

ANOTHER SOLDIER COMES HOME



The remains of an Illinois soldier, missing since 1969, is coming home.

The remains of an airman listed as "missing in action" during the Vietnam War have been recovered. Officials with the U.S. Department of Defense confirmed the remains of Pfc. Kenneth Leroy Cunningham of Ellery, Illinois. He had been missing since Oct. 3, 1969.

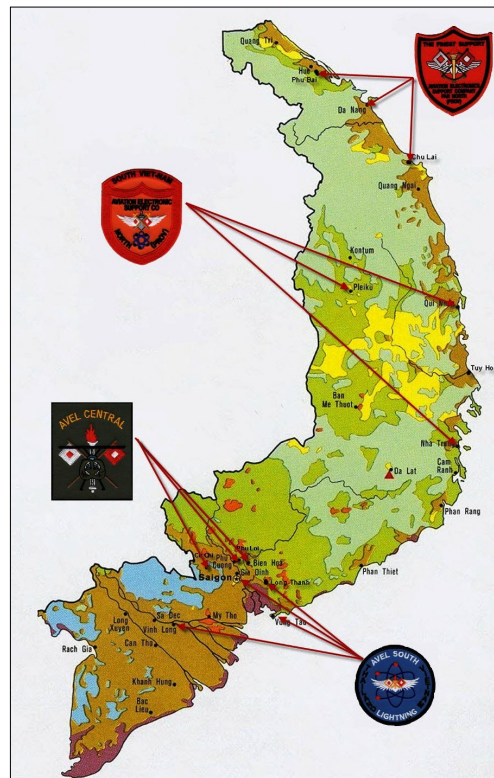
Cunningham's remains were flown back to the United States, arriving at the airport in Louisville, Kentucky on January 19th. His remains were escorted back to Albion, Illinois for funeral services and burial at the Little Prairie Christian Church on January 21st.

On October 3rd, 1969, First Lt. Paul L. Graffe, a pilot, and Cunningham departed from Phu Hiep, South Vietnam during the early evening for a nighttime surveillance mission of targets located in the tri-border area of Cambodia, Laos and South Vietnam. The aircraft, an OV1C Mohawk plane, was equipped with surveillance equipment, but was not armed. The aircraft failed to return at its scheduled time. Two days later, search-and-rescue aircraft located the wreckage of an aircraft atop a 7,000-foot peak in a mountain range north of the city of Kontum. The wreckage was positively identified as that of Graffe and Cunningham's aircraft. Efforts were made to insert a ground team at the site on Oct. 5 and Oct. 6, but bad weather prevented the mission. A later effort was scrubbed for fear that enemy troops had a set a trap at the crash site.

Dave Cunningham of Fairfield, Illinois was 12 when his brother's plane went missing.

"The news is sort of bittersweet," Dave said. "We now know that he died at the crash site and not in a concentration camp. What we still don't know is if his plane was shot down. It was very foggy and rainy the night his plane disappeared. They may have just flown into the side of the mountain. What we know now closes a chapter, but not the book."

"I still remember the last thing that Kenneth asked me to do at the airport before he left for Vietnam," Dave said. "He asked me to take care of mom and dad." Cunningham's father, Arthur Neal Cunningham died in 1988. His mother, Margaret Cunningham, died in April of last year at the age of 96. "Mom never gave up hope."



Viet Court - Sad but True

Vietnam, 1 December 2015: Vietnamese Court Sentences Seven For Ripping Off Relatives Of MIA ARVN and NVA/VC Soldiers And Digging Fake Graves

A Vietnam National has been systematically extracting money from the families of Missing in Action (MIA) soldiers, on the pretext of locating the remains of their loved ones.

The families obtained money from the bank's fund to pay the sums requested by fifty-six-year-old Nguyen Van Thuy, a man who claimed to have supernatural powers that would enable him to locate the remains of their relatives.

Thuy and his family secretly desecrated the graves of over 70 unknown soldiers and removed the remains, including military helmets and other personal belongings. They dug new graves and placed the items inside, marking them with the names of the people whose families had paid him. Thuy fooled 12 families in all, fraudulently netting a total of \$363,000.00.

A total of seven people, including Thuy's wife, were involved in the deception, and all were sentenced to imprisonment in October 2015. The sentences varied from five years to life in prison for what the trial judge called a very serious crime, one that hurt the families of the soldiers killed in action and "the nation as a whole."



