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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NORTH KOREA REPATRIATES REMAINS TO DOD DELEGATION

A Department of Defense delegation has returned from North Korea with remains believed to be those of four American soldiers missing in action from the Korean War.

Led by Robert L. Jones, deputy assistant secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs, the delegation arrived at Yokota Air Base, Japan Monday afternoon (Japan time) for a brief ceremony which included U.S. and U.N. Command honor guards.

Jones led a delegation of Department of Defense officials to Pyongyang, North Korea, to accept the remains that were located during joint excavations earlier this year. The four soldiers, thought to have been killed at the battle of the Chongchon River between late November and early December of 1950, represent only a few of hundreds killed in that region during a period of fierce fighting. More than 8,200 Americans remain missing from the Korean War.

Since joint recovery operations began in North Korea in 1996, the United States has recovered remains believed to be those of 39 American soldiers. Of those, three have been positively identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors. A U.S. recovery team is currently in North Korea, conducting the final joint recovery operation for 1999.

Jones will accompany the remains to Hawaii where they will be transferred to the Army's Central Identification Laboratory. There they will undergo a complete forensic review, including the use of mitochondrial DNA, if appropriate, to make identification.

Discussions concerning recovery operations during the year 2000 are expected to take place with the North Koreans in December.