

No. 527-99
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 12, 1999

KOREAN WAR REMAINS REPATRIATED

A Department of Defense delegation has returned from North Korea with remains believed to be those of three American soldiers missing in action from the Korean War. The delegation arrived at Yokota Air Base, Japan, Thursday afternoon (Japan time) for a brief ceremony.

Officials from DoD and the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii flew to Pyongyang, North Korea, on Thursday to accept the remains that were located during the joint excavation which began in late October. The three 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 42 American soldiers. Of those, three have been positively identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors. This joint recovery operation is the last of three conducted in North Korea during 1999 and the 12th since 1996.

Following the Yokota Air Base ceremony, the remains will be flown to the Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii where they will undergo a complete forensic review, including the use of mitochondrial DNA, if appropriate, to make identification.

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