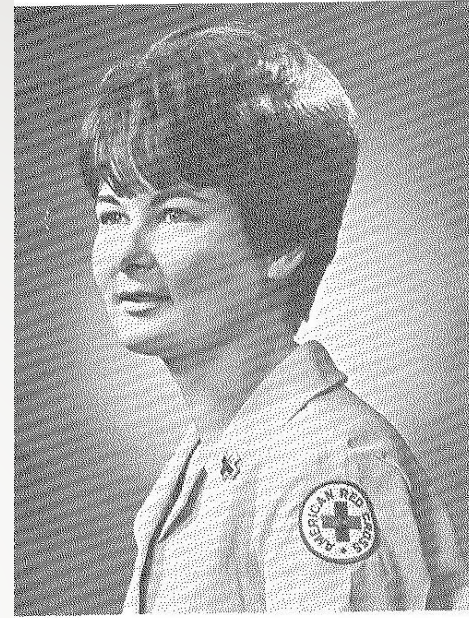
## **Jeanie Hasenbeck goes to Vietnam**

When Paul became missing in 1967, I thought the military was too overwhelmed in fighting the war to have time to look for my brother.

I applied with the American Red Cross with a specific assignment request of Viet Nam.

I was assigned to the Service to Military Hospitals branch. My duties would be to assist in gathering of medical data of wounded personnel there to be forwarded to family's state side.

My duties would be between the 24th and 93rd Evacuation Hospitals spending alternate days at each. I would chopper between the two.



JEANIE HASENBECK GOES TO VIETNAM

ineteen months after her brother, Pfc. Paul Hasenbeck, was reported missing in action in Vietnam, Jeanie Hasenbeck has gone to that torn land as a Red Cross overseas secretary. Paul is remembered as a former employee in the Bureau of Health Education Services, who was assigned to military service in 1966. He landed in Vietnam on Dec. 21, 1966, as a member of the U.S. Army's 196th Light Infantry Brigade. Approximately four months later, he was reported missing and his official status remains unchanged at that time.

Jeanie was scheduled to arrive in Saigon the first week of December where she will be assigned to work in the American Red Cross headquarters as a secretary-stenographer. Her tour is for one year's duration, after which she may either resign or accept assignment in another theater of service. Jeanie admits that her decision to go to Vietnam was influenced by her missing brother, but says her primary motivation is a feeling that "women are needed in Vietnam as well as fighting men." Her sense of service shows also in her plans for her off-duty time, "I hope to visit the hospitals in Saigon and do whatever I can for our boys who are consoling there." Prior to joining the Red Cross overseas secre-

tariat corps, Jeanie has been employed for five and one-half years as a secretary with the State Division of Personnel. She and Paul are the children of Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Hasenbeck of Freeburg.

EUGENE VIETS, Sanitarian IV of the Bureau of Milk, Food and Drug Control, discussed state regulations concerning eating and drinking establishments at a Food Service Executive Seminar on November 15. The seminar took place at the Student Union of Central Missouri State College in Warrenton, Oregon.

ROBERT M. ROBINSON, Sanitary Engineer transferred from District One and Ralph Frederickson, Sanitarian III, transferred from District Three to work on the Solid Wastes Project. They will make a study of the problems of solid waste throughout the state and recommend a plan for control and disposal of solid wastes. The U.S. Public Health Service, which provided a short training session for these two men to acquaint them with the objectives of the study and with methods to be used, will provide 50 percent of the cost of the project.

GERRY GAGNON, District Two health program representative, and Moody Summit, health program representative with the Fire and Burn Injury Prevention Program in southeast Missouri, attended a one-week training course on "Principles of Accidental Injury Control." It was held at the Taft Engineering Center in Cincinnati and conducted by the U.S. Public Health Service. Moody gave a report of the Fire and Burn Injury Prevention Program.

HOUSEWIVES who plan to prepare Japanese style meals for their families should not use hibachi or charcoal grill indoors, warns the National Safety Council. Such cooking devices—used extensively in the comparatively airy homes in Japan—can produce deadly quantities of carbon monoxide in American houses.



# **Jeanie Hasenbeck on her decision to go to Vietnam to search for her brother Paul, and her experience once she got there**

When Paul went missing in 1967, I thought the military was too overwhelmed in fighting the war to have time to look for my brother. This is how naïve a 20 year old girl can be about wars. I didn't want to take the time to join the military and have to go through various periods of training before getting to Viet Nam and needed to be a non-combatant status to search for Paul so I applied with the American Red Cross with a specific assignment request of Viet Nam. When I was hired by a panel of interviewers in St. Louis, I was told that I would be given a clerical assignment in the Saigon Red Cross office and thus be in a relatively safe place. Like the military, the Red Cross has different branches of service: Service to Military Installations; Supplemental Recreation to Areas Overseas and Service to Military Hospitals. When I completed my week of orientation in Saigon, I was told personnel were needed at an evacuation hospital in Bien Hoa. Thus, I was assigned to the Service to Military Hospitals branch. My duties would be to assist in gathering of medical data of wounded personnel there to be forwarded to families state side. I was also told that the hospital also oversaw a POW hospital immediately across the road but I would not be assigned there. My duties would be between the 24th and 93rd Evacuation Hospitals spending alternate days at each. I would chopper between the two. I was often on the wards assisting with various assignments but my main duty was to type and prepare "health and welfare" reports in response to family requests back home. My first day on the job with the Red Cross was the same day I left for Viet Nam. I had never been out of Missouri much less to a foreign country located in a war zone. I knew nothing about the military and never worked in a hospital until going to Nam. I knew no one there but fortunately found myself surrounded by the most amazing people in the world - the people living the war up close and personal every day. Together we formed a bond that cannot be broken and over 50 years since that assignment, I see it as the best year of my life. After 13 months in Nam, I was sent to the 135th Station Hospital in Heidelberg, Germany, thus ending my time with the American Red Cross service. Unfortunately, I never found any information on my brother, Paul.

# **A Sister's Unhealed War Wound/Pentagon update on search for MIAs brings little comfort – SFGate**

**Bill Wallace, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer**  
**Published 4:00 am PST, Tuesday, January 21, 2003**

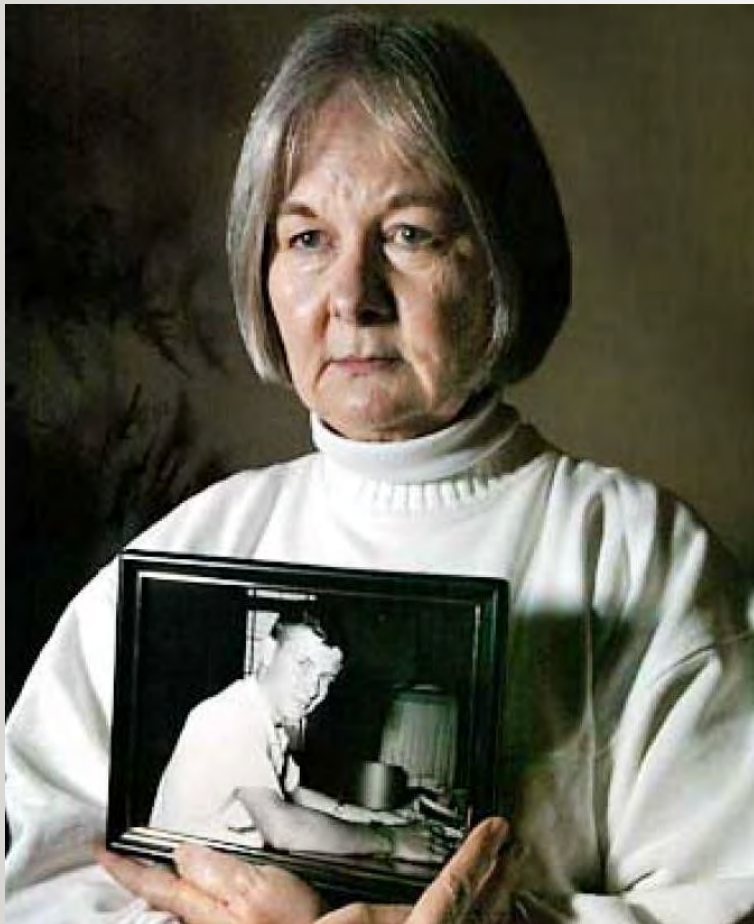


Jeanie Hasenbeck's brother, Staff Sergeant Paul Hasenbeck (18 in the family photo), disappeared in Vietnam on April 21, 1967. Although there is strong evidence that he was captured along with three other GIs, the Vietnamese claim he was killed during an ambush and they cannot find his body. Jeanie (her face reflected in Paul photograph) continues to press for the return of all 1,902 U.S. MIAs in Southeast Asia, and waits to learn of her brother's fate, 35 years after his disappearance. Chronicle photo by Frederic Larson



