



LT Michael Blassie, United States Air Force

0 019

MSC RANDOLPH AFB TEXAS GOVT PD CASUALTY MESSAGE, 11 MAY 19 72 C- PERSONALMR AND MRS GEORGE C. BLASSIE
405 PADDLEWHEEL DRIVE
FLORISSANT, MISSOURI 63033

WU: DELIVER - DO NOT PHONE

REPORT DELIVERY

IT IS WITH DEEP REGRET THAT I OFFICIALLY INFORM YOU OF _____ (THE DEATH
OF YOUR) ^{SON'S} FIRST LIEUTENANT MICHAEL J. BLASSIE.
(HE WAS KILLED IN ACTION IN) SOUTH VIETNAM
ON 11 MAY 1972. HE WAS THE PILOT OF AN A-37 AIRCRAFT ON A COMBAT MISSION.
WHILE ON A PASS OVER THE TARGET HIS AIRCRAFT RECEIVED INTENSE GROUND FIRE AND
CRASHED.

YOUR SON'S _____ COMMANDER WILL WRITE YOU A LETTER
WHICH WILL CONTAIN ALL THE KNOWN CIRCUMSTANCES CONCERNING HIS DEATH.
_____ THE MORTUARY BRANCH, HEADQUARTERS, USAF,
WASHINGTON, D.C., WILL COMMUNICATE WITH YOU CONCERNING HIS REMAINS _____

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, YOU MAY CONTACT MY PERSONAL
REPRESENTATIVE BY DIALING TOLL FREE _____ PLEASE ACCEPT MY SINCERE SYMPATHY.
1-800-531-5501.

BRIG GENERAL K.L. TALMAN
COMMANDER, AIR FORCE MILITARY PERSONNEL CENTER

(22 DEC 71)

Telegram sent to LT Blassie's family on 11 May 1972 informing them
of his death.

0 013

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
 HEADQUARTERS 377TH AIR BASE WING (PACAF)
 APO SAN FRANCISCO 96307



13 MAY 1972

Mr. and Mrs. George C. Blassie
 405 Paddlewheel Drive
 Florissant, Missouri 63033

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Blassie

Please accept my heartfelt condolences on the death of your son, First Lieutenant Michael Joseph Blassie. Mike was highly respected by the members of the 8th Special Operations Squadron, both for his exceptional leadership abilities and his skill as a pilot.

Mike departed Bien Hoa Air Base at 7:41 a.m. on 11 May 1972 on a combat mission to An Loc City, South Vietnam. On a pass over the target area, his aircraft was hit by enemy gunfire. His wingman observed the aircraft as it crashed and immediately exploded and burned. An Army helicopter team landed shortly after the crash and determined that there was no possibility of survival. The observations of the wingman and the Army Team, and the explosion and intense fire resulting from the crash force me to conclude, regretfully, that Mike was killed in action. Recovery efforts by ground forces are impossible at the present time due to intense combat operations and large concentrations of enemy troops in the area.

Mike's gallantry on this mission was typical of the outstanding devotion he has demonstrated throughout the past three and a half months. I am proud to have been associated with Mike, and I join with the men of this Wing in expressing our deepest sympathy at his loss. Be assured that I stand ready to help you in any way I can during this time of sorrow.

Sincerely,

CHARLES D. GUNN, JR., Colonel, USAF
 Commander

Letter of condolences sent by Colonel Charles D. Gunn to Michael Blassie's parents dated 13 May 1972.

6518
BNR
VS

HEADQUARTERS
 UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
 APO SAN FRANCISCO 96222
 JOINT PERSONNEL RECOVERY CENTER



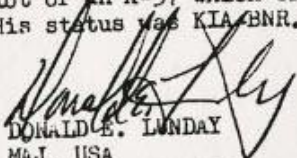
MACDI-13

31 Oct 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Body Recovery

1. At approximately 1645 hours this date, the undersigned was notified by "Joker" that a recon patrol had discovered the remains of an American at coordinates XT716906. Also recovered were dog tags and an ID card identifying the individual as LT Joseph Michael Blassie, USAF.
2. TRAC TOC was contacted to determine additional details and present location of the remains. The unit is still at the site and will start ~~filtrating~~ infiltrating tomorrow. CPT Dixon was notified of the recovery and instructed to get in contact with TRAC TOC and provide guidance on recovery and shipment of remains. By 1730 hours he had effected the necessary coordinations with TRAC.
3. LT Blassie (JPRC #6518) was the pilot of an A-37 which crashed on 11 May 72 in the vicinity of An Loc. His status was KIA/BNR.


