



VMFA 542

A forum for members, family and friends of VMFA-542 Marines

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[Capt Jerry Zimmer & Lt Al Graf Update](#)

by [Jerry Nicholson](#) » 15 Jun 2009, 23:31

I am posting an email I received from Ltc Mares concerning the possible location of the crash site.

Capt Jerry A. Zimmer and 1st Lt Albert S. Graf members of VMFA-542 who have been listed as Missing In Action since August 29, 1969 crash site has been positively identified and probable remains may reside within the wreckage site. It was through a detailed re-evaluation of the crash site documentation and personal contacts with individuals familiar with the incident this information has led to a decision re-open their case within the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC). A new investigation will be conducted the end of August 2009 to corroborate the information that was uncovered over the past few years. It has taken a lot of persistence and persuasion to get to this point. I want to thank those who assisted in this effort.

Elaine Zimmer Davis, Jerry's widow, has written an article about this research and the exploration of the Vietnam site which will appear in the July issue of the Leatherneck. The article has been selected for open viewing on their internet site. The link is below. It will be publish June 22nd. I thought you may appreciate this article.

I was fortunate to be able to be guided to the site and positively identify an area which had been impacted by a major explosion on March 23rd of this year. We recovered six small pieces of the wreckage which were later positively identified as US Navy/Marine Corps F-4 parts. Only one F-4 is recorded being shot down in the area we searched. The lead guide was a former Viet Cong leader within the area and conducted a Buddhist ceremony over the spot he believes their remains may reside. The probable site of their remains was located in a very steep ravine within the jungle about 1/4 mile from the aircraft impact point. This spot is about 1/2 mile away from the JPAC 1993 investigated site. The article will cover this "journey" in hopes of recovering Jerry and Al's remains. Jerry was my best friend, fellow Marine, and he has not been forgotten. We are hoping our information will lead to their recovery.

Semper Fi,

Gene

Marines,

I wanted to take this opportunity to provide a "good news" update and again thank those of you who have assisted us, in our year long search for Capt Jerry Zimmer and 1st Lt Al Graf. I am sure I will miss many who have helped and I would appreciate you forwarding this message to anyone I might have missed, or would be interested.

Starting with the recent good news, JPAC has agreed to send an Investigative Team (IT) in August, to interview the witnesses and trek up to the Quang Nam Province crash site we identified earlier this year.

Elaine has written an account of our quest. which will be published in the July Issue of Leatherneck Magazine. It is titled, Bringing Jerry and Al Home, and although prejudiced, I think it will be an excellent read and I encourage you to take a look on the MCA web site for the July issue anytime after June 22nd.. I will leave most of the details for your reading pleasure, but Gene Mares, Lt Col, USMC (Ret), Jerry's closest friend since high school, Vietnam bunkmate and a RIO who flew with him in F-4s, was the person who finally made it to the crash site and was able to bring back six pieces of aircraft debris. Five of those six pieces were identified by USMC Col Bruce Neuberger's team at the Naval Air Technical Data & Engineering Service Command (NATEC) as coming from an F-4, Phantom. There was only one F-4 known to have crashed in that area during the war. We bundled up all that information and provided it to JPAC. They recently agreed to take the first major step by sending in an IT.

Col Walt Ford, USMC (Ret), Publisher/Editor of Leatherneck Magazine at the Marine Corps Association (MCA) has been very supportive of our efforts, and I always encourage Marines to join MCA if they have not – you receive Leatherneck as one of the benefits of your membership. If you are a member of MCA, you can go directly to the Leatherneck webpage by clicking on <http://www.mca-marines.org/leatherneck/default.asp> . If you then click on the cover photo of the July Issue of Leatherneck Magazine shown on the left of the page, you will be able to read and download the magazine. As some of you may not be subscribers, I will download and forward a copy of the article to you as soon as it appears.

My special thanks to all who keep the great Marine Corps brotherhood active and effective. Without the MC network, none of this would have been possible.

Semper Fi,

Ron Davis

Cpl Jerry Nicholson

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"Semper Fidelis".

Having earned the title of Marine it becomes an integral part of who and what we will become later in life.

[Jerry Nicholson](#)

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