

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 1, 1998

U.S. AIR FORCE COLD WARRIORS TO BE BURIED AT ARLINGTON

The remains of 17 U.S. Air Force airmen shot down during the Cold War have been identified as a group and will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery on Wednesday, Sept. 2, 1998.

The airmen were crewmembers aboard a C-130 Hercules aircraft on Sept. 2, 1958 when it was shot down by MiGs over Soviet Armenia. The C-130 was flying a reconnaissance mission near the Armenian border when it strayed into Soviet territory. The aircraft crashed and burned with 17 crewmen on board.

In 1958 the Soviet Union returned the partial remains of 6 of the 17 crewmen. Later that year the U.S. Air Force and the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology identified three of the six remains and the remaining 14 crewmen were listed as unaccounted-for. Identifications were made in 1996 and 1997 for the three remains unidentified from those repatriated in 1958.

A subsequent review of the case by the Air Force concluded that no crewmen had been able to escape from the aircraft.

A recovery team from the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii excavated the crash site in 1993. The team recovered more than 2,000 bone and tooth fragments, life support equipment, personal effects and aircraft wreckage.

Given the incomplete nature of the remains recovered from the crash site and those of the six men previously identified, a group remains identification was made for the entire crew. A group remains identification is possible because the remains recovered represent all of the manifested crew. The remains will be interred as a group at Arlington.

Identified in 1958: Capt. Rudy J. Swiestra of Compton, Calif; Capt. Edward J. Jeruss of New Haven, Conn; 1st Lt. Ricardo M. Villarreal of Laredo, Texas

Identified in 1996: Airman 2nd Class Archie T. Bourg Jr. of Parish, La.

Identified in 1997: Capt. John E. Simpson of Richland, Wash. and Airman 2nd Class Gerald H. Medeiros of New Bedford, Mass.

Identified as a group in 1998: Capt. Paul E. Duncan of Richland, Wash.; Staff Sgt. LaRoy Price of Hodgenville, Ky.; Tech. Sgt. Arthur L. Mello of Erie, Pa.; Airman 1st Class Robert J. Oshinskie of Shamokin, Pa.; Airman 2nd Class James E. Ferguson Jr. of Kingsford Heights, Ind.; Airman 2nd Class Harold T. Kamps of Lena, Wis.; Airman 2nd Class Clement O. Mankins of Point Marion, Pa.; Airman 2nd Class Robert H. Moore of West Monroe, La.; and Airman 2nd Class Joel H. Fields of Cynthiana, Ky.

Out of respect for the families' privacy two names are not being released.

With the group identification of these 17 men, 18 Americans have been identified from Cold War losses, and 123 are still unaccounted-for.