

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**U.S. POW/MIA TEAMS BEGIN NORTH KOREA OPERATIONS**

Department of Defense specialists have arrived in North Korea to begin operations to recover the remains of servicemen missing in action from the Korean War.

The 28-person team, comprised primarily of personnel from the U.S. Army Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii, will operate for approximately 30 days in an area about 60 miles north of Pyongyang. If remains are recovered during this operation, they will be airlifted via U.S. Air Force aircraft from Pyongyang, and repatriated at the end of this month.

Negotiators from the Defense Department's Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office reached agreement with the North Koreans in December to set the schedule for operations in 2001. The agreement calls for 10 joint recovery operations. Eight of the operations will be in the areas of Unsan, Kaechon and Kujang, where battles involving the U.S. Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry and 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry were fought in November 1950.

Later in the year, teams will conduct two additional operations on the east and west sides of the Chosin Reservoir in the northeast portion of North Korea. Korean War analysts believe that as many as 750 U.S. soldiers and Marines may have been lost during battles in November and December 1950 near the Chosin.

The joint U.S.-North Korean teams have recovered 107 sets of remains since these operations began in 1996. Eight have been identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors. Approximately 10 more are in the final stages of the forensic identification process.

The 10 operations in North Korea this year will conclude with a final repatriation on November 11.

More than 8,100 American servicemen are missing in action from the war.