 DONALD E. LUNDAY
 MAJ, USA
 Acting Chief, JPRC

Memorandum dated 31 October 1972 on the recovery of human remains BTB (believed to be) LT Michael Blassie. Many of the items recovered at the crash site that would have established positive identity were lost in transit.

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS
(POSTHUMOUS)

TO

MICHAEL J. BLASSIE

First Lieutenant Michael J. Blassie distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as an A-37 pilot in Southeast Asia on 23 April 1972. On that date, Lieutenant Blassie flew in support of an allied unit under attack near Dau Tieng, Republic of Vietnam. Despite the poor weather, antiaircraft fire, and very close proximity of friendly forces to the hostile positions, Lieutenant Blassie made repeated passes delivering his ordnance precisely on target. As a result of these actions, a superior hostile force was dispersed, thus allowing the allied force to secure their position. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Lieutenant Blassie in the dedication of his service to his country reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF
THE SILVER STAR
(POSTHUMOUS)

TO

MICHAEL J. BLASSIE

First Lieutenant Michael J. Blassie distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force at An Loc, Republic of Vietnam, on 11 May 1972. On that date, Lieutenant Blassie flew in support of allied forces that were defending the town of An Loc and in grave danger of being overrun by a large hostile force supported by a multitude of heavy weaponry. Flying through intense antiaircraft fire with complete disregard for his own safety, Lieutenant Blassie attacked gun sites in extremely close proximity of the friendly positions and, despite taking numerous direct hits from the antiaircraft fire, delivered his ordnance precisely on target. The dedication of Lieutenant Blassie was instrumental in helping the friendly forces to maintain their positions and successfully defend the town. By his gallantry and devotion to duty in the dedication of his service to his country, Lieutenant Blassie has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Citations for the Distinguished Flying Cross and Silver Star to be
awarded to LT Blassie

573-72

JRD OF IDENTIFICATION PROC
SKELETAL CHART

LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL (or unknown number)

"BTB" BLASSIE, Michael Joseph

AGE 0-2 SERVICE NUMBER [REDACTED]

NAME OF CEMETERY, EVACUATION NUMBER, OR SEARCH AND RECOVERY NUMBER

LOT ROW GRAVE

ESTIMATED AGE (Years) ESTIMATED HEIGHT 68.9"

SKELETAL MEASUREMENTS (Centimeters)

SKELETAL MEMBER	METHOD	RIGHT	LEFT
SKULL			
VERUS		33.5	
HA			
SIUS			
IVR			
RIA			
OLA			

REMARKS OR STATEMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGIST (Continue on reverse if more space is required)

- "Cut" remnants of nomex flight suit.
- One man inflatable raft.
- One ammo pouch.
- Remnants of pistol holster.
- Empty signal marker pouch.
- Remnants of parachute.

IF PARTS PRESENT AS INDICATED ON THIS SKELETAL CHART REPRESENTS ONE AND THE SAME INDIVIDUAL

ANTHROPOLOGIST (Name)

JOHN G. ROGERS

SIGNATURE

BLACK OUT PORTIONS RECOVERED

SYMBOLS
MISSING
BURNED
FRACTURED
SHATTERED

FORM 1044, 18 MAR 47, WHICH IS OBSOLETE.

Identification sheet indicating the remains and items recovered at the crash site BTB LT Michael Blassie.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION LABORATORY, HAWAII
~~ARM-SAN-FRANCISCO-82488~~

Fort Shafter, Hawaii 96858

DAAG-PED-H

4 December 1978

SPECIAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL NARRATIVE

SUBJECT: Processing of TSN 0673-72

1. Skeletal remains designated TSN 0673-72 received as BTB: BLASSIE, Michael J. consist of the right humerus, right innominate and 4 ribs (rt 2, 5, 12 & lt 4). Items of clothing and equipment received with the remains were remnants of a flight suit (portions of right sleeve and right leg), and inflatable raft (for one man), an ammo pouch, remnants of parachute, a pouch for signal marker, and remnants of a pistol holster. No other identification media were received.
2. Upon processing the remains and clothing additional identification media was found and evaluation therefrom are as follows:
 - a. Age was estimated to be 26 - 33 years.
 - b. The living stature at the time of death was estimated to be 68.4" or within 65.2" - 71.5" bracket (95% coverage).
 - c. A small quantity of body hair, light brown in color was collected from the inside of the right trouser of the flight suit. Blood group determination revealed the blood type to be "O".
 - d. BLASSIE was 24 years 1 month 7 days at the time of death and this age is outside of the estimated age bracket.
 - e. Statistical possibility of the height to be over 72" whose humerus measured 33.5 cm is less than 1.1%. Thus the estimated height disagrees with the recorded height of BLASSIE.
 - f. Blood type of the remains disagrees with the recorded blood type "A" for BLASSIE.

