

HANOI TO RETURN MORE U.S. REMAINS

Group Due for Repatriation Today Could Consist of 36 People, Largest Yet

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 (AP) — The Pentagon announced today that Vietnam intends to turn over to the United States what could be the largest single group of remains of American servicemen missing from the Vietnam War.

The Defense Department, in a statement, said the return of the remains had been scheduled for Thursday in Hanoi and would include what the Vietnamese believe are the remains of 38 people.

The largest previous repatriation of remains later identified as those of American servicemen occurred in August 1985, when 25 sets of remains were returned. In April, Vietnam turned over the remains of 27 people, but the identification process for those is not yet complete. In the past, remains returned by Vietnam have occasionally included those of Vietnamese.

The Vietnamese Government also has said it will share other, unspecified information about the status of 12 additional cases of missing Americans, said Lieut. Col. Keith Schneider, a Pentagon spokesman.

U.S. Is Appreciative

"Arrangements have been made to receive the remains in Hanoi and fly them to the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii for subsequent evaluation in an effort to achieve individual identification," the Pentagon said in its statement.

"The U.S. Government appreciates the initiative taken by Vietnam to repatriate these remains and hopes to continue the increasing cooperation to resolve this longstanding issue."

The Pentagon said it had not received any information from Vietnam on precisely where the various remains had been recovered or the circumstances surrounding their discovery.

But Colonel Schneider added that "we understand the remains as well as the information are related to incidents that occurred in the northern provinces" during the Vietnam War.

"That's all we know at this point," he said.

2,383 Listed as Missing

Currently, 2,383 Americans are listed as missing in Indochina as a result of the Vietnam War, of whom 1,747 are listed as missing in either North or South Vietnam.

All told, the remains of 172 Americans have been repatriated to the United States from Vietnam and subsequently identified by the Army laboratory since the end of the war.