

# BLAIR, CHARLES EDWARD

Remains Returned 6 April 1988; Identified 3 June 1988

Name: Charles Edward Blair  
Rank/Branch: Colonel/US Air Force  
Unit: 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron  
Nha Trang, South Vietnam  
Date of Birth: 02 November 1924  
Home of Record: Chatham, VA  
Date of Loss: 19 March 1968  
Country of Loss: South Vietnam  
Loss Coordinates: [122000N 1085500E \(BP740590\)](#)  
[Click coordinates to view maps](#)  
Status in 1973: Killed/Body Not Recovered  
Category: 4  
Aircraft/Vehicle/Ground: [O1G "Bird Dog"](#)  
Other Personnel in Incident: Victor Romero (missing)



## REMARKS:

SYNOPSIS: Because the Cessna O1G Bird Dog was built to withstand a great deal of punishment and suited to conduct a wide variety of tasks, it was used virtually throughout the entire war. The US Army used the Bird Dog primarily as a liaison and observation aircraft. It brought not only an aerial method of locating targets, but the rudiments of a system of strike coordination between different types of aircraft employed in the air war, as well as coordination between different branches of the service who were operating in the same area. The Bird Dog was also used very successfully as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) since it could fly low and slow carrying marker rounds of ammunition to identify enemy positions for the attack aircraft.

On 19 March 1968, then Major Charles E. Blair, pilot; and Sgt. [Victor Romero](#), radio operator; comprised the crew of an O1G, call sign "Walt 33," on a visual reconnaissance mission. At 1255 hours, they departed Nha Trang Airfield and proceeded to their area of operation known as "Mike North." The area along the flight path consisted of rugged mountains covered in dense canopy jungle. Weather conditions during Walt 33's mission included 2 miles horizontal visibility and 5 miles vertical visibility, heavy haze, and winds blowing from the northeast at 20 to 25 knots. There was also a broken cloud ceiling with a 3500-foot cloud base.

The last radio transmission with Maj. Blair and Sgt. Victor Romero came at 1340 hours. During that contact there was no indication of trouble with their Bird Dog or from enemy activity. Their last known location placed them over rugged, jungle-covered mountains just east of the junction where two rivers join together before flowing east to the coastline approximately 17 miles south-southwest of Duc My, the same distance west of Nha Trang Airbase Tac An, 19 miles west of the city of Nha Trang and 28 miles northwest of Cam Ranh Bay, Khanh Hoa Province, South Vietnam. Another reference to Walt 33's last known position refers to it as "Mike North 285 degrees."

When Walt 33 could not be raised on the radio for additional reconnaissance information, an intense visual and electronic search and rescue (SAR) efforts were initiated. These efforts were terminated at

1900 hours on 23 March when no trace of the aircraft or its crew could be found. At that time both Charles Blair and Victor Romero were listed Missing in Action.

On three separate occasions between the early to mid 1980s, US government representatives asked Vietnam about the fate of Maj. Blair and Sgt. Romero. The communists repeatedly refused to respond to these requests for information. However, on 6 April 1988, the Vietnamese returned the remains of Charles Blair without explanation. To date they deny any knowledge of Walt 33's radio operator.

While the fate of Charles Blair is resolved and his family has the peace of mind of knowing where their loved one now lies, there are no answer to the question of when and how he died. For other Americans who remain unaccounted for in Southeast Asia, including Victor Romero, their fate could be quite different.

Since the end of the Vietnam War well over 21,000 reports of American prisoners, missing and otherwise unaccounted for have been received by our government. Many of these reports document LIVE American Prisoners of War remaining captive throughout Southeast Asia TODAY.

Pilots and aircrews in Vietnam were call upon to fly in many dangerous circumstances, and they were prepared to be wounded, killed or captured. It probably never occurred to them that they could be abandoned by the country they so proudly served.