

NEWS RELEASE
JOINT TASK FORCE-FULL ACCOUNTING PUBLIC AFFAIRS
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MIA REPATRIATION CEREMONY FRIDAY

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii – Remains believed to be those of 11 unaccounted-for American servicemen from two different wars will arrive at Hickam Air Force Base Friday at 9 a.m.

On Tuesday (Hawaii Time), two sets of remains were returned to U.S. possession during a repatriation ceremony at Vientiane International Airport in Laos. Remains believed to be those of six Americans will be returned today (Hawaii Time) during a similar ceremony at Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi, Vietnam. Those eight sets of remains, plus three others repatriated Nov. 11 in Pyongyang, North Korea, will be transported by a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft (from McChord AFB, Wash.) to Andersen AFB, Guam, where a ceremony will be held Thursday night to signify their return to U.S. soil. Their arrival at Hickam AFB on Friday begins the identification phase at the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii.

The eight sets of remains from Laos and Vietnam were recovered by military and civilian members of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii during three separate search and recovery missions held from August to November. The three sets of remains from North Korea were recovered in October and November by a team from the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii.

Since 1973, 540 American service members, formerly listed as missing and unaccounted-for from the war in Southeast Asia, have been identified and returned to their families, with many others currently in the identification phase. There are currently 2,043 Americans still unaccounted-for in Indochina – 1,523 in Vietnam, 438 in Laos, 74 in Cambodia, and eight in China.

Joint North Korean/U.S. Government efforts to recover more than 8,100 unaccounted-for Americans from the Korean War began in 1996. To date, three servicemen from the Korean War have been identified and returned home to their families, with many others currently in the identification phase.

More information about the U.S. Government's worldwide Full Accounting mission can be found on the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Affairs Office website at www.dtic.mil/dpmo.

(Note: Hawaii-based media wishing to cover the arrival ceremony Friday need to call the Hickam Public Affairs Office at 449-2490 by 4 p.m., Thursday.)