



AP Wirephoto

Flag-draped containers holding the remains of the dead servicemen were taken off the C-141A

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Remains of 5 Return

POWS

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War Dead Finally Get Home

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Their bodies lay in the same aluminum containers that were used during the Vietnam war and they were flown back to their home soil in the same type of military transport that returned thousands of their comrades.

Five of them were under the flags in the cargo hold when the big C-141A Starlifter landed here at noon yesterday — and they had been gone a long time.

In their honor, a color guard with the nation's flag and the flags of the four military services marched to the rear of the high-wing jet — the planes that sometimes brought home more than 500 of the same containers a month during the bloodiest periods of the war.

The color guard snapped to attention as a 20-member honor guard carried the flag-draped containers from the plane, past relatives and military brass to five waiting hearses.

Standing silently beside Representative Paul N. McCloskey Jr. of Menlo Park, the ranking Republican member of the House Select Committee on Missing Persons in Southeast Asia, was one of the young sons of Petty Officer Kenneth Ward Pugh of Lancaster (Los Angeles county).

He was a baby when his father — a Navy parachute rigger — was killed when his Navy attack bomber was shot down somewhere over the Luichow peninsula in China on April 12, 1966.

Petty Officer Pugh's ashes, along with those of Lieutenant Commander Jimmy Lee Buckley of Sioux City, Iowa, a Navy pilot who disappeared Aug. 21, 1967, near the Chinese border, were returned to American Red Cross representatives in Hong Kong after President Ford's visit to China.

The other three bodies, skeletal remains, had been turned over to a four-member delegation of the House committee in Hanoi on December 21.

They were Navy Commander

Jesse Junior Taylor of Los Alamitos (Orange county), who was shot down Nov. 12, 1965; Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Crosley James Fitton Jr. of Hartford, Conn., shot down Feb. 29, 1968 and Air Force Captain Ronald Dwight Perry of Galleta, Tex., a navigator aboard a B-52 that was hit by an anti-aircraft missile on Dec. 21, 1972.

The brief ceremony ended when the five waiting hearses had been loaded.

"We hope these are only the first five of perhaps as many as 400 men," said McCloskey, noting that the men honored yesterday were returned home because of "an act of friendship" by the Chinese and North Vietnamese governments.

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