

DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY

CONFLICT – VIETNAM WAR

SERVECE – U.S. AIR FORCE

On March 23, 2023, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) identified the remains of Col. Ernest Leo De Soto and Captain Frederick Mervyn Hall missing from the Vietnam War.

Col. Ernest Leo Desoto, who joined the U.S. Air Force from California, who was the aircraft commander and Captain Frederick Hall from North Carolina, who was the navigator on an F-4D Phantom II (tail number 66-8766) was a member of the 390th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On April 12, 1969, they took off from Da Nang Air Base, South Vietnam. This Phantom II was part of a two-plane strike mission over Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam. During the mission, while flying through cloud cover, their F-4 Phantom II crashed into a mountain ridge. Search and rescue efforts were prevented by heavy enemy presence in the area. In May 1995, a joint team located the crash site. Due to considerable unexploded ordnance at the site, coupled with harsh weather and helicopter access issues, the site was not successfully excavated until March 2011. From March through June 2021, Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons recovery teams recovered human remains. Life support equipment, and other material evidence associated with the missing aircraft. Laboratory analysis and the totality of the circumstantial evidence available confirmed the identity of the remains belonging to Col. De Soto and Captain Hall.



PERSONNEL PROFILE



Service Member

CAPT FREDRICK MERVYN HALL

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Capt FREDRICK MERVYN HALL

Unit 390 TFS
Historical Country of Loss: South Vietnam
Current Country of Loss: Vietnam
Home of Record NC

Conflict VIETNAM WAR
Service UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
Status Accounted For

Date of Identification 03/23/2023

On March 23, 2023, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) identified the remains of Captain Frederick Mervyn Hall, missing from the Vietnam War.

Captain Hall, who joined the U.S. Air Force from North Carolina, was a member of the 390th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On April 12, 1969, he was the navigator on an F-4D Phantom II (tail number 66-8766) that took off from Da Nang Air Base, South Vietnam. This Phantom II was part of a two-plane strike mission over Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam. During the mission, while flying through cloud cover, the Phantom II crashed into a mountain ridge. Search and rescue efforts were launched, but there were no signs that either crew member survived the crash, and ground searches were prevented by heavy enemy presence in the area. In May 1995, a joint team located the crash site. Due to considerable unexploded ordnance at the site, coupled with harsh weather and helicopter access issues, the site was not successfully excavated until March 2021. From March through June 2021, Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons recovery teams recovered human remains, life support equipment, and other material evidence associated with the missing aircraft. Laboratory analysis and the totality of the circumstantial evidence available confirmed the identity of remains belonging to Capt Hall.

Captain Hall is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

If you are a family member of this service member, [you may contact your casualty office representative to learn more about your service member.](#)

Location of Loss

Retrieving Map Image



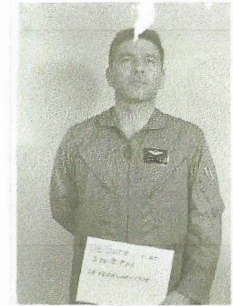
PERSONNEL PROFILE



Service Member

COL ERNEST LEO DESOTO

[Return to Service](#)
[Member Profiles](#)



Col ERNEST LEO
DESOTO

Unit 390 TFS
Historical Country of Loss:
South Vietnam
Current Country of Loss
Vietnam
Home of Record CA

Conflict VIETNAM WAR
Service UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
Status Accounted For

Date of Identification 03/23/2023

On March 23, 2023, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) identified the remains of Colonel Ernest Leo De Soto, missing from the Vietnam War.

Colonel De Soto, who joined the U.S. Air Force from California, was a member of the 390th Tactical Fighter Squadron. On April 12, 1969, he was the aircraft commander on an F-4D Phantom II (tail number 66-8766) that took off from Da Nang Air Base, South Vietnam. This Phantom II was part of a two-plane strike mission over Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam. During the mission, while flying through cloud cover, the Phantom II crashed into a mountain ridge. Search and rescue efforts were launched, but there were no signs that either crew member survived the crash, and ground searches were prevented by heavy enemy presence in the area. In May 1995, a joint team located the crash site. Due to considerable unexploded ordnance at the site, coupled with harsh weather and helicopter access issues, the site was not successfully excavated until March 2021. From March through June 2021, Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons recovery teams recovered human remains, life support equipment, and other material evidence associated with the missing aircraft. Laboratory analysis and the totality of the circumstantial evidence available confirmed the identity of remains belonging to Col De Soto.

Colonel De Soto is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

If you are a family member of this service member, [you may contact your casualty office representative to learn more about your service member.](#)



PERSONNEL PROFILE



Service
Member

CAPT RALPH JIM CHIPMAN

[Return to Service](#)
[Member Profiles](#)



Conflict VIETNAM WAR
Service UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Status Accounted For
Date of Identification 08/02/2023



Capt RALPH JIM CHIPMAN

Unit VMA 533 (AW) MAG 15
Historical Country of Loss North Vietnam
Loss Area Current Vietnam
Current Country of Loss Vietnam
Home of Record UT

On August 2, 2023, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPA) identified the remains of Captain Ralph Jim Chipman, missing from the Vietnam War.

