

**Date posted online: Tuesday, December 26, 2006**

## **Fort Wayne Army helicopter pilot ID'd after 36 years**

FORT WAYNE, Ind. | The remains of an Army helicopter pilot who disappeared while flying in Vietnam 36 years ago have been identified.

Capt. Herbert Crosby, 22, was flying back to his base at Chu Lai in 1970 when his chopper went down in bad weather over Quang Nam Province in southern Vietnam. A search then found no trace of the Huey or its crew.

In 1989, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam gave U.S. specialists 25 boxes containing items related to the crash. Later that year, a Vietnamese refugee provided additional remains and Crosby's dog tags. In 1994, teams excavated the crash site and recovered a metal box and several bags containing more remains.

Then this month, by using DNA provided by Crosby's two sisters, the pilot's remains were finally identified. Crosby's tooth provided proof that it was the pilot's remains, his sister said.

"It's a mixture of joy and sadness, but at least we finally have closure," Janie Crosby of Pine Mountain, Ga., told The News-Sentinel for a Monday story.

Ab Crosby, 57, said his cousin chose to go to Vietnam after a good friend was killed there.

"It was real difficult when we lost (Herbert). He was only a few weeks from coming home," said Ab Crosby, a captain with the Fort Wayne Fire Department. "At first you hope they will find him. But the area was rugged, and after four or five months you begin to wonder. Then you just hope it was over quickly."

Before Herbert C. Crosby Sr. died in 1991 in Georgia at the age of 71, the fate of his missing son had haunted him for more than two decades, Ab Crosby said.

"My uncle wanted to go to Vietnam and search for him, especially after some neighbors came over and said they had talked to Herbert. Sometimes he would get on the helicopter's radio and talk to ham radio operators back home."

Janie Crosby said a military funeral is being planned sometime around Memorial Day.

Besides Herbert Crosby, the remains of crewmen Sgt. 1st Class Wayne C. Allen of Tewksbury, Mass.; and Sgt. 1st Class Francis G. Graziosi of Rochester, N.Y.; also were identified this month.

Of the 2,646 American originally listed as missing during the Vietnam War, the remains of 841 have since been identified and returned, according to the Defense Department's Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office.