





OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

2400 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2400



INTERNATIONAL  
SECURITY AFFAIRS

11 DEC 1995  
In reply refer to:  
I-95/53695

21-21

Dear Kenneth B. Goff, Sr.:

In October 1994, the Department of Defense initiated a comprehensive review of each case involving an American serviceman or civilian who is unaccounted for as a result of United States involvement in the war in Southeast Asia. Analysts of the Defense Prisoner of War and Missing In Action Office, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, and the United States Army Central Identification Laboratory worked together to examine carefully all information developed throughout the years. Our efforts included a total review of wartime and post-war intelligence, as well as the reports of joint investigation, oral history interviews, and archival research. This painstaking, case-by-case review was completed on July 21, 1995.

Our purpose was to determine how to achieve the fullest possible accounting for each individual. Unfortunately, our analysis has identified some cases where all available evidence indicates there is no reasonable expectation that identifiable remains will ever be recovered. This is true in the case of Major Kenneth B. Goff, Jr., United States Army, REFNO 0811.

Your son is one of four men who remain unaccounted for after the helicopter in which they were flying crashed into the swollen Dak Bla River. Survivors reported the swift current swept your son several hundred feet downstream and he was not seen again. Despite extensive search efforts, no trace of him could be found. Two years later when the river was at a normal level, additional ground searches were conducted, but they also failed to find any evidence of the four missing Americans or the helicopter. In 1993 and 1994, a joint team of American and Vietnamese investigators surveyed the incident location and spoke with residents of the area in an attempt to locate knowledgeable witnesses. While one witness knew of the helicopter crash, we were unable to find anyone having substantive information on the fate of your son and the other crew members.

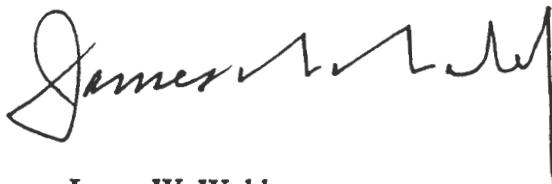
Considering the location and circumstances of loss, there is no evidence that the Vietnamese government has information that could help account for your son. It appears he drowned after being swept away by the current of the swiftly running river. Given the nature of the incident, the fact that he could not be recovered at the time, and the negative results of searches only two years after the crash we must reluctantly conclude there is no hope of recovering his remains.



I regret very much that our findings were not more positive in your son's case. We have taken our obligation to pursue the cases of our service members and civilians very seriously. It is only with great reluctance that we have come to this conclusion.

Those of us who have worked to account for your son and for our other brave Americans consider ourselves privileged to have done so. Even though his remains may never be recovered, Major Goff's name and memory will long be honored by this nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James W. Wold".

James W. Wold  
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense  
(POW/MIA Affairs)