



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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U.S. SOLDIERS MIA FROM KOREAN WAR IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today that the remains of two U.S. servicemen, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and returned to their families for burial with full military honors.

They are Sgt. Donald M. LaForest, of Bay City, Mich., and Master Sgt. John G. Linkowski, of Buffalo, N.Y., both U.S. Army. They will be buried Oct. 14 at Arlington National Cemetery near Washington D.C.

Representatives from the Army met with the soldiers' next-of-kin to explain the recovery and identification process, and to coordinate interment with military honors on behalf of the Secretary of the Army.

In early November 1950, the men were assigned to the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division occupying a defensive position near the town of Unsan in the bend of the Kuryong River known as the "Camel's Head." Two enemy elements attacked the U.S. forces, collapsing their perimeter and forcing a withdrawal. The soldiers' unit was involved in heavy fighting which devolved into hand-to-hand combat around their command post. Almost 400 men of the 8th Cavalry Regiment were reported missing in action or killed in action from the battle at Unsan.

In late November 1950, a U.S. soldier captured during the battle of Unsan reported during his debriefing that he