

Vindication

As the Vietnam War was nearing its end, a nightmare began for the family of private first class Alan Barton. Barton was killed by a land mine just outside his base in Vietnam. The Army was unable to identify the remains.

Meanwhile, Barton was unaccounted for. Somehow, the officers in charge did not see the relationship between those two events, and the Army classified Barton as a deserter.

The family, of course, was devastated. Having your son labeled a deserter is a shame for any parents to endure, but much more for this family. Barton's father was a 20-year Army veteran.

Alan Barton's mother did not believe her son had deserted. She insisted on his innocence. For 13 years, her son's unidentified remains lay in a military morgue in Hawaii as she fought to clear his name. Finally, the Army re-checked the morgue records, and this time they correctly identified Alan Barton's remains.

In February 1983, the Army honored the soldier it had wronged. It gave Alan K. Barton a full military funeral. Soldiers sounded a 21-gun salute, and a bugler played Taps. Barton's mother wept into a tightly folded U.S. flag that moments before had draped her son's silver coffin.

In this world, even heroes may be wrongly incriminated. But just as this soldier's name was cleared and honored, so God promises to vindicate His servants. One day, either in this world or at the final judgment, the truth will come out. You can count on it.

--Beecher Hunter