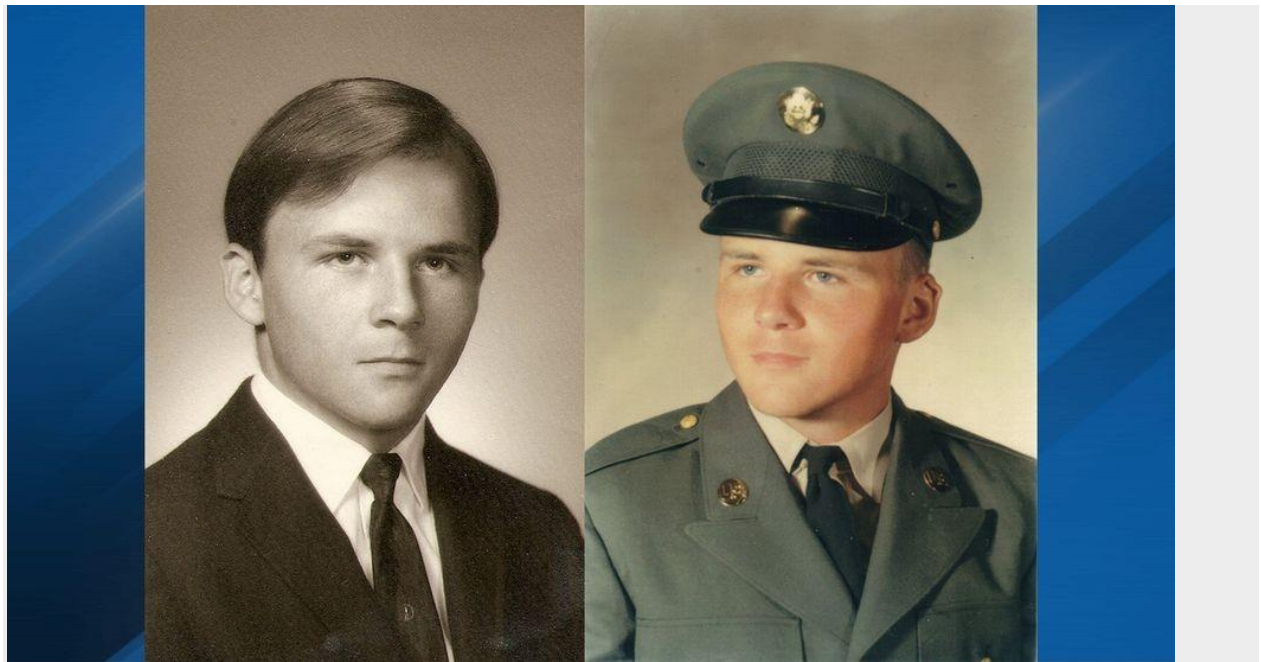


Family finds closure as Vietnam War vet IDed as victim in decades-old Oregon cold case

by KATU Staff

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Larry Eugene Parks - Photos from Oregon State Police courtesy family members

WOODBURN, Ore. — Cold case investigators have identified a “John Doe” victim nearly 45 years after he was found dead along Interstate 5 near Woodburn, Oregon State Police said Friday, helping bring closure to his family decades after his disappearance.

Larry Eugene Parks, a Vietnam War veteran, was 30 years old when he died back in 1980. His family had lost contact with him the year prior, and he was last seen in Pensacola, Florida.

According to Oregon State Police, two men were found dead along Interstate 5 in mid-July of 1980. Michael O'Fallon was found near the Talbot, Ore., exit on July 17, and in the early morning hours of July 18, an unidentified man (confirmed to be Parks more than four decades later) was discovered near Woodburn.

"Due to similarities in the evidence, investigators at the time suspected the two murders were related," Oregon State Police said. "Unfortunately, both investigations went cold as investigative leads dried up."

Three years later, authorities arrested Randy Kraft in Orange County, California. Kraft was later convicted of 16 murders in California, but investigators suspect him of committing more than 60 murders along the West Coast and in Michigan.

Evidence from the two I-5 deaths in Oregon was sent to Orange County for Kraft's trial and sentencing. It remained there until January 2024, when an investigator reached out to OSP's Cold Case Unit, offering to help identify the John Doe's remains using Forensic Investigative Genetic Genealogy.

Parabon Nanolabs used a blood sample to develop a genetic profile, and investigators tracked down possible relatives. After more DNA testing, they confirmed that the man was Larry Parks.

"Until his identification last month, the circumstances of his disappearance were unknown to the Parks family," Oregon State Police said. "With Parks' identity confirmed, investigators are now working to bring resolution to the 45-year-old case."