

## MEMORANDUM FOR CORRESPONDENTS

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The remains of two American servicemen previously unaccounted-for from Southeast Asia have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial in the United States.

They are identified as Maj. James B. East, USAF, of Oklahoma City, Okla. and Lt. Col. Thomas R. Morgan, USAF, of Akron, Ohio.

On April 26, 1969, East was attacking an enemy mortar position in Laos when his A-1J Skyraider was struck by enemy ground fire. The aircraft crashed and exploded.

In 1994, a Lao witness identified a possible crash site associated with that of East. A joint U.S./Lao Recovery Team excavated the site later that year and found aircraft wreckage, pilot-related items, and human bone fragments.

On January 26, 1967, Morgan was conducting a strike mission over a target in South Vietnam. As the attack began, pilots in other aircraft on the mission observed smoke trailing from Morgan's F100D Super Sabre. His plane burst into flames and broke in half prior to impact.

Investigations of Morgan's crash site were conducted in 1967 and 1968 by American investigators, but no remains were located. A joint U.S./Vietnamese recovery team in 1994 excavated the crash site and found human remains. In 1996, a local Vietnamese turned over more bone fragments and personal effects of Morgan scavenged from the crash site. Morgan's remains were subsequently identified.

Mitochondrial DNA testing was used to confirm the two identifications. The remains will be shipped from the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii at a date to be determined by the families.

With the identification of these two servicemen, there remain 2,116 unaccounted-for Americans from the Vietnam War.

The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the governments of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic which resulted in the accounting of these servicemen. We hope that such cooperation will bring increased results in the future. Achieving the fullest possible accounting for these Americans is of the highest national priority.