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MIA Search Team Deploys to Laos

CAMP H.M. SMITH, Hawaii - A Joint Field Activity consisting of one investigation team and three recovery teams will deploy from Hickam Air Force Base to Laos on 4 Aug, with hopes of recovering remains leading to the identification of American servicemen still unaccounted for from the war in Southeast Asia. The teams consist of 50 mostly Hawaii-based U.S. military specialists from Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii and the Joint Field Operating Base, Hawaii (Stony Beach).

On Aug 9, team members will be joined by technical representatives from the Lao People's Democratic Republic to begin joint investigations and remains recovery operations in two Lao provinces. Up to 23 cases involving aircraft losses are scheduled for investigation during the 30-day operation. In addition, three primary sites involving aircraft and ground losses are scheduled for excavation.

Since 1973, the remains of 628 American service members, formerly listed as unaccounted for, have been identified and returned to their families. There are currently 1,957 Americans still unaccounted-for from the war in Southeast Asia, 415 in Laos.

The investigation and recovery teams consist of members from the Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps. as well as Department of Defense civilians.