DAAG-PED-H

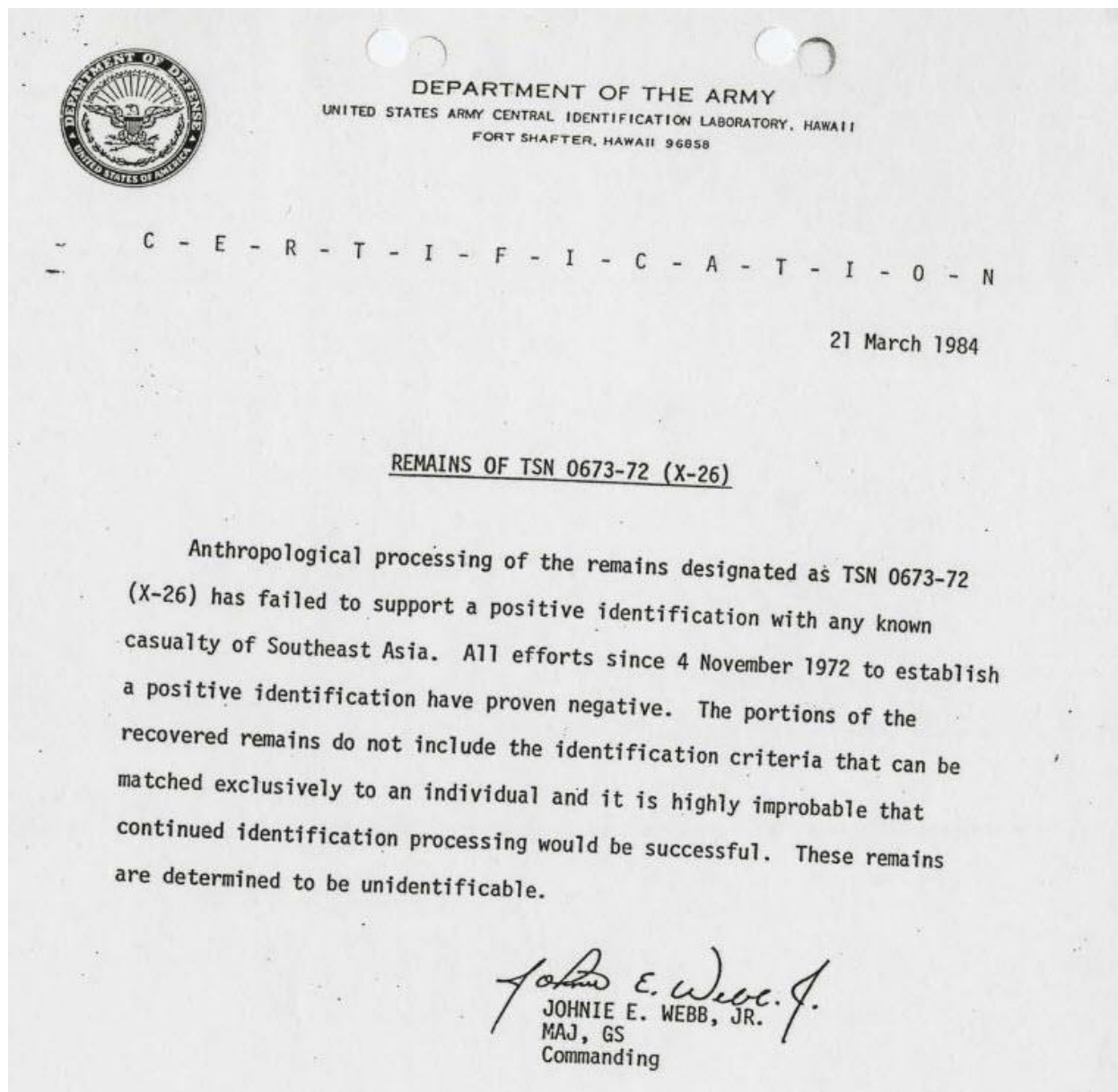
SUBJECT: Processing of TSN 0673-72

4 December 1978

3. The above findings resulted in the recommendation of the anthropologist that TSN 0673-72 BTB: BLASSIE be designated unknown number and BLASSIE be disassociated with TSN 0673-72.

Tadao Furue
TADAO FURUE
Physical Anthropologist

Report by Anthropologist, Tadao Furue, claiming that the remains could NOT be those of LT Michael Blassie and the recommendation that they be classified as "unknown."



