



## DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY

2300 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-2300

The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
United States Senator  
324 Park Central West, Suite 101  
Springfield, MO 65806

JUN 22 2016

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for your recent inquiry on behalf of Valarie Wolfe regarding the Department of Defense's efforts to account for her father, Air Force Captain Thomas Hubert Wolfe, who was lost during the Vietnam War. I lead the Department of Defense's efforts to account for our personnel who are missing from past conflicts and I am pleased to respond.

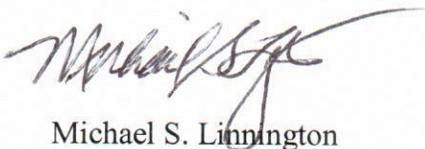
Captain Wolfe and his two crewmates were lost on June 28, 1966, when their A-26 aircraft was shot down during a combat reconnaissance mission over Laos. The crew of another United States military aircraft witnessed the loss and reported that none of the men survived. Since 1996 Department of Defense personnel have investigated this case 11 times in an effort to account for Captain Wolfe and his crewmates. As a result of these efforts, a probable crash site was located and correlated to this loss in 1999; the site was approved for excavation in 2006. The site is scheduled for excavation during our planned operations in Laos in the fall of 2016.

Ms. Wolfe's frustration with the time from approval to scheduled excavation is understandable. Scheduling is based on our ability to access the loss site and the most efficient use of resources to ensure we excavate as many cases as possible. Rugged terrain, unpredictable weather, remote site locations, and restrictions placed on us by the Lao government are among the many challenges that make conducting operations in Laos the most difficult and challenging of all the countries where we work. Unfortunately, there are more than 70 cases pending excavation in Laos. Some of these sites are "open," meaning that we began to excavate to recover remains, but did not complete the excavation and have yet to return to the site. Our current strategy to account for our personnel lost in Laos is to conduct operations in areas of the country where there are numerous clustered loss sites. This strategy allows us to maximize our resources.

The biggest factors impacting the pace of operations in Laos is the limit the Lao government places on the number of personnel who may conduct field work in Laos at any one time, and restrictions on our ability to base camp at a site. This means our teams are required to travel each day, often by helicopter, to the respective loss sites which costs precious

time and resources. We will continue to press the Lao government to ease these limitations. I will ensure we keep Ms. Wolfe apprised of any developments in her father's case through the Air Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael S. Linnington". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael S. Linnington  
Director

cc:  
Air Force Casualty Office