

## U.S., North Korea End Stalemate Over MIA Remains

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American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, October 22, 1999 -- Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary Bob Jones left Oct. 21 to accept remains believed to be four Korean War GIs that North Korean officials refused to repatriate last May.

Jones is the chief of DoD's Office of POW/Missing Personnel Affairs. His trip is the result of an Oct. 14 agreement U.S. and North Korean officials negotiated in New York to end the five-month-old stalemate, spokesman Larry Greer said.

Greer said the remains were recovered by a U.S.-North Korean recovery team in northwest North Korea near where other remains were found on earlier excavations. He said negotiators agreed to establish procedures for repatriating of remains at the airport in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital.

After receiving the remains, Jones will launch the sixth joint U.S.-North Korean search and recovery operation in that country this year. The operation is part of an agreement hammered out by the two countries in December 1998 that calls for six joint operations between April and November 1999. The agreement also included two joint archival reviews, during which U.S. archivists can access North Korean documents relating to U.S. personnel lost or captured during the Korean War.

Jones went to North Korea to keep a pledge. He said that when the stalemate began in May he vowed to families of missing servicemen and to veterans organizations to "do everything I could to ensure that this impasse was resolved and that the remains were repatriated."

His agenda is to fly the remains to Yokota Air Base, Japan, for appropriate repatriation ceremonies, then to continue to Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. There, the remains will be given to the Army's Central Identification Laboratory for identification purposes.

Jones said the United States has asked the North Koreans for greater access to areas such as the Chosin Reservoir and former POW camps, where greater numbers of missing might be found. The Chinese government is helping the U.S. coordinate meetings with the North Koreans, Jones said, which "shows an increased level of cooperation on behalf of the Chinese government, and that's very important to us."

Jones said there are 8,215 American servicemen still missing from the Korean War. Each service has established a toll-free number to keep families advised of Korean War and Cold War remains recovery operations.

Family members should contact the appropriate service casualty office to provide their name, address and relationship to their loved one. The Army number is 1-800-892-2490; the Navy's, 1-800-443-9298; the Air Force's, 1-800-531-5501; and the Marine Corps', 1-800-847-1597. Families of civilians missing from these conflicts may contact the State Department at (202) 647-6769.