



The Repatriation of Flying Officer Michael Herbert and Pilot Officer Robert Carver



Funerals for PLTOFF Bob Carver and FLGOFF Mike Herbert

Recap: Monday 31st August 2009 realised a sight that most RAAF Vietnam Veterans, especially those who had served with No 2 Squadron, never expected to see: after nearly 39 years MIA in Vietnam, the caskets of FLGOFF Mike Herbert and PLTOFF Bob Carver being ceremonially transferred from the C130 that had brought them from Hanoi to the tarmac at RAAF Base Richmond.

Following the formal "Repatriation Ceremony" at RAAF Base Richmond on 31 August 2009, a ceremony which had previously been conducted for each of the four Army MIAs that "Operation Aussies Home" had located for return to Australia (an enormous feat), Mike and Bob were accorded funerals with military honours.

On Thursday 3rd September 2009, Bob was interred at Toowoomba (Queensland) following a church service attended by hundreds of relatives, friends, former colleagues and current members of No 2 Squadron. A solitary F111 passed overhead in a final salute.

Mike was accorded a similar funeral service in Adelaide on 7th September, before a private internment. The Archbishop of Adelaide conducted a Pontifical Celebrated Mass at the Cathedral Church of St Francis Xavier, attended by the SA Governor and Premier, the Minister of Defence and the Chief of Air Force as well as hundreds of relatives, former squadron colleagues and Vietnam Veterans.

With flags throughout the City of Adelaide at half mast, Mike's cortege left the Cathedral escorted by an RAAF honour guard and band with veterans and students from his former school (Sacred Heart College) lining the roadway as a solitary F111 passed over in salute.

After nearly 39 years together as MIAs in a foreign country, they are now at home and at rest within the care of their families!

State Funeral for Bob Carver

*Official Department of Defence Media Release
Funeral for PLTOFF Robert Carver: 03 September 2009*

Family and friends, along with government and military representatives, gather for the funeral of Pilot Officer Robert Carver at St Luke's Cathedral in Toowoomba, Queensland. Pilot Officer Carver was repatriated by the Royal Australian Air Force from Vietnam to Australia on 30 August 2009 with military ceremonies in both Hanoi, Vietnam and at Royal Australian Air Force Base Richmond, New South Wales.

Pilot Officer Carver and Flying Officer Michael Herbert went missing in action when the Royal Australian Air Force Canberra Bomber they were flying in disappeared on 3 November 1970 while returning to base following a bombing mission.

As part of Operation Magpies Return, the remains of Pilot Officer Carver and Flying Officer Herbert, along with the wreckage of their aircraft, were located in thick jungle in a remote and sparsely populated area of Quang Nam Province, Vietnam.

The return of Pilot Officer Robert Carver and Flying Officer Michael Herbert of Number 2 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, completes the search for all missing Australian Defence Force personnel who died while on operations during the Vietnam Conflict.











State Funeral for Mike Herbert

Born in Freeling, South Australia, to John and Joan Herbert, Michael completed his secondary schooling at Sacred Heart College in Somerton Park.

Interested in aviation from a young age, he graduated from South Australian Squadron Air Training Corp and was awarded a prestigious Flying Scholarship in 1962.

Michael trained and achieved his civil private pilot's licence aged 16, in 1963, and was accepted as a cadet at the Royal Australian Air Force Academy in January 1964.

After graduating in December 1967, he moved to RAAF Point Cook for training, then on to RAAF Pearce, graduating with his Pilot's Wings in January 1969. He was posted to No 2 Squadron as a pilot in Canberra Bombers.

Flying Officer Michael Herbert arrived in Vietnam in February 1970. On his 199th mission, on the night of 3rd November 1970, flying a Canberra Bomber, Michael and his navigator, Pilot Officer Robert Carver, reached their target and successfully completed the bombing run.

Returning well above the range of anti-aircraft artillery, in fine weather, while climbing from 22,000 to 25,000 feet, the aircraft vanished from radar screens. Despite intensive searching for the next three days, no trace was found.

The aircraft wreckage was discovered in dense jungle near the Laotian border in April 2009. On 18th April 2009, the remains of Flying Officer Michael Herbert and Pilot Officer Robert Carver were found in the same site and were repatriated to Australia on 31st August 2009.

Flying Officer Michael John Patrick Herbert was born on 6th September 1946 and died on 3rd November 1970. He was interred in a private burial on Monday, 7th September 2009 after a Pontifical Concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial at the Cathedral Church of St Francis Xavier, Adelaide.

Official Department of Defence Media Release *Funeral for FLG OFF Michael Herbert: 07 September 2009*

Family and friends, along with government and military representatives, gather for the funeral of Flying Officer Michael Herbert at St Francis Xavier's Cathedral in Adelaide.

Flying Officer Herbert was repatriated by the Royal Australian Air Force from Vietnam to Australia on 30 August 2009 with military ceremonies in both Hanoi, Vietnam and at Royal Australian Air Force Base Richmond, New South Wales.

Flying Officer Herbert and Pilot Officer Robert Carver went missing in action when the Royal Australian Air Force Canberra Bomber they were flying in disappeared on 3 November 1970 while returning to base following a bombing mission.

As part of Operation Magpies Return, the remains of Flying Officer Herbert and Pilot Officer Carver, along with the wreckage of their aircraft, were located in thick jungle in a remote and sparsely populated area of Quang Nam Province, Vietnam.

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