

June 28, 2001

RELEASE NO. #01-18

VIETNAM REPATRIATION CEREMONY TO BE HELD AT NOI BAI AIRPORT

JTF-FA DETACHMENT 2, HANOI - Five sets of remains believed to be those of unaccounted-for U.S. servicemen from the war in Southeast Asia are scheduled to be repatriated to the United States in a ceremony at Hanoi's Noi Bai International Airport on Monday morning, July 9 at 11:30 a.m. Vietnam time (Sunday, Hawaii time).

The remains were recovered by a team of 96 mostly Hawaii-based military and civilian specialists who were deployed to Vietnam in February and March. Eighteen cases involving aircraft and ground losses were investigated and six sites were excavated during the 30-day operation.

Since 1973, 619 American service members, formerly listed as unaccounted-for, have been recovered, identified and returned to their families. There are currently 1,966 Americans still unaccounted-for from the war in Southeast Asia, 1,481 in Vietnam.

The repatriation ceremony is a solemn ceremony in which remains are signed over from the Vietnamese government to the Commander of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting's Detachment 2. The remains are then placed into transfer cases by an honor guard consisting of personnel from all four U.S. military services. The cases are draped with a U.S. flag before being loaded onto an Air Force strategic aircraft for the long trip back to the United States.

The remains will be flown from Hanoi to Yokota Air Force Base, Japan, and then to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. Upon arriving at Hickam AFB, the remains will receive honors and be transported to the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii for forensic identification analysis.