

M17
Crash
Memorial
Vietnam
Remarks

April 7

2011

MG STEPHEN
TOM

Thank you all for being here today to pay tribute to our fallen comrades. I want to especially recognize the family members of those men who tragically left us ten years ago, from both our countries. To Rennie and Caroline Cory, thank you for making this emotional and arduous trip. Your presence here today is greatly honored and appreciated by all of the members of the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, and DPMO.

It's been said that a person's life is often measured by the difference he or she makes in this world. Each one of the men we remember today, seven Americans and nine Vietnamese, made a difference measured by their vast accomplishments with the VNOSMP and JPAC.

Today, the MIA recovery partnership between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the United States has evolved into one of great respect and commitment, and has never been stronger.

The memorial monument that Vietnam has so graciously provided today will become an important symbol of the joint accomplishments that the VNOSMP and JPAC have made since the 1970's as well as a touching tribute to sixteen people who gave their lives searching here for U.S. servicemen ten years ago.

All of these men, Americans and Vietnamese risked their lives, and it is with great humility that I honor their sacrifices.

We have travelled near and far to honor all of these men: a small, but hopefully, meaningful gesture, signifying the importance of remembering those who perished doing this most honorable humanitarian mission. Today, simultaneously with this ceremony at JPAC headquarters in Hawaii, a similar memorial service is being held in honor of these 16 American and Vietnamese heroes.

Let me conclude by saying, all of these men paid the ultimate sacrifice trying to honor and bring closure to comrades they never met.

They will be missed by all those who knew them and by those who know only of their great sacrifice... but most importantly, they will not be forgotten.