# **A Sister's Unhealed War Wound/Pentagon update on search for MIAs brings little comfort – SFGate**

**Bill Wallace, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer**  
**Published 4:00 am PST, Tuesday, January 21, 2003**



Jeanie Hasenbeck's brother, Staff Sergeant Paul Hasenbeck, disappeared in Vietnam on April 21, 1967. Although there is strong evidence that he was captured along with three other GIs, the Vietnamese claim he was killed during an ambush and they cannot find his body. Jeanie continues to press for the return of all 1,902 U.S. MIAs in Southeast Asia, and waits to learn of her brother's fate, 35 years after his disappearance. Chronicle photo by Frederic Larson

# Testimony of Jeanie Hasenbeck Missouri House Veterans Committee March 2017

March 9, 2017 by Alisa Nelson, Missouri.net

“When Paul went to Vietnam, I know he expected to be wounded. I know he expected to be killed, but he never expected to be abandoned. I feel that’s what we’ve done,” says Jeanie Hasenbeck.

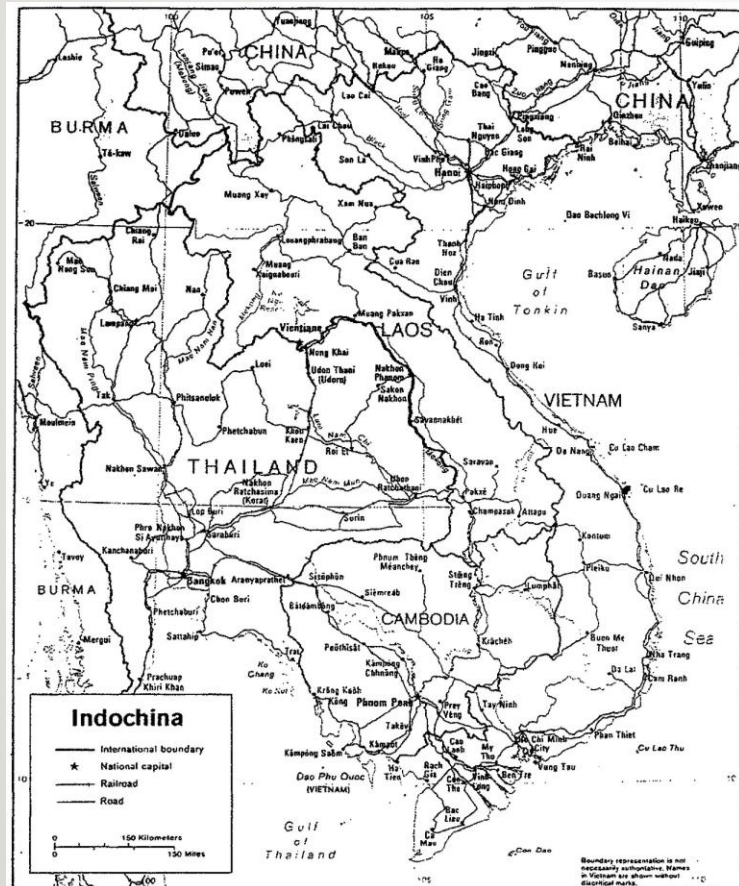
“Everyone on that list deserves, after they gave their all and did everything their country asked of them, to have a resolution so that they can be brought home.”



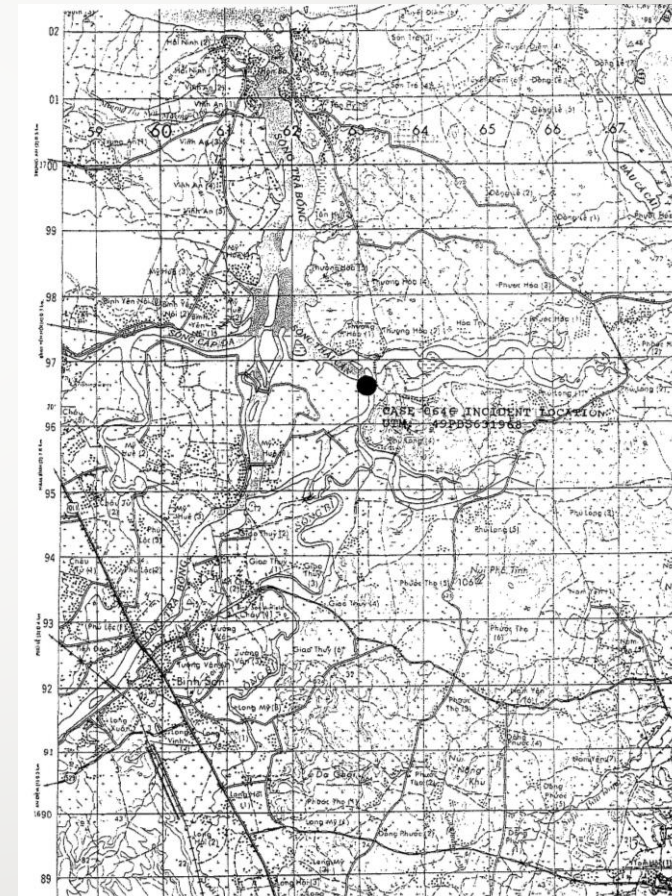


# Jeanie Hasenbeck's quest to find her brother Paul-- a lifelong effort carried out with skill & determination

MAP FROM JOINT TASK FORCE



MAP FROM JEANIE HASENBECK



# Paul Hasenbeck's personal items from his wallet on display at Hanoi War Museum

Paul A. Hasenbeck:

Was recovering from wounds  
from a previous mission

Volunteered for this mission

A recognized expert with the  
weapon he carried

Disappeared with three others,  
The Mangino Four

## Paul Hasenbeck Missouri MIA Still Unaccounted For



## His Personal Items on Display at the War Museum in Hanoi

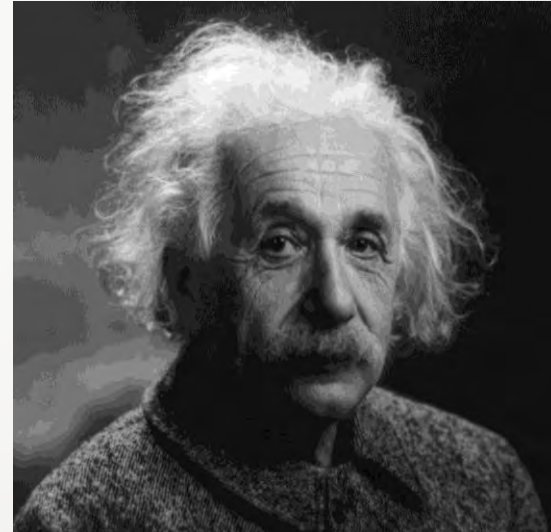




**Jeanie Hasenbeck, a force of nature in the hunt for her brother Paul, joined the Red Cross and went to Vietnam, made 50 trips to Washington, spent thousands in long distance phone calls, all while holding responsible jobs. The government stonewalled and delayed.**



BEFORE I MET JEANIE I LOOKED  
LIKE THIS



AFTER WORKING WITH JEANIE  
FOR A FEW MONTHS I FELT LIKE  
THIS

**Approximately how many U.S. soldiers were left behind/M.I.A. in Vietnam at the final evacuation?**



# **Two Cases Unaccounted for Freeburg, Osage County, Missouri**

**Bernie Plassmeyer**

Much is known about the  
circumstances of his loss.

