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REMAINS OF U.S. SERVICEMEN RECOVERED IN NORTH KOREA

Remains believed to be those of eight American soldiers missing in action from the Korean War were repatriated in formal ceremonies today in Korea.

The remains were flown on a U.S. Air Force aircraft from Pyongyang, North Korea, under escort of a uniformed U.S. honor guard to Yokota Air Base, Japan, where a U.N. Command repatriation ceremony was held.

A joint team operating near the Chosin Reservoir in North Korea recovered five sets of remains believed to be those of U.S. Army soldiers from the 7th Infantry Division who fought against Chinese forces November-December 1950.

Additionally, a second team recovered three sets of remains in the area along the Kuryong River near the junction of Unsan and Kujang counties, about 60 miles north of Pyongyang. The area was the site of battles between communist forces and the U.S. Army's 1st Cavalry and 25th Infantry Divisions in November 1950. Approximately 1,000 Americans are estimated to have been lost in battles of the Chosin campaign.

The 28-person U.S. contingent was composed primarily of specialists from the Army's Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii.

The Defense Department's Prisoner of War and Missing Personnel Office negotiated terms with the North Koreans in June, which led to the scheduling of three operations this year. This repatriation marks the end of the second of this year's three operations. The remaining operation is set for Sept. 28-Oct. 29.

Twenty-four individual joint operations have been conducted since 1996 in North Korea, during which 167 sets of remains believed to be those of U.S. soldiers have been recovered. Thirteen have been positively identified and returned to their families for burial with military honors.

Of the 88,000 U.S. servicemembers missing in action from all conflicts, more than 8,100 are from the Korean War.