Australian Vietnam veteran makes emotional journey to return belongings to the family of a soldier he shot and killed.

After years of searching, an Australian Vietnam veteran has tracked down the family of a Vietnamese soldier he shot and killed, to return belongings taken from the dead body. West Australian man Ian Williamson never chose to go to war. When he was just 20 years old he was called up to serve his country and went on to spend eight months in Vietnam. There he fought in Operation Overlord, a two-week battle in Phuoc Tuy 35 kilometers south-east of Saigon.

Now Mr. Williamson, with the support of his daughter Amanda, herself a lieutenant colonel in the Australian Army, has returned to Vietnam to put the past to rest and to confront a four-decade-old burden that has sat on his shoulders since June 13, 1971.

On that day in 1971, the then-Private Williamson took a Vietnamese soldier's life, in a moment that saved his own but has shadowed his thoughts every day since. "I saw movement in the trees in front of me about 30 meters away. I stopped and watched and I took aim, the object kept moving and when it cleared the bushes in the jungle about 20 meters in front of me, I identified him as an enemy soldier.

"He was carrying an AK47, as soon as I saw that weapon I fired a six-round burst. I saw him fall. I paused for half-a-second while the smoke cleared and then I fired off the rest of the magazine. "I found the body lying on the ground, he was lying on his back, the medic checked him and he was dead and I noticed that he was hit by three rounds. One went, we think, through the heart so I was quite pleased that he didn't suffer at all. He would have not known a thing."

The Vietnamese soldier was stripped bare and buried and Mr. Williamson's platoon commander later gave him a compass and hammock taken off the soldier's body. "I said, 'Thanks, Sir', I put it in my case and they stayed there for 44 years," he said.

Mr. Williamson's return to Vietnam would not have been possible without the help of Ngo Thi Thuy Hang, the founder of Marin, a Vietnamese non-governmental organization committed to searching for information about Vietnamese soldiers missing in action.

With information from the Australian side, she managed to find the soldier's family within weeks. "We found some information including the name of the soldier, his unit, the day he died and the location."

Sergeant Nguyen Sy Huy was shot and killed by Mr. Williamson when he was just 24 years old. Mr. Williamson, his daughter and other members of the family travelled 200 kilometers south of Hanoi to Thanh Hoa province where the dead soldier's brother, sister and former fiancé live. "I'm still amazed I've actually got this far, I thought it was an impossible task but through persistence with Amanda and the embassy I'm still glad that we got this far so I'm looking forward, to meeting them," Mr. Williams said during the three-hour journey

In an emotional moment Mr. Williamson and Amanda were welcomed into the family home, and passed back the hammock and compass to the soldier's relatives. "I have no right to imagine the grief you have been through and the heartache at the loss of Mr. Huy," Mr. Williamson said, with tears flowing. "I hope I have been able to help you and put your minds at rest and maybe settle the wandering soul of Mr. Huy."

The soldier's brother 65-year-old Nguyen Sy Dinh was emotional throughout the ceremony. "Until today, with a lot of support from many sides, I could not say anything but thank you all, who have done so much," he said. "But we still have one last wish, how could we find and move my brother's tomb back here? That is our wish."

Through tears, the soldier's former fiancée, 66-year-old Nguyen Thi Tho, spoke of the pain she suffered when her loved one never came home. She waited 10 years before marrying another man. "Forty years ago, when he went, he promised me he would come back, I waited for him for so long," she said.

With hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese soldiers believed to be still missing in action, this is just one story of two families thrust together by war. And a story of a father and daughter who have done all they can to reconcile the past. "I am happy with the result, very happy," Mr. Williamson said.

Why Vietnam Veterans Experience More PTSD than Other Veterans

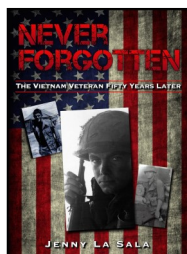
It has long been acknowledged that Vietnam War is a very different war, perhaps even the least recognized and remembered, from all other wars fought. The veterans fought in an American war that isn't recalled with pride. Even much bleaker is the fact that the number of cases of PTSD in Vietnam veterans is significantly greater than those in other wars. PTSD is common among war veterans but it is surprisingly greater among Vietnam veterans.