Certification by Major John Webb of the US Army Central Identification Laboratory that the X-26 remains were unidentifiable and thus eligible for interment at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, 21 March 1984.

The Vietnam Unknown Soldier can be Identified

U.S. Veteran Dispatch Staff Report

In 1984, as a result of the U.S. government's eagerness to lay to rest a Vietnam Unknown Soldier, it interred the remains of a missing American serviceman that today can be identified and accounted for through the U.S. government Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii (CIL-HI).

The interment of that "unidentifiable" U.S. serviceman in Arlington National Cemetery, beside the Unknown from World War I, World War II and Korea was supposed to be the ultimate symbolic gesture in healing the POW/MIA issue, the Vietnam War's "sorest wound."

Instead, as it turns out, the entombment of the Vietnam Unknown was at the very best premature and at worst a politically expedient attempt to further close the books on the POW/MIA issue.

On April 13, 1984, the Defense Department chose a Vietnam Unknown from one of four sets of remains then at CIL-HI. Because of the progress in identification techniques, the Defense Department waived an administrative criteria, which had been followed in earlier wars, that only remains that were 80% complete were selected as Unknown Soldiers. With today's advancements in technology and with CIL-HI boasting of its ability to identify remains of American serv-

icemen from evidence as minute as a tooth fragment, remains that are 80% complete would be the worst choice for an Unknown Soldier.

The remains finally chosen by CIL-HI to be the Vietnam Unknown had been found by a South Vietnamese Army Reconnaissance team in late 1972 near An Loc, Binh Long Province, which is located 60 miles north of Saigon. The remains, which consisted of six bones, or only 3% of a skeleton, were eventually given the number by CIL-HI of X-26. Along with the X-26 remains, the reconnaissance team had brought in the remnants of a parachute, a flight suit, a pistol holder and a one man inflatable raft.

CIL-HI determined that X-26 was a caucasian man who had been between 26 and 36 years old at the time of death.

In the surrounding area of An Loc where X-26 had been found, there had been numerous American servicemen reported missing in action, bodies not returned.

There was at least two C130s, several helicopters and an A37 fighter jet that went down in that general area during the war prior to the Fall of 1972. The remnants which were found with the bone fragments of X-26 are important pieces of a puzzle which, when placed together point specifically to the identification of the Unknown Soldier of the Vietnam War.

The piece of a flight suit indicates that the

Vietnam Unknown was an airman and evidence of the existence of a parachute rules out the possibility of a helicopter crew, thus focusing on the aircrews of the C130s and the pilot of the lone A37. The existence of a one man inflatable raft can be argued as a strong reason to rule out the crews of the C130s, leaving only the pilot of the A37, who would have been equipped with a one man raft.

Many facts pertaining to 1Lt. Michael J. Blassie's shootdown closely match those of the Unknown Soldier.

In May 1972, near An Loc, an A37, flown by U.S. Air Force 1Lt. Michael J. Blassie, was hit by ground fire. 1Lt. Blassie's wingman saw him crash into the ground and witnessed an explosion and fire. He did not see any signs that indicated the survival of 1Lt. Blassie.

In October, 1972, the U.S. government sent a search team to the crashsite (probably in response to the remains recovered by the South Vietnamese Reconnaissance team) and found "identification media that correlated to the case."

In November, 1992, the U.S. government

again visited the area of the crashsite, and found a witness who had heard about the incident. The witness, according to a U.S. government source, took U.S. government representatives to what was believed to be the exact crashsite. The crashsite, according to the source, had been severely scavenged and U.S. government investigators were unable to find anything significant pertaining to the Blassie incident. The crash crater, according to the source, was being used by a local farmer for a watering hole.

Many facts pertaining to 1Lt. Blassie's shootdown closely match those of the Unknown Soldier. CIL-HI determined the Unknown Soldier to be a male caucasian and between 26-33 years old. 1Lt. Blassie, was a male caucasian who, at the time he became missing in action, was 24 years old. Remnants found with the remains of the Unknown Soldier indicate that he was a fighter pilot. 1Lt. Blassie, from St. Louis, Mo., is the only fighter pilot listed Killed-In-Action/Body-Not-Returned within a 2,500-square mile area of where the remains of the Unknown Soldier were found.

If the experts at CIL-HI can identify American MIAs from minute tooth fragments, as they claim, then they should be able to "right this wrong" by determining through DNA if the remains of 1Lt. Blassie fit the tomb of the Vietnam Unknown Soldier.

Article by Ted Samplly in the *US Veterans Dispatch* claiming that the Vietnam Unknown Serviceman could be identified using new DNA technology.