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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## VIETNAM WAR MIAS IDENTIFIED

Eleven U.S. Air Force servicemen missing in action from the Vietnam War have been identified and are being returned to their families for burial.

They are identified as Col. Charles P. Claxton, Chicago, Ill.; Col. Donald E. Fisher, Halfway, Ore.; Lt. Col. Edwin N. Osborne, Jr., Raiford, Fla.; Lt. Col. Gerald G. Van Buren, Toledo, Ohio; Lt. Col. Gordon J. Wenaas, Mayville, N.D.; Maj. Frank C. Parker III, Bridgeport, Pa.; Chief Master Sgt. Jack McCrary, Madison, Tenn.; Chief Master Sgt. Wayne A. Eckley, Enterprise, Ore.; Chief Master Sgt. Gean P. Clapper, Altoona, Pa.; and Chief Master Sgt. James R. Williams, Charlotte, N.C. The name of the eleventh crewmember is not being released at the request of his family.

On Dec. 29, 1967, their Air Force C-130E *Hercules* took off from Nha Trang, Republic of Vietnam, on a special mission over North Vietnam. Approximately four hours into their mission, the crew made a radio report from an area near Lai Chau Province, North Vietnam. When they failed to return to base, a visual and electronic search was initiated. About a month later, the search was ended when the aircraft could not be located.

In October and November 1992, a joint U.S./Socialist Republic of Vietnam team interviewed five witnesses who had knowledge of the crash site. Two of the witnesses had visited the area of the crash in 1967 or 1968 and provided information about the site. Some of the witnesses turned over identification cards or tags that contained the names of some of the crew members. The team visited the site and recovered some human remains.

In February 1993, the government of Vietnam turned over additional remains and a photocopy of more identification media. In October and November a joint team led by Joint Task Force-Full Accounting excavated the suspected crash site where they recovered aircraft wreckage, personal effects and human remains. In 1994 and 1995, Vietnamese citizens and government officials turned over additional remains.

Department of Defense analysts concluded from the distribution of the aircraft wreckage that the C-130 hit a mountainside and that the crew was unaware of the impending crash. Nine parachutes were accounted for among the artifacts recovered, and there are no unresolved live sighting reports associated with this incident.

Analysis of the remains and other evidence by the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii established the identification of the eleven servicemen.

The U.S. government welcomes and appreciates the cooperation of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that resulted in the accounting of these servicemen. We hope that such cooperation will bring increased results in the future. Achieving the fullest possible accounting of Americans missing in action is of the highest national priority.