One explanation for this can be attributed to the availability of treatments during war which the Vietnam veterans didn't find the need for early on when compared to Korean veterans. In the Korean war, whenever there are psychological breakdowns, the soldiers could easily be provided with immediate treatment by clinicians who stay onsite so they can go back to combat afterwards. In the Vietnam War, there were only a few number of psychological breakdowns than the Korean War and World War II, making the people believe that the treatment used in Korea has already solved this particular problem in combat.

What they didn't know, however, that there is a differing pattern of neuropsychiatric disorder across war veterans. The pattern in Korea and WWII was very different from that that in Vietnam. In Korea and WWII, the incidence of neuropsychiatric disorder directly increases with the intensity of wars. When the wars settle down, so will the incidence of disorders. This is not the case in Vietnam. There were no rise of neuropsychiatric disorders during war. When the war ended, however, the disorders began.

When they finally returned home, they were greeted with an unwelcoming nation and unaccommodating government and homes, in addition to the heavy burden and a developing disorder most of them have been carrying straight from the war. At the time when they needed the treatment and support, they were ultimately deprived of attention and care. Decades after the war, these veterans are still experiencing the disorder.

Vietnam Vets Corner 2 Jan 2016



New Book

Never Forgotten, The Vietnam Veteran Fifty Years Later by Jenny La Sala.

The book *Never Forgotten*, captures 58 Veteran's accounts on what it was like to experience the Vietnam War. In their own words, they talk about their return home, struggles to maintain healthy relationships, decades of recovery, and feelings of worthlessness. Many find emotional well-being and self-worth by helping other Veterans.

NEW AVEL, AVIONICS AND VIETNAM VETERANS REGISTERED

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Avel North, Nha Trang: March 1968 – March
1969

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34th Engineer Battalion , 20th Engineer Brigade,
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AGENT ORANGE

Comments: Hey guys, Just wanted to mention that
the Army Engineers helped to maintain the Airfield
there in Phu loi . I know because I was repairing it
when Tet broke out. I would like (If you see fit)
to mention the Army Engineers in your AVEL Phu
Loi history so we (the Army Engineers " 34th
Bn.") are not forgotten.

Thanks, I'll try to attend your 2016 reunion in Chi-
cago as I live right outside Chicago. Born and
raised in Chicago.

John Segura, Avel North and Avel Central

I received this email from John a couple days ago. He hasn't registered yet but those that knew him can email
him.

*Hi Jack; I am responding to your letter dated July, 2013 which somehow got mixed into a pile of papers at our
house and only recently found by my wife. Yes, I was assigned to Avel, first to Avel North in Pleiku from
around June 69-May 70. I recognize some of the guys in the photos and saw myself also. I was also assigned
to Avel Central in Phu Loi from around Sep 70 to June 71, and also saw some pics of myself there. I volun-
teered for night shift to stay away from the brass during the day, at both places, so I was kind of a ghost to
many, I guess. Since I only served 10 months during my second tour, I left before some of the guys who ar-
rived before me, and I recall someone telling me a lot of the guys would not talk to me when I arrived because
they thought I was a "lifer" who had reenlisted and been sent back to Vietnam. I got a chuckle out of that. But
in reality, I entered the Army again in 1976 and retired in 1999 as a sergeant major, so there is some irony in
all that. I served during the Gulf war and later, served in Bosnia for a short stint. Let me say there was a
world of difference in the reception we got returning from Vietnam and from the Gulf War. I only wish all the
guys returning from Vietnam could have experienced what I did returning from the Gulf. You can contact me
at this email; I tried registering on your site, but yahoo has my old phone number and would not allow me to
enter my own account, so have to figure something out. Had a good time going through all the photos; I may
have some I can send you, take care. John Segura, Fort worth, TX sgm.99@att.net*

TAPS

Norman Ahrens

Avel North

Died 25 September 1983

He was 35 years old

**Michael D. Miller**

614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)

Died 1 June 2006

He was 57 years old

James Hirsch

614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)

Died 1984

He was 32 years old

Kenneth Olvey

614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)

Died 1982

He was 45 years old

TAPS, CONTINUED

Terry Loughry
Avel North
Died 30 April 2012
He was 64 years old



Raymond Yee
614th Maintenance Co. (LEM)
Died 1997
He was 49 years old

PHOTOS

None submitted



AVEL VIETNAM



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