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VIETNAM MIAS IDENTIFIED

The remains of three U.S. soldiers previously unaccounted for from the war in Vietnam have been identified and will be buried as a group at Arlington National Cemetery on Friday, Nov. 8.

They are Capt. Ronald D. Briggs, Philadelphia, Sgt. 1st Class Robert C. O'Hara, Lost Nation, Iowa; and Maj. David E. Padgett, Washington, Ind.

On Feb. 6, 1969, Padgett and O'Hara were crewmembers on a UH-1H Huey helicopter, flying Briggs and three other soldiers on an emergency resupply mission in South Vietnam. While enroute from a landing zone in the Quang Tri province, the crew radioed that the flight was returning due to poor weather conditions and reduced visibility. When the flight did not return, a search and rescue mission was initiated, but was unsuccessful in locating the missing aircraft.

In December 1993, a joint U.S. and Vietnam investigation team, led by the Joint Task Force-Full Accounting, interviewed several local informants in Quang Tri province. One claimed to possess the remains of a missing serviceman. Two months later, the remains were repatriated to U.S. officials and submitted to the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii (CILHI) for analysis.

On July 16, 1995, another joint U.S. and Vietnam team interviewed a witness who gave information about a helicopter crash site in the Huong Hoa District. After investigating the site, the team recovered aircraft debris, personal artifacts, and human remains that corresponded to the missing aircraft and its crewmembers. This additional evidence was also transported to CILHI.

From July 1996 to October 1996, additional remains, personal artifacts, and aircraft debris were recovered from the crash site. Some of the remains were submitted by CILHI to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory for mitochondrial DNA analysis. By analyzing dental records and comparing the DNA of skeletal fragments found at the crash site to that of maternal family members, CILHI scientists were able to make identifications of the missing servicemen. The remains of three others from the same incident were previously identified.