Little to be gained by further  
exposure to risks of  
pursuing this case.

**Paul Hasenbeck**

Very little reliable  
information about his loss.

Much information likely  
held by Vietnam and U. S.  
Government agencies.

# **Bring Our Heroes Home Act**

A bill to provide for the creation of the Missing Armed Forces Personnel Records Collection at the National Archives, to require the expeditious public transmission to the Archivist and public disclosure of Missing Armed Forces Personnel records, and for other purposes.

S. 120 in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress

Under development for the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.



Donna D. Knox, Esq.  
Daughter of Lt. Hal Downes, USAF  
MIA January 13, 1952

Legislative & Policy Liaison  
Coalition of Families of Korean &  
Cold War POW/MIAs



"Those who have worked to gain the fullest possible accounting have run up against countless documents that remain classified. We don't know how many other relevant documents exist because there is no effective mandate that the government proactively search for and release that information. The BOHHA will require the Federal government to locate and produce relevant information, and to justify any claim that the information should remain classified. The Bill also creates an independent Review Board to enforce the declassification process. Without the BOHHA—and the Board's oversight—it is unlikely the public will gain access to the information it needs to pursue answers about American POW/MIAs."

# Action Requested

We invite all citizens, local officials, Members of the General Assembly, Statewide elected officers, and especially Members of Congress and the President of the United States to take action to pass the Bring Our Heroes Home Act so that vital information can be found by families of unaccounted for who seek it.



# **Family Impact of a Lost Soldier**

## **Plassmeyers and Hasenbecks of Freeburg, Missouri**

**POW-MIA RECOGNITION DAY**

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2019**

**Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital**

**Columbia, Missouri**

**Presented by**

**Norb Plassmeyer**

**An OsageSolutions, LLC production**

**Addendum 1: A Sister's Unhealed War Wound/Pentagon update on search for MIAs brings little comfort – SFGate**  
**Bill Wallace, Chronicle Staff Writer**  
**Published 4:00 am PST, Tuesday, January 21, 2003**





# Part 1

Ever since [Jeanie Hasenbeck](#)'s brother, Paul, disappeared in the jungles of Vietnam 35 years ago while on patrol with his squad of soldiers, her search for him has been a morass of uncertainty and frustration.

This past weekend, Hasenbeck joined some 160 other relatives of American GIs who have vanished in various wars dating back to 1941. The relatives went to a daylong meeting called by [Pentagon](#) officials to update the families on the government's search for MIAs.

Three and a half decades have passed, but Hasenbeck still does not know for sure what happened to Army Staff Sergeant Paul Hasenbeck, who vanished in Quang Ngai Province on April 21, 1967, with three comrades from the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, which was assigned to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade.

She said officials at the Pentagon have disputed reports from Vietnamese sources and U.S. intelligence services that her brother had been captured and moved to several different locations by troops who forced him and his companions to teach Viet Cong cadres to speak English. The CIA told her flatly it had no files on her brother at a time when she already had obtained several CIA documents from other sources.

## Part 2

Over the years, the Vietnamese government has released one contradictory account of her brother's fate after another -- all of which appeared to be designed to conceal the truth.

"It is hard to know exactly where to point the finger," said Hasenbeck, who lives in Daly City. "I feel that right now, (defense officials) are doing everything they can to locate everyone who is missing. But they haven't always been that way.

"There were many years when nothing was being done. I think they just hoped this issue would go away, but that didn't happen. These families (of the missing) organized and supported each other. I don't think they thought we would get together and compare notes, but we did."

Hasenbeck and the other relatives of missing U.S. military personnel met with [Department of Defense](#) officials on Saturday for a briefing on the Pentagon's Missing in Action (MIA) program. [Larry Greer](#), a Pentagon spokesman, told The Chronicle there are roughly 88, 000 GIs still missing in action from conflicts dating back to World War II. About 78,000 of them were lost during 1941-45, and the rest disappeared in Korea, the Cold War, Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf.



## Part 3

Over the years, the Vietnamese government has released one contradictory account of her brother's fate after another -- all of which appeared to be designed to conceal the truth.

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The 1,902 troops still missing in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are a major current focus of the program, Greer said. Under a recovery project code-named "Stony Beach," teams of [Defense Intelligence Agency](#) experts comb isolated areas of Southeast Asia looking for traces of missing soldiers, sailors and aviators.

# Part 4

The joint teams of 50 to 100 U.S. and Asian investigators spend as much as six months at a time in the field, interviewing villagers, reviewing local records and excavating possible burial sites, Greer said.

He said the work is difficult and dangerous. A helicopter containing 16 members of a Vietnamese-U.S. search team crashed on a mountain in Thahn Trach Province nine months ago, killing everyone aboard. "Many of these areas are remote, and some are located in places where there is unexploded ordnance or minefields," Greer said. Although much of the effort is aimed at recovering the remains of those who were killed in action, the group also investigates the recurrent claims that [U. S.](#) prisoners of war remain in custody in Southeast Asia.

"There have been credible reports from time to time," Greer said. "We have spent extensive man hours and time and money to insure that all those reports are fully investigated . . . Unfortunately, the answer still comes up zero."

Many MIA families are not satisfied. They believe Vietnamese officials have only pretended to cooperate in order to secure trade advantages and move toward normalization of postwar relations with the United States. They also believe, though the evidence is slim, that the Vietnamese may still be holding U.S. prisoners of war.

"Our expanded aid and trade with Vietnam has not opened Vietnam to democracy," said [Dolores Apodaca Alfond](#), president of the [National Alliance of Families](#) for the Return of America's Missing Servicemen, an MIA support organization headquartered in Seattle.

"Vietnam remains a closed society, oppressing its people and doling out POW/MIA information as it suits their needs," she said.



# Part 5

As the Hasenbeck case shows, not all the information Vietnam releases is reliable. Jeanie Hasenbeck said the Vietnamese government claims her brother was killed in an ambush in 1967, but various intelligence documents and physical evidence provided to her contradict this story. The Vietnamese government also claims that Hasenbeck and his three companions were buried, but has given conflicting locations for their graves and seems to be unable to find their bodies.

"We learned there was a museum in Hanoi that had 13 pieces of Paul's personal identification in it and all of them had his name, rank and unit," Jeanie Hasenbeck said. "The museum had everything marked from the province where he had disappeared.

"We find it really hard to believe that they (the North Vietnamese) took such meticulous care of all his paperwork, but could not keep track of where he was buried."

Hasenbeck said her brother may no longer be alive, but she believes the evidence suggests he survived for some time after his capture.

She says some new U.S. efforts -- tracking down 35-year-old maps of the area where he vanished for analysis, or using dogs that can sniff out long-buried human remains -- may help searchers locate her brother's body so he can receive a family burial in the United States.

In the meantime, she waits and hopes.

"It's a wound that never heals," she said. "On Saturday I went and thought it wasn't going to bother me after all these years. But it does . . . If he isn't still alive, there should be some way to mark that he was once on this earth."

