



Personal memento of Delawarean killed in Vietnam returned to family

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The personal effect of a Delawarean killed in Vietnam 45 years ago was returned to his family Thursday.

Two veterans – one from the U.S. and another from South Vietnam – delivered fragments of Capt. Michael Momcilovich's driver's license to his brother and daughter Thursday morning in Wilmington.

Momcilovich died in a helicopter crash while serving in May 1968. Ten years later, Vietnamese vet Ngoc Van Vo's son found the license while scavenging for metal. Van Vo kept it and brought it to Florida when a U.S. soldier he met and worked with in Vietnam, Bill Melfi, helped his family emigrate to the United States in 1990.

The pair have worked to track down Momcilovich's family in the intervening 23 years, and finally found them in February through Nancy Lynch, author of *Vietnam Mailbag: Voices From the War, 1968-1972*. The book is a compilation of letters Lynch exchanged with Delaware residents serving in Vietnam as part of a column she wrote for *News Journal* at the time. One of the first letters she received in 1968 was from Momcilovich, written the day before he was killed. Lynch agreed to help connect the vets to the family and arrange bringing the license to Delaware.

"If we can give them some small measure of closure for their loved one -and that's certainly the intent of [Van Vo and Melfi] – it's extremely gratifying to be a part of it," said Lynch.

Van Vo said he cried when he learned that they'd found Capt. Momcilovich's family, and called the opportunity to handle the fragments to his family Thursday "my miracle."

Melfi added that presenting the license Momcilovich's daughter, Kristin James, made all the work worthwhile.

"She was just 15 months old [when he died]. She never had a chance to say good-bye to her dad. She never had a chance to know him. No Kristen has a piece of her father – one of the things he had closest to him when he died as a memento. [It represents] some kind of closure, something that I felt and Ngoc felt was very necessary."

James said she's extremely grateful for the effort made, especially by Van Vo, to connect her to her dad.

"He could have easily just tossed it aside and he never chose to do that. He was very persistent on his mission to get it here and then their mission to find us. I don't know how you thank someone for that," said James.

Melfi and Van Vo were named the grand marshalls for Thursday night's Wilmington Memorial Day parade in honor of their effort.

- See more at: <http://www.wdde.org/44867-vietnam-vet-memento#sthash.sYBgReGc.dpuf>

Video



[Vets return license fragments to Capt. Momciovich's family in Wilmington.](#)