Captain Chipman entered the U.S. Marine Corps from Utah and was a member of the Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 533, Marine Air Group 15, 1st Marine Air Wing. On December 27, 1972, he was the pilot aboard an A-6A Intruder (bureau number 155666, call sign "Tiny 05") which took off from Royal Thai Air Base Nam Phong, Khon Kaen Province, Thailand, carrying two crew members on a night combat mission over North Vietnam. The Intruder was last heard from when an airborne controller received a radio transmission indicating "Tiny 05" was beginning its entry into the target area. No subsequent radio contact was made, and an aerial search conducted over the area was unsuccessful in locating the aircraft or crew. On July 1, 1974, the Marine Corps changed Capt Chipman's status from Missing in Action to Killed in Action. Investigations following the incident continued for decades, with investigators eventually discovering remains and material evidence which are believed to be associated with Capt Chipman and the other aviator in the area of the crash site.

Captain Chipman is memorialized on the Courts of the Missing at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. His name is also inscribed along with all his fallen comrades on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, DC.

If you are a family member of this service member, you may contact your casualty office representative to learn more about your service member.

Location of Loss

Refresh Map



Service Members Associated with CAPT RALPH CHIPMAN's Loss

Show 10 entries

Showing 1 to 2 of 2 entries

CHIPMAN, RALPH JIM	Capt	Accounted For
FORRESTER, RONALD WAYNE	Capt	Unaccounted For

Previous 1 Next

- Limited to 10,000 Individuals

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- [News](#)
- [Recovery Act](#)
- [Privacy & Security](#)
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- [Site Map](#)
- [Contact](#)
- [No FEAR Act](#)



STAY CONNECTED:

CAPT RALPH JIM CHIPMAN

MIA 27 DEC 1972



On December 27, 1972, an A-6A Intruder (bureau number 155666, call sign "Tiny 05") took off from Royal Thai Air Base Nam Phong, Khon Kaen Province, Thailand, carrying two crew members on a night combat mission over North Vietnam. The Intruder was last heard from when an airborne controller received a radio transmission indicating "Tiny 05" was beginning its entry into the target area. No subsequent radio contact was made. An aerial search was conducted over the area where the Intruder was last heard from, but the effort was unsuccessful in locating the aircraft, a crash site, or the two crew members.

Captain Ralph Jim Chipman entered the U.S. Marine Corps from Utah and was a member of the Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 533, Marine Air Group 15, 1st Marine Air Wing. He was the pilot of this Intruder when it was lost, and he went missing with the aircraft. His remains were not recovered, until today. 08/02/2023

Welcome home Captain Chipman!

DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY
ACCOUNTED FOR FROM JAN. 1,2023 TO SEP. 22,2023.

WWII

U.S. Army – 5

U.S. Navy – 2 USS West Virginia – 1 USS Enterprise - 1

U.S. Army Air Corps – 21

Total – 27

KOREAN WAR

South Korea - U.S. Army – 6

North Korea – U.S. Army – 6

Total - 12

VIETNAM WAR

U.S. Marines – 1

U.S. Air Force – 2

Total – 3

GRAND TOTAL - 43

DEFENCE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY
TOTAL MISSING and ACCOUNTED FOR SINCE 1973
JAN. 1,1973 TO SEP. 22,2023

WWII 12/7/41 to 12/31/45

Missing – 73,695

Accounted – 1,519

Unaccounted – 72,176

KOREA 6/27/1950 to 7/27/1953

Missing – 8,157

Accounted - 667

Unaccounted – 7,490

VIETNAM 7/8/1959 to 5/13/1975

Missing – 2,641

Accounted – 1,063

Unaccounted – 1,578

COLD WAR 9/2/1945 to 8/21/1991

Missing - 128

Accounted - 2

Unaccounted - 126

IRAQ AND LIBYA 4-15-1986 TO PRESENT

Missing and unaccounted – 6

TOTAL OF ALL

Missing – 84,627

Accounted – 3,251

Unaccounted – 81,376

As of 9-22-23, American remains still missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War:

Vietnam – 1,238 – 422 non-recoverable*

Laos – 285 – 11 non-recoverable*

Cambodia – 48 – 2 non-recoverable*

Republic of China territorial waters – 7

Total – 1,578

*Non-recoverable - This means that as a result of rigorous investigation, we have conclusive evidence the individual perished, but do not believe it possible to recover his remains.

On July 30, 2023, DPAA's under-water recovery team completed Joint Field Activity 23-3VN in Vietnam, which was conducted from June 18 to July 10. DPAA collaborated with the U.S. Army's 7th Engineer Dive Detachment; the U.S. Coast Guard Regional Dive Locker West and Pacific, along with the Vietnamese Office of Seeking Missing Persons; DPAA's Detachment 2 Vietnam; and the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi to carry out a special underwater recovery mission.

The combined efforts took more than 75 days. The team traveled back to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam on July 30 after completing the joint field activity. There was no more information available at this time about the results of this mission.