



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KOREAN WAR MISSING IN ACTION SERVICEMAN IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of a U.S. Army soldier, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial in Schererville, Ind.

He is Private First Class Lowell W. Bellar of Gary, Ind. He is to be buried on July 15, the date of his birth in 1931.

In Nov.-Dec. 1950 Bellar's unit, Company M of the 31st Infantry Regiment, was surrounded and overrun by Chinese communist forces near the Chosin Reservoir in northeast North Korea. Elements of his unit joined others in their breakout and fighting retreat as they made their way to relative safety further south to an area near the village of Hagaru. Regimental records compiled after the battle indicate that Bellar was killed in action on Dec. 1, 1950. More than 1,000 men, primarily Marines and Army soldiers, are still missing in North Korea from the Chosin campaign.

The DPMO opened negotiations with North Korea in January 1996 for U.S. teams to recover remains of servicemen still missing from the Korean War. Joint U.S.-North Korean recovery teams, led by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) excavated a site in Sept. and again in Oct. 2001 believed to be the location where American soldiers were buried. They recovered remains of 12 individuals, some of which were later identified as those of Bellar.

Laboratory analysis of the remains by forensic scientists at JPAC led to Bellar's identification. Comparison of Bellar's mitochondrial DNA data with samples from his family were key factors in their finding.

Of the 88,000 Americans unaccounted-for from all conflicts, approximately 8,100 are from the Korean War. Remains believed to be those of more than 220 American servicemen have been recovered in joint operations in North Korea since 1996.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO Web site at <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo> or call (703) 699-1169.

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