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# Mystery of POW-MIA bracelet solved

BY HOWARD WILKINSON | HWILKINSON@ENQUIRER.COM

*Capt. Herbert C. Brown.*

The name was a mystery to Terri Stamm of Springfield Township for more than 30 years, staring up at her from the POW-MIA bracelet she bought for \$3 decades ago to honor those Americans left behind in Vietnam.

Who was he? Where was he from? What did he look like? Was there a family somewhere praying for his return?

Now, those questions have been answered.

And the bracelet Stamm wore proudly for all those years now rests on the arm of the one woman who could answer those questions – Capt. Brown's mother, 88-year-old Jane Crosby Wesley of Titusville, Fla.

How those questions were finally answered is, to Stamm, nothing short of a miracle.

"It seems almost impossible, after all these years," said Stamm. "But I was in the right place at the right time."

On Dec. 21, Stamm flew to Florida to visit her daughter, who lives in New Port Richey. At her daughter's home, she picked up a copy of the St. Petersburg Times and saw a 2-inch news brief – a Defense Department announcement that the Army captain and two of his fellow soldiers had been identified and returned to the U.S., nearly 37 years after their Huey helicopter went down in bad weather over Quang Nam Province.

Brown, the story said, had been identified by one tooth and ID tags.

"I knew the name immediately," Stamm said. "I almost froze."

Stamm called the newspaper to tell them of the bracelet that was, at that point, sitting in her dresser drawer back home in Springfield Township. A few days later, she received a call from Crosby's sister, Mary Lou Wade. Stamm said she would retrieve the bracelet and make sure it was sent to Titusville.

When Stamm returned home in January, she told friends at St. John Neumann Church in Springfield Township what had happened in Florida. Father Steve Kolde, the parish priest, told her he was planning a trip to Titusville to visit his parents and would be glad to deliver the bracelet to the soldier's mother.

Sunday, Kolde gave the bracelet to Wesley.

"I never expected this," the soldier's mother said. "I can't believe someone would keep it that long."

She put it on her wrist immediately and said she would wear it every day.

Two others have contacted Crosby's family saying they would like to give them their bracelets bearing Crosby's name.

Stamm said that, over the years, she had often thought about whether Capt. Crosby had a mother somewhere, broken-hearted over her son's disappearance.

"If it were my son, after all those years, I know how I would feel," Stamm said. "So I kept that bracelet to honor that soldier and his family."

Stamm said she bought the bracelet sometime in the early 1970s, at a time when the unpopular war in Vietnam was winding down.

"I remember those soldiers from Vietnam coming home and they were degraded by so many people – maligned and spit upon," Stamm said. "I saw the bracelet as a way of honoring them."

Wade, Crosby's younger sister by eight years who also lives in Titusville, said she felt blessed to make contact with one of the people with her brother's bracelet.

"I hope this gives other families the sense of hope that they would get closure," she said. "Other POWs, their parents are now dead and it's left to siblings and cousins. It's so lucky (our mother) is alive to know this."

In November, military officials used one tooth and identification tags to confirm Crosby's death. He is among more than 850 servicemen the military has identified since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975, according to the U.S. Defense Department's POW/MIA office. Nearly 1,800 are still missing in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and China.