

# Joint Task Force-Full Accounting Briefing Transcript (Partial)

**Lt. Col. Franklin Childress**  
**Public Affairs Officer**

## Repatriation of Remains Announcement

**Tuesday, April 10, 2001**

**Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii**

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**Lt. Col. Childress:** Good Afternoon, I am Lt. Col. Franklin Childress, the Public Affairs Officer of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting.

I would like to talk to you today about the recent helicopter accident in Vietnam. I would like to give a statement, after which I will take your questions. Please hold your questions until the end.

**Lt. Col. Childress:** Good Afternoon, I am Lieutenant Colonel Franklin Childress, the Public Affairs Officer of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting.

I would like to talk to you today about the recent helicopter accident in Vietnam. I will give a statement, after which I will take your questions. Please hold your questions until the end.

This afternoon I want to provide you an update regarding the accident involving seven Americans and nine Vietnamese personnel in Quang Binh Province in central Vietnam.

On behalf of Brigadier General Harry B. Axson Jr. and the entire JTF-FA family, I would like to express our sincere appreciation for the outpouring of condolence letters, e-mail and calls we have received from family members, veterans groups and friends. It is a testament to the great work these men did, that these organizations have sent their heartfelt sympathies, support and words of appreciation to our unit.

I want the families of our fallen comrades to know that we consider each and every one a hero. They died in faithful service to the nation on a mission that is of great importance to the families of the unaccounted-for and illustrates the commitment of our government to account-for and return our fallen comrades. To the families: our prayers and deepest sympathies go out to you at this time of loss.

Let me now update you with the plan for the repatriation and return of the remains.

General Axson and a twelve-man honor guard representing all four branches of the military will depart tonight from Hickam Air Force Base bound for Vietnam. On Thursday in Vietnam, a memorial service honoring both the Americans and Vietnamese lost in the accident will be held at the Daewoo Hotel in Hanoi.

A Repatriation Ceremony for the seven Americans will be held at Noi Bai International Airport on Friday (Vietnam time). At this ceremony, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Pete Peterson and General Axson will honor the servicemen killed. Following the ceremony, the flag-draped transfer cases will be placed aboard a U.S. C-17 by a military honor guard for the trip back to the United States. General Axson and the U.S. contingent will escort the remains back to the United States. An all-service honor guard will commemorate their arrival in Hawaii with a ceremony at Hickam Air Force Base tentatively scheduled Friday, April 13. The other details for this ceremony will be announced as soon as they become available.

I want to say in closing, that the mission of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting to achieve the fullest possible accounting of Americans unaccounted-for as a result of the Vietnam War will continue.