

June 28, 2001

RELEASE NO. #01-17

LAO REPATRIATION CEREMONY TO BE HELD IN SAVANNAKHET

CAMP H.M. SMITH, HAWAII - Remains believed to be those of three unaccounted-for American servicemen from the war in Southeast Asia will be repatriated to U.S. control.

On Saturday, July 7 (12:30 p.m. Lao time, Friday Hawaii time), three sets of remains will be returned to U.S. possession during a repatriation ceremony at Laos' Savannakhet Airport. At the ceremony, the remains will be signed over by the Lao government to the Commander of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting's Detachment 3. After the ceremony, the remains will begin their trip home to American soil. Upon their arrival at Hickam AFB, they will undergo an extensive forensic identification process at the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii (CILHI).

The three sets of remains from Laos were recovered by military and civilian members of Joint Task Force-Full Accounting and the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory-Hawaii during a search and recovery mission conducted earlier this year.

Since 1973, 619 American service members, formerly listed as missing and unaccounted-for from the war in Southeast Asia, have been identified and returned to their families. There are currently 1,966 Americans still unaccounted-for in Southeast Asia – 1,481 in Vietnam, 417 in Laos, 60 in Cambodia, and eight in China.

For additional information about the JTF-FA's mission or the repatriation ceremony in Laos contact LTC Franklin Childress at (808)-477-5301. More information about the U.S. Government's Full Accounting mission in Southeast Asia can be found on the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Affairs Office website at www.dtic.mil/dpmo.