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VIETNAM WAR MIAS IDENTIFIED

The remains of two U.S. Air Force servicemen killed in action during the Vietnam War have been identified and are being returned home to their families. They are Master Sgt. Thomas E. Heideman and Capt. Craig B. Schiele, both of Chicago.

On Oct. 24, 1970, Heideman and Schiele were crewmembers of a CH-3E helicopter as the lead of a two-ship formation on a mission to extract friendly forces from Laos. Shortly after takeoff, the helicopter crashed into nearby dense jungle. Eight Laotians and two American servicemen were rescued. A rescue mission was continued the next morning, but there was no evidence of survivors. The only body recovered from the crash site at that time was later identified as the pilot, Capt. Schiele, who was subsequently buried in Bartlesville, Okla.

On Dec. 14, 1994, a U.S. - Lao team, led by Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, conducted an investigation at the crash site in the Laotian province of Khammouan. Material from the recovered wreckage included aircraft debris and personal artifacts but no human remains.

In the spring of 1995, a second joint team excavated the crash site and recovered human remains and additional personal affects that were submitted to the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI). By compiling eyewitness accounts and other physical evidence such as personal artifacts and the human remains, the forensic scientists at CILHI identified the remains as those of Schiele and Heideman.

A group burial with full military honors for these two servicemen will be conducted June 7 at Arlington National Cemetery.