

Hernando County Sheriff's Office Team with Othram to Identify a 1991 John Doe

After 32 years, investigators have identified the 1991 John Doe as Vietnam veteran Richard Paul Sargent.

Solved

Summary

Over three decades ago, a local hunter discovered the skeletal remains of an unidentified male in the area of Osowaw Boulevard, between Shoal Line Boulevard and Commercial Way. These remains were neither the result of a homicide, nor were they those of a reported missing person from any jurisdiction.

Information was provided to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs), a national clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases throughout the United States. The NamUs record was UP6042.

The remains, which were discovered in November 1991, were sent to several labs in an effort to obtain a DNA profile necessary for identification. With the assistance and cooperation of the District 5 Medical Examiner's Office, and The University of South Florida Forensic Anthropology Department; the remains were sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), DNA Labs International, and University of North Texas's (UNT) respective laboratories. In spite of the efforts, no identification was made.

In February 2022, skeletal remains were sent for further genetic DNA testing to Othram. Othram scientists developed a DNA extract and used Forensic-Grade Genome Sequencing® to develop a comprehensive DNA profile. Othram's in-house genetic genealogy team used the profile to develop investigative leads that were returned investigators.

With these leads, investigators were able to confirm that the unidentified remains belonged to **Richard Paul Sargent**, born July 12, 1946. Detective G. Loydgren proceeded to locate Sargent's family members in Massachusetts. In July 2022, Detective Loydgren made contact with Richard Paul Sargent's family with the help of the Massachusetts State Police and the Yarmouth Police Department in Massachusetts.

Sargent was a Vietnam veteran who served our country honorably; therefore, The American Red Cross arranged to have Sargent's remains shipped to a local funeral home in Massachusetts.

Hernando County Sheriff Al Nienhuis said although we have no evidence that foul play was involved in this particular death, this new information shows that law enforcement never forgets.

"We never stop working behind the scenes to identify remains and, if a crime can be proven, hold criminals accountable. We know that it is important to give family members answers whenever possible, even if their relative went missing decades ago," the Sheriff said. "Although many of these cold cases hit temporary dead ends throughout the years, it is very gratifying when they finally get resolved. I am blessed to work with some very passionate, professional, and dedicated individuals who are patiently working behind the scenes to get answers on dozens of similar cases."