# Addendum 2-Vietnam Site Investigation 2012

UNCLASSIFIED

Rec'd 17 Jan 2013

CASE 1660

PLASSMEYER, BERNARD H. - Y

R 070042Z NOV 12 ZYB  
FM CDR JPAC HICKAM AFB HI  
TO RUEHHI/AMEMBASSY HANOI  
INFO RHEFLGX/SAFE WASHINGTON DC  
RUETJIS/CSG JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
ZEN/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RUEKJCS/CDR USPACOM LO WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
BT

CONTROLS

UNCLAS

BODY

MSGID/GENADMIN/MIL-STD-6040(SERIES)/B.0.01.00/CDR JPAC HICKAM AFB HI  
SUBJ/DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OF CASE 1660//  
GENTEXT/REMARKS/SUBJ/DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OF CASE  
1660(SITE VM-01488) CONDUCTED DURING JOINT FIELD ACTIVITY 12-4VM (108TH  
JFA).

AKNLDG/COMMENTS IN THIS REPORT ARE BASED ON FIELD ANALYSIS AND ARE  
NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE FINAL ANALYTICAL CONCLUSIONS.

REF/A/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/021244Z JUN 94.  
REF/B/RMG/JCRC LIAISON BANGKOK TH/151126Z FEB 91.  
REF/C/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/052203Z AUG 94.  
REF/D/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/302037Z OCT 12.  
REF/E/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/022026Z NOV 12.  
REF/F/RMG/CDR JTF-FA HONOLULU HI/302025Z OCT 12.  
REF/G/DOC/1:50,000 SCALE MAP.  
REF/H/DOC/1:50,000 SCALE MAP.

NARR/REFERENCES:

- A. REF A IS THE DETAILED REPORT OF INVESTIGATION (DRI) OF CASE 1660 (VM 01488) CONDUCTED DURING JOINT FIELD ACTIVITY (JFA) 94-4VM (29TH JFA).
- B. REF B IS THE DRI OF CASE 1660 CONDUCTED DURING JFA 91-2VM (13TH JFA).
- C. REF C IS THE DETAILED REPORT OF EXCAVATION (DRE) OF CASE 1660 CONDUCTED DURING JFA 94-5VM (30TH JFA).
- D. REF D IS THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REPORT (AIR) 12 4 18 CONDUCTED DURING THE JFA 12-4VM (108TH JFA).

Reviewed by DPMO IAW US § 485 Note  
& DOD 5400.7-R  
Date: 16 NOV 2012 Initials: RW

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QC by: DPMO  
Date: 26 NOV 12  
Initials: LMR



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E. REF E IS THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REPORT (AIR) 12 4 20 CONDUCTED DURING THE JFA 12-4VM (108TH JFA).

F. REF F IS THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REPORT (AIR) 12 4 19 CONDUCTED DURING THE JFA 12-4VM (108TH JFA).

G. REF G IS VIETNAM MAP DATA: NAME: BAN KO; SHEET: E-48-65-C.

H. REF H IS MAP DATA: NAME: BAN KO; SHEET: 6441 III; SERIES: L7015; EDITION: 3-TPC, 1960.

RMKS/1.SUMMARY.

A. CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS: CASE 1660 INVOLVES THE 11 SEPTEMBER 1970 LOSS OF ONE U.S. MARINE PILOT OF THE NUMBER TWO AIRCRAFT IN A FLIGHT OF TWO A-4E ON A SUPPORT MISSION NEAR THE A SHAU VALLEY. ON THE FOURTH PASS, THE FLIGHT LEADER SAW SPARKS AND THEN A LONG TRAIL OF SPREADING FLAME THAT TERMINATED IN THE TARGET AREA. THE FLIGHT LEADER, TWO FORWARD AIR CONTROLLERS (FAC) AND HELICOPTER CREWS IN THE AREA SAW NEITHER AN EJECTION SEAT NOR A PARACHUTE. NO EMERGENCY BEEPER WAS HEARD. BOTH THE FAC AND THE FLIGHT LEADER WERE UNABLE TO RE-ESTABLISH RADIO CONTACT. THE PILOT IS STILL UNACCOUNTED FOR.

B. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION: ON 30 AUGUST 2012 DURING JFA 12 4VM (108TH JFA), INVESTIGATION TEAM ONE (IT1) RE-INTERVIEWED MR. NGUYEN VAN HUY, MR. HO VAN HONG, AND RE-SURVEYED ONE SITE REGARDING CASE 1660 IN HONG THAI VILLAGE, A LUOI DISTRICT, THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE, S.R.V. IT1 FOUND NON DIAGNOSTIC AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE STILL PRESENT INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED AREA.

C. POSSIBLE REMAINS/MATERIAL EVIDENCE/IDENTIFICATION (ID) MEDIA: IT1 DID NOT RECOVER OR RECEIVE ANY MATERIAL EVIDENCE, POSSIBLE REMAINS, OR ID MEDIA WHILE INVESTIGATING CASE 1660.

2. DETAILS OF INVESTIGATION.

A. PURPOSE:

(1) VIETNAMESE OFFICE FOR SEEKING MISSING PERSONS (VNOSMP) REQUIREMENT: LOCATE THE FOLLOWING WITNESSES AND ARRANGE FOR THEM TO MEET THE JOINT TEAM IN THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE.

(A) MESSRS. CO DAI (COOR DAIJ), HO VAN HONG (HOOF VAWN HOONGF) AND NGUYEN VAN HUY (NGUYEENX VAWN HUY), ALL RESIDENTS OF HONG THAI VILLAGE (XAX HOONGF THAIS), A LUOI DISTRICT (HUYEENJ A LWOIS), THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE (PARTIALLY ACCOMPLISHED, MR. CO DAI IS DECEASED; SEE PARA 2.D., BELOW).

(B) CANVAS LOCAL VILLAGES FOR WITNESSES, FARMERS OR LANDOWNERS THAT MAY HAVE INFORMATION REGARDING THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LOSS AND/OR DISPOSITION OF THE CREWMEMBER INVOLVED (ACCOMPLISHED, SEE PARA 2.D., BELOW).

(C) LOCATE THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED CRASH SITE (GRID COORDINATES [GC] 48Q YC 36944 91820 [TRIMBLE TRIMPAK]) IN HONG THAI VILLAGE (XAX HOONGF THAIS), A LUOI DISTRICT, THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE (ACCOMPLISHED, SEE PARA 4.A., BELOW).

(D) PROVIDE THE GC OF THE VEHICLE DISMOUNT POINT (VDP)

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IN WGS-84 TO THE JOINT TEAM LEADER PRIOR TO THE JOINT INVESTIGATION (NOT ACCOMPLISHED, IT1 FLEW TO SITE; SEE PARA 2.E., BELOW).

(E) PROVIDE THE GC OF THE WITNESSES LEAD LOCATION IN WGS-84 PRIOR TO THE JOINT INVESTIGATION (ACCOMPLISHED, SEE PARA 2.E., BELOW).

(2) IT1 REQUIREMENTS:

(A) RE-INTERVIEW MR. CO DAI (COOR DAI) AND MR. HO VAN HONG (HOF VAWN HOONGF) RESIDENTS OF HONG THAI VILLAGE (XAX HOONGF THAIS), A LUOI DISTRICT, THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE, REGARDING THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF ANY CRASH SITE, BURIAL, REMAINS OF PERSONAL EFFECTS THAT INVOLVES ANY U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS (PARTIALLY ACCOMPLISHED, MR. CO DAI IS DECEASED SEE PARA 2.D., BELOW).

(B) RE-INTERVIEW MR. NGUYEN VAN HUY (NGUYEENX VAWN HUY), RESIDENT OF HONG THAI VILLAGE (XAX HOONGF THAIS), A LUOI DISTRICT (HUYEENJ A LWOIS), THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE, REGARDING HIS KNOWLEDGE OF ANY CRASH SITE, BURIAL, REMAINS OR PERSONAL EFFECTS THAT INVOLVES ANY U.S. SERVICE MEMBERS (ACCOMPLISHED, SEE PARA 2.D., BELOW).

(C) RE-SURVEY THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED CRASH SITE IN HONG THAI VILLAGE (XAX HOONGF THAIS), A LUOI DISTRICT (HUYEENJ A LWOIS), THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE, FOR EVIDENCE OF AIRCRAFT DEBRIS, LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT, REMAINS OR PERSONAL EFFECTS. EXPAND THE SURVEY FROM THE OUTER BOUNDARY OF THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED CRASH CRATER 50 METERS IN EACH CARDINAL DIRECTION (NOT ACCOMPLISHED, ONLY COMPLETED 30 METERS IN EACH CARDINAL DIRECTION; SEE PARA 4.A., BELOW).

B. ON 29 AUGUST 2012, IT1 ARRIVED IN HUE CITY TO INVESTIGATE CASE 1660 IN THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE.

C. TEAM COMPOSITION:

(1) U.S. CONTINGENT:

(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (A) [REDACTED] JPAC, TEAM LEADER/LINGUIST.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (B) [REDACTED] JPAC, SURVEY ANTHROPOLOGIST.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (C) [REDACTED] JPAC, ASSISTANT TEAM LEADER/LINGUIST/INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (D) [REDACTED] JPAC, SENIOR ANALYST/INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (E) [REDACTED] JPAC, INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (F) [REDACTED] JPAC, INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (G) [REDACTED] JPAC, LEAD INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (H) [REDACTED] JPAC, INVESTIGATOR.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (I) [REDACTED] JPAC, MEDIC.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (J) [REDACTED] JPAC, EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL (EOD) TECHNICIAN.  
(b)(3):(b)(3)+(b)(6) (K) [REDACTED] JPAC, LIFE SUPPORT INVESTIGATOR (LSI).

(2) VNOSMP CONTINGENT:

(A) MR. NGUYEN HONG CHIEN (NGUYEENX HOONGF CHIEENS), TEAM LEADER.

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(B) MR. DANG LE HOANG (DAWNGJ LEE HOANGF), TEAM MEMBER.  
(C) MS. LE THU HA (LEE THU HAF), TEAM MEMBER.  
(D) MR. TONG NGOC KHANH (TOONGS NGOCJ KHANH), TEAM MEMBER.

(E) MR. NGUYEN NGOC MINH (NGUYEENX NGOCJ MINH), TEAM MEMBER.

(F) MR. CAO XUAN THANH (CAO XUAAN THANH), TEAM MEMBER.

(3) THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CONTINGENT:

(A) MR. NGUYEN LE NHIEEN (NGUYEENX LEE NHIEEN HWONG), TEAM LEADER.

(B) MR. TRINH NGOC THAI (TRINHJ NGOCJ THAIS), TEAM MEMBER.

(C) MR. LE DINH THANH (LEE DINHF THANH), TEAM MEMBER.

(D) MR. NGUYEN TRUNG MINH (NGUYEENX TRUNG MINH), TEAM MEMBER.

(E) MR. HO SY TOAN (HOOF SYX TOANF), TEAM MEMBER

(4) A LUOI DISTRICT PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CONTINGENT:

(A) MR. HO THIN (HOOF THINF), TEAM LEADER.

(B) MR. HO VAN ZON (HOOF VAWN ZON), TEAM MEMBER.

(5) HONG THAI VILLAGE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CONTINGENT: MR. NGUYEN VAN HUY (NGUYEENX VAWN HUY), TEAM LEADER.

D. ON 29 AUGUST 2012, IT1 MET WITH THE VNOSMP CONTINGENT AT THE INDOCHINE PALACE BEST WESTERN HOTEL IN HUE CITY TO DISCUSS THE INVESTIGATION PLAN. THE VNOSMP TEAM LEADER INFORMED IT1 THAT THEY LOCATED TWO OF THE REQUESTED WITNESSES, MR. HO VAN HONG AND MR. NGUYEN VAN HUY, WHO WOULD BE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW AT THE SITE. THE VNOSMP TEAM LEADER ALSO INFORMED IT1 THAT MR. CO DAI, IS DECEASED. THE VNOSMP TEAM LEADER PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING CONFIRMATION LETTER:

((BEGIN TRANSLATION))

I AM NGUYEN HONG CHIEN (NGUYEENX HOONGF CHIEENS), THE VIETNAM IT (INVESTIGATION TEAM) TEAM LEADER DURING 108TH JFA, CONFIRMING THE WITNESSES SITUATION OF CASE 1660 AS FOLLOWS:

OF THE THREE REQUESTED WITNESSES, THE VIETNAM IT ADVANCE TEAM MET TWO. WITNESS CO DAI (COOS DAIJ) IS DEAD, SO ((THE TEAM)) WAS UNABLE TO CONDUCT THE INTERVIEW DURING THIS JFA.

THEREFORE, THE VIETNAM ((IT)) TEAM RECOMMENDS THE U.S. TEAM TO REMOVE MR. CO DAI FROM ANY FUTURE INVESTIGATION.

HUE, 29 AUGUST 2012

/SIGNED/

NGUYEN HONG CHIEN

((END TRANSLATION))

E. ON 30 AUGUST 2012, IT1 DEPARTED THE INDOCHINE PALACE BEST WESTERN HOTEL IN HUE CITY AND DROVE SOUTH ON NATIONAL HIGHWAY ONE FOR APPROXIMATELY 20 MINUTES TO THE PHU BAI HELIPORT (LZ) (48Q YC 88370 14860). IT1 THEN FLEW SOUTHWEST FOR APPROXIMATELY 30 MINUTES

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TO A LZ (48Q YC 36652 92170). FROM THE LZ, THE VNOSMP LED IT1 ON FOOT SOUTH TO THE SITE FOR APPROXIMATELY THREE MINUTES (48Q YC 36578 92106). UPON ARRIVAL, IT1 RE-INTERVIEWED THE WITNESSES AND OBTAINED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

(1) MR. NGUYEN VAN HUY (NGUYEENX VAWN HUY).

(A) AGE: 51 (BORN: 1961).

(B) CURRENT RESIDENCE AND LENGTH OF TIME THERE: HONG THAI VILLAGE (XAX HOONGF THAIS), A LUOI DISTRICT (HUYEENJ A LWOIS) THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE; LIFELONG RESIDENT (LLR).

(C) OCCUPATION: VILLAGE CHAIRMAN.

(D) LOCATION AT TIME OF INCIDENT: HONG THAI VILLAGE.

(E) OCCUPATION AT TIME OF INCIDENT: CHILD.

(F) BACKGROUND: SECOND JOINT INTERVIEW, (REF A).

(G) STATEMENT:

((1)) WHILE HUNTING, ON AN UNRECALLED DATE IN 1973, MR. HUY FOUND THE CRASH SITE. HE SAW THE COCKPIT AND OTHER PIECES OF THE AIRCRAFT. MR. HUY SAW THE ENTIRE AIRCRAFT IN A 20 TO 30 METER RADIUS AROUND THE IMPACT CRATER.

((2)) LOCALS HAVE BEEN SCAVENGING AT THE SITE FROM 1985 UNTIL 1994 WHEN THE U.S. EXCAVATION TEAM ARRIVED. MR. HUY WAS ONE OF THE WORKERS DURING THE EXCAVATION; THE U.S. TEAM EXCAVATED THE IMPACT CRATER AND SOME OF THE AREA AROUND IT. IN 1995, AFTER THE EXCAVATION TEAM LEFT, A SCAVENGER MR. TRAN VAN VINH (TRAANF VAWN VINH), WHO IS DECEASED, FOUND A GOLD RING, STAMPED WITH 14K INSIDE OF THE RING, IN THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED IMPACT CRATER.

((3)) MR. HUY DESCRIBED THE PRESENT SIZE OF THE CRATER IS DUE TO YEARS OF EXPANSION BY MANY SCAVENGERS AFTER THE U.S. TEAM DEPARTED. THEY WENT TO THE SITE TO SCAVENGE FOR COPPER AND METAL. THE SCAVENGERS FOUND A VISOR HELMET (NFI). ALL OF THE MATERIALS AND ITEMS RECOVERED WERE SOLD TO UNRECALLED BUYERS. TO MR. HUYS KNOWLEDGE, NO ONE FOUND ANY REMAINS.

((4)) MR. HUY HAS INFORMATION INVOLVING TWO OTHER AIRCRAFT CRASH SITES (REFS D AND E).

((5)) OTHER THAN THE INFORMATION REPORTED ABOVE, MR. HUY HAD NO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION INVOLVING UNACCOUNTED-FOR AMERICANS, PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMPS, AIRCRAFT CRASH SITES, AMERICAN BURIAL SITES, OR AMERICANS WHO REMAINED IN VIETNAM AFTER 1975.

(2) MR. HO VAN HONG (HOOF VAWN HOONGF).

(A) AGE: 68 (BORN: 1944).

(B) CURRENT RESIDENCE AND LENGTH OF TIME THERE: HONG THAI VILLAGE, A LUOI DISTRICT, THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE; LLR.

(C) OCCUPATION: RETIRED.

(D) LOCATION AT TIME OF INCIDENT: HONG THAI VILLAGE.

(E) OCCUPATION AT TIME OF INCIDENT: MILITARY.

(F) BACKGROUND: SECOND JOINT INTERVIEW.

(G) STATEMENT:

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((1)) FROM 1964 TO 1973 MR. HONG WAS A SOLDIER AT TROOP STATION 304 AND IN 1973 HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO REGIMENT 1304, BOTH UNITS WERE STATIONED IN THE HONG THAI AREA. IN 1973 ON AN UNRECALLED DATE, MR. HONG HEARD FROM OTHER SOLDIERS THAT AN AIRCRAFT CRASH SITE WAS IN THE AREA. UPON HEARING THIS INFORMATION HE AND FOUR OTHER SOLDIERS, WHO ARE ALL DECEASED, WENT TO INVESTIGATE THE AREA LOOKING FOR ANY KIND OF MUNITIONS THEY COULD SALVAGE. WHEN MR. HONG ARRIVED AT THE CRASH SITE, HE SAW A WHITE AIRCRAFT (NFI) IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OF THE IMPACT CRATER. HE LOOKED AROUND AND SPOTTED MANY INTACT PORTIONS OF THE AIRCRAFT INCLUDING THE COCKPIT AND THE TAIL SECTION. NEITHER HE NOR ANY OF THE FOUR SOLDIERS WITH HIM TOOK ANYTHING FROM THE SITE.

((2)) MR. HONG KNOWS OF ONE OTHER CRASH SITE (REF F).

((3)) OTHER THAN THE INFORMATION REPORTED ABOVE, MR. HONG HAD NO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION INVOLVING UNACCOUNTED-FOR AMERICANS, PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS, AIRCRAFT CRASH SITES, AMERICAN BURIAL SITES, OR AMERICANS WHO REMAINED IN VIETNAM AFTER 1975.

F. FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEWS IT1 ESTABLISHED THE SITE DATUM BY PAINTING THE NORTH SIDE OF A MEDIUM SIZED TREE BORDERING THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE CRATER WITH "JFA 108 IT" (48Q YC 36578 92106). AT THE SITE, IT1 CONDUCTED A PEDESTRIAN AND SUBSURFACE SURVEY OF A 60-X-60-METER AREA USING ONE EXCALIBUR II METAL DETECTOR. IT1 FOUND ONLY NON DIAGNOSTIC AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE WHILE SURVEYING THE SITE.

3. MATERIAL EVIDENCE:

A. RETAINED BY JPAC: NONE.

B. PHOTOGRAPHED AND LEFT IN PLACE: NON-DIAGNOSTIC AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE.

C. POSSIBLE REMAINS: NONE.

4. SITE SURVEY RESULTS:

A. SITE-RELATED INFORMATION:

(1) GEOPOLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS: HONG THAI VILLAGE, A LUOI DISTRICT, THUA THIEN-HUE PROVINCE, S.R.V.

(2) CARIS SITE NUMBER: VM-01488.

(3) MILITARY GRID REFERENCE SYSTEM (MGRS) GRID COORDINATES:

(A) IT1 OBTAINED ALL COORDINATES USING A GARMIN GPSMAP 60CSX GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM (GPS) RECEIVER, USING THE WGS-84 MAPPING DATUM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

(B) DATUM POINT: 48Q YC 36578 92106 (9 SATELLITES, +/- 5 METERS OF ERROR, AND 850 METERS OF ELEVATION).

(C) MAP GRID COORDINATES: 48Q YC 366 921.

(4) MAP SHEET DATA:

(A) VIETNAM MAP: REF D.

(B) U.S. WAR-TIME MAP: REF E.

(5) LANDOWNER, LAND RESIDENT, OR TENANT: MANAGED BY A LUOI DISTRICT.

B. SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONSIDERATIONS:

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- (1) SITE TYPE: CRASH SITE.
- (2) SITE SIZE: 60-X-60 METERS.
- (3) LANDFORM AND TOPOGRAPHIC SETTING: THE SITE IS ON THE SOUTH SIDE FACE OF BAR SON HILL (TELEX). THE SITE HAS ABOUT A 25 DEGREE SLOPE; IT IS IN DOUBLE CANOPY JUNGLE CONSISTING OF A SPARSE UNDERBRUSH AND SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZE TREES. SOUTH OF THE SITE THE HILL DROPS INTO A RAVINE. TO THE NORTH OF THE HILL IS A RIVER THAT FLOWS FROM NORTH TO WEST AROUND THE HILL ABOUT ONE KILOMETER AWAY. TO THE EAST AND WEST, THERE ARE OTHER HILLS THAT FOLLOW A RIDGE OUT FROM THE SITE.
- \* (4) SITE DISTURBANCE AND LAND USE HISTORY: SINCE THE EXCAVATION (REF C), METAL SCAVENGERS HAVE DOUBLED THE ORIGINAL SIZE OF THE CRASH CRATER THROUGH THEIR CONTINUED DIGGING.
- \* (5) SURFACE MATERIAL EVIDENCE: NON-DIAGNOSTIC AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE.
- (6) INCIDENT-RELATED SURFACE FEATURES: NONE.
- (7) SOIL TYPES: LEAFY JUNGLE HUMUS WITH UNDERLYING BROWN CLAY WITH SMALL ROCK INCLUSIONS.
- (8) RECOMMENDED SCREENING SYSTEM: DRY.
- (9) MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATION: NONE.
- (10) UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO) OBSERVED OR REPORTED: NONE.
- (11) SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: MEDIUM-SIZE TRACK BACKHOE.
- C. LOGISTICAL AND OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:
  - (1) SITE ACCESSIBILITY: THE SITE IS ACCESSIBLE VIA A 30 MINUTE FLIGHT SOUTHWEST FROM PHU BAI HELIPORT (48Q YC 88322 14935), FOLLOWED BY A THREE MINUTE WALK SOUTH.
  - (2) DISTANCE TO THE NEAREST ROAD: SEVEN KILOMETERS.
  - (3) NEAREST POPULATED AREA:
    - (A) NAME: HONG THAI VILLAGE (XAX HOONGF THAIS).
    - (B) DISTANCE FROM SITE: SEVEN KILOMETERS.
    - (C) ESTIMATED AVAILABLE LABORERS: AVAILABLE.
  - (4) LANDING ZONE RECOMMENDATION:
    - (A) LOCATION: 48Q YC 36652 92170.
    - (B) DISTANCE TO SITE: 100 METERS.
  - (5) BASE CAMP RECOMMENDATION:
    - (A) LOCATION: 48Q YC 36652 92170.
    - (B) DISTANCE TO SITE: 100 METERS.
  - (6) WATER SOURCE: THE SONG (VIETNAMESE WORD FOR RIVER) A SAP (SOONG A SAPS) LOCATED ONE KILOMETER EAST OF THE SITE.
  - (7) HOTEL AVAILABILITY:
    - (A) LOCATION: HUE CITY (ASKED LINGUIST AND THIS IS THE ANSWER THAT WAS GIVEN).
    - (B) ROOMS AVAILABLE: 100 PLUS.
5. PERTINENT LOCATION OR DATA CHANGES: NONE.
- \* 6. ANALYST COMMENTS:
  - A. ALTHOUGH A TEAM EXCAVATED THIS CRASH SITE (REF C), THE SITE

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SURVEY COMPLETED DURING THIS JFA SHOWED THAT THERE WERE ADDITIONAL NON-DIAGNOSTIC PIECES OF WRECKAGE STILL PRESENT INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED AREA. EVEN THOUGH THIS WRECKAGE WAS NON-DIAGNOSTIC, IT STILL ILLUSTRATES THAT A LARGER BOUNDARY AROUND THE PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED AREA SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR EXCAVATION TO RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ANY REMAINS OR MATERIAL EVIDENCE BEING PRESENT.

B. THE CRASH CRATER IS TWICE AS WIDE AS IT WAS DURING THE EXCAVATION IN 1994 AND THERE ARE TWO CRATERS THAT WERE NOT ANNOTATED ON THE SITE SKETCH FROM THE PREVIOUS EXCAVATION (REF C). HOWEVER, THE WITNESS WAS ADAMANT IN HIS IDENTIFICATION OF THE LOCATION. WITH THE WITNESS AT THE SITE CLEARLY IDENTIFYING THE LOCATION AND WORKING AS PART OF THE EXCAVATION, THIS WAS INDENTIFIED AS THE PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED SITE.

C. DUE TO THE PASSAGE OF TIME, MR. HONG DID NOT REMEMBER BEING INTERVIEWED BEFORE ABOUT THIS SITE, BUT ACCORDING TO A DRI FROM THE 13TH JFA JPAC RECORDS INDICATE THAT MR. HONG WAS INTERVIEWED BEFORE (REF B). DURING THIS JFA MR. HONGS INFORMATION DOES CORRELATE WITH SOME OF THE INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM MR. HUYS INTERVIEW. MR. HONG WOULD NOT HELP ANY FUTURE INVESTIGATION OF CASE 1660 BECAUSE HIS RECOLLECTION OF THE EVENTS PERTAINING TO THE CASE IS VAGUE.

7. LIFE SUPPORT INVESTIGATOR COMMENTS: NO LIFE SUPPORT ITEMS RECOVERED OR OBSERVED DURING THIS INVESTIGATION. THE LSI COULD NOT CORRELATE THE AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE PHOTOGRAPHED AND LEFT IN PLACE TO A SPECIFIC AIRCRAFT TYPE OR CASE. THE LSI SECTION WILL CONDUCT FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHED ITEMS AT JPAC-CIL.

8. EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL TECHNICIAN COMMENTS: NO UXO OBSERVED OR DETECTED THROUGHOUT THE SURVEYED AREAS.

9. ANTHROPOLOGIST COMMENTS:

A. THE VNOSMP IT1 ADVANCE TEAM CLEARED APPROXIMATELY 30 METERS IN EACH CARDINAL DIRECTION OF THE WITNESS IDENTIFIED IMPACT CRATER AND IT1 CONDUCTED A PEDESTRIAN AND METAL DETECTOR SURVEY FINDING UNIDENTIFIABLE PIECES OF AIRCRAFT WRECKAGE. IT1 ADDITIONALLY CLEARED FOUR 15-X-2 METER SAMPLING TRANSECTS IN THE FOUR CARDINAL DIRECTIONS FROM THESE CLEARED BOUNDARIES, FINDING ONLY BOMB FRAGMENTATION. IT CANNOT BE DETERMINED IF IT1 WAS IN THE RIGHT LOCATION FROM THE PREVIOUS TERRAIN AND EXCAVATION PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE 30TH JFA AS WELL AS THE SITE SKETCH IN COMPARISON TO TODAY. THE SITE SKETCH WAS VERY VAGUE WITH NO DOCUMENTATION OF WHICH GRID UNIT YIELDED MATERIAL EVIDENCE AND LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT. THE AREA 24 METERS NORTHWEST OF THE 30TH JFA DATUM (REF C) TO WHERE BOOT FRAGMENTS WERE FOUND ON THE SURFACE WAS NOT EXCAVATED. THERE WAS NO DESCRIPTION OF A 12 METER IN DIAMETER BOMB CRATER FIVE METERS NORTH OF THE IMPACT CRATER FROM THE 30TH JFA DRI (REF C). NONE OF THE PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE 30TH JFA EXCAVATION ILLUSTRATE THIS. MR. HUY

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WAS ADAMANT THAT IT1 WAS SURVEYING THE CORRECT LOCATION DESPITE THE OBSERVATIONS NOTED ABOVE. POST 30TH JFA SCAVENGING IS NOTED IN AND AROUND THE CRATER AS THE CRATER NOW IS MUCH LARGER THAN THE PREVIOUS EXCAVATION CRATER. MR. HUY CONFIRMS THIS.

B. A COMPARISON OF WARTIME IMAGERY WITH IMAGERY OF THE SURVEYED AREA MAY ASSIST IN DETERMINING IF THE IT1 WAS IN THE RIGHT LOCATION. IF THAT IS THE CASE THEN THIS CASE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR RE-EXCAVATION.

C. SHOULD JPAC APPROVE THIS LOCATION FOR EXCAVATION, THE JOINT ADVANCE WORK (JAW) WILL REQUIRE A RECOVERY LEADER TO SUPERVISE CLEARING OF AT LEAST 40 METERS IN EACH OF THE CARDINAL DIRECTIONS OF THE IMPACT CRATER. THE JAW TEAM WILL NEED TO ESTABLISH THE BASE CAMP, SCREENING STATIONS, AND BREAK AREAS. A SYSTEMATIC BLOCK GRID EXCAVATION SHOULD BE CONDUCTED TO EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY HUMAN REMAINS AND ADDITIONAL LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT BEING PRESENT ON SITE. A MEDIUM-SIZED TRACK BACKHOE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR EXCAVATING THE IMPACT CRATER.

10. TEAM LEADER COMMENTS.

A. CONCUR WITH ANALYST AND ANTHROPOLOGIST COMMENTS IN PARAGRAPHS 6 AND 9 ABOVE.

B. HOST GOVERNMENT COOPERATION/SUPPORT WAS GOOD AT ALL LEVELS.

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#0121

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# Addendum 3

## **Missouri Senate Joint Resolution 39-Senator Mike Bernskoetter Urges Missouri Congressional delegation to support the BRING OUR HEROES HOME ACT**

Whereas, federal statutes and multiple presidential executive orders have called for the declassification of records relating to POWs and MIAs, but such mandates have been limited in scope, lacked enforcement mechanisms, and included broad exceptions that have been routinely cited by federal agencies as justification for continued classification of documents; and

Whereas, all government agencies should be directed by Congress and the Executive Branch of the United States to identify, locate, review, and declassify this vital information, subject to reasonable standards and limitations; and

Whereas, declassification and availability of these records would allow families of the missing and others in the private sector to conduct research, gain relevant information, and, thereby, hold the federal government accountable; and

Whereas, the governments of Vietnam and the Republic of Korea are now offering increased support to the United States POW/MIA recovery efforts, and diplomatic efforts with other involved countries continue; and

Whereas, the "Bring Our Heroes Home Act", which will be introduced in the United States Senate, sets forth an integrated process for comprehensive declassification of records pertaining to missing Armed Forces personnel records, subject to legitimate limitations and exceptions



# Addendum 4

## A Memorial Day Remembrance for Bernie, Who Was Lost in Vietnam



Marine 1st Lt. Bernard Plassmeyer on a flightline in Vietnam in April 1970. He went missing that September. (Photo courtesy of Norb Plassmeyer)

27 May 2019

Military.com | By [Richard Sisk](#)

My friend Bernie went missing on a 1970 bombing run in Vietnam. Every Memorial Day since has come as a reminder of the void he left in the lives of those he served with, his family and all who knew him.

[Marine](#) 1st Lt. Bernard Herbert Plassmeyer, of Freeburg, Missouri, was flying an A-4 Skyhawk on a night mission for Marine Attack Squadron 311 (VMF-311) that took him over the A Shau valley in September 1970.

He came from a farm family in Osage County. He was 25 years old and days away from



becoming a father. We had trained together as young lieutenants at The Basic School in [Quantico](#), Virginia, in 1967.



Marine 1st Lt. Bernard Plassmeyer went missing while flying an A-4 Skyhawk on a night mission for Marine Attack Squadron 311 over Vietnam's A Shau valley in September 1970. He was later declared presumed dead and promoted posthumously to captain. Photo courtesy of Norb Plassmeyer

The A Shau was the true heart of darkness for those of us who were on the ground. It was the place of no answers, and that was the case with Bernie.

His A4 went down that night. There were reports years later that there had been ground fire, but it was unclear. Search teams eventually found the crash site, but there was no trace of him.

Norb Plassmeyer, Bernie's older brother, shared a letter Wednesday that had come to him from Sgt. Greg Cain, the one they called "Speed Brakes," who serviced VMF-311's aircraft and suited up Bernie for his last flight.

Cain's missive was written in the form of a letter to Bernie, and it accurately described the guy we had known.

"This is Speed Brakes [the nickname you and Lt. Sloan hung on me in Da Nang]. Chatting with you one day, I found out your wife was expecting your first child. My wife was also expecting, and this kind of formed a common bond with us," the letter begins. "I was always impressed with your consideration of the enlisted men in the squadron because, every time you came into the flight equipment shop to suit up, you always took a minute to ask me about my wife."

Cain said he was with Bernie when he "came in to suit up for the fatal flight." When he learned that his lieutenant was missing, "I dropped to my knees and prayed for you and your wife and unborn child," the letter states.

Cain also prayed that Bernie's son would come to read the letter "and hear from one of your men that you were a great man. You spoke to me shortly before your flight and as always asked about my wife and told me your wife was getting very close."

Bernie's son was born in late September 1970. He would be named "Bernard."

#### Vigil in a Church Cemetery

Norb Plassmeyer, who served a term in the Missouri House of Representatives, said he will go again on Memorial Day to his brother's gravesite in the small cemetery of St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Westphalia, Missouri. "There's a little Memorial Day ceremony there. That's how we commemorate this," he said.

There's just the headstone for Bernie next to those of their parents, Norb said. "There are no remains. On the basis of the conversations I've had, there is no prospect of recovering remains."

When Bernie's plane went down, the family learned of it from the [Marine Corps](#) and a telegram, Norb said. There was another older Plassmeyer brother, Martin, a [West Point](#) graduate who had served a tour in Vietnam and was then based at the Pentagon.

He had access to the casualty center, "but there wasn't a whole lot of information," Norb said.

According to a VMF-311 history, Bernie's A-4 and other aircraft had been scrambled on a mission to support units of the [Army's](#) 101st Airborne Division.

"Two A-4s arrived over the target and commenced their runs. The flight leader finished his pass and watched as Lieutenant Plassmeyer went into his dive. As the lieutenant was passing at approximately 1,500 feet, the leader saw some 'sparks' and then a long trail of flame impact in the target area," the history states.

Norb said he later met in Washington, D.C., with Bernie's commander and the flight leader. He said they were convinced, based on the evidence that could be found, that Bernie had not survived the mission.



Norb said he has come to accept their conclusions but his mother, who died a few years after the crash, never did. For a long time, neither did Bernie's wife, Carol, he said. She would later remarry and have a career in nursing. Their son, who also goes by "Bernie," has done well in advertising, according to Norb.

Is it hard to accept that he's gone? "Well. It was really difficult to accept the prospect of him being held captive," Norb said. There's little alternative but to believe what the commander and the flight leader told him. As for searches, "that's pretty much been done to the point of exhaustion," he said.



Marine 1st Lt. Bernard Plassmeyer on a flight line in Vietnam in April 1970. He went missing that September. Photo courtesy of Norb Plassmeyer

In 1976, Bernie's status was changed from missing in action to unaccounted for and presumed dead. He was posthumously promoted to captain.

Bernie's name is in the current listings of "unaccounted for from the Vietnam War" kept by the Pentagon's Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency. It lists the "incident" for him as occurring on Sept. 9, 1970. There's a double "X" under the heading for status. The footnote says that double "X" means "Presumptive finding of death."

Bernie's name is also on Panel 7W, Row 57 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall and on a small monument that went up in 2017 for the 50 who never came home from TBS 6/67 -- those who began training at The Basic School in Quantico in June 1967. Norb was at the unveiling.

Forty-three from the class were killed in action in Vietnam, and others died in training accidents while preparing to go. Also listed was Col. William R. "Rich" Higgins, a member of TBS 6/67. He was kidnapped and assassinated by gunmen in Lebanon while serving as a United Nations military observer in 1988.

In addition to class members who were killed, more than 200 were wounded, a casualty rate of more than 50 percent and the highest of any Marine officer class during Vietnam.

I was one of Bernie's 498 classmates in TBS 6/67. I was from Brooklyn, and Bernie was from somewhere in what I then viewed as the Great Beyond that existed on the other side of the Hudson.

Once, I asked, "Hey Bernie, where you from?" He said Freeburg, Missouri. "Where's that?" He began to tell me about Freeburg. "Nah," I said. "Where's Missouri?" Bernie got a kick out of that.

We all knew we were going to Vietnam. Most of us were slated for the infantry and would arrive in country in late 1967. Bernie and others going to flight or artillery school would arrive later.

Those going to flight school thought that the infantry types were nuts. We thought that the "zoomies," as we called them, were nuts. Bernie got a kick out of being called a "zoomie" too.

Norb sent us photos of Bernie a while back. One showed him leaning on a jeep as a bunch of curious Vietnamese kids milled about in the foreground. He has the half-smile that we knew so well. It was the one he would have back in Quantico when the rest of us were doing something amazingly stupid.

The smile wasn't judgmental. It seemed to say, "Isn't that interesting?" To say we loved him would be the half of it.

-- *Richard Sisk served with 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, in Vietnam in 1967-68. He can be reached at [Richard.Sisk@Military.com](mailto:Richard.Sisk@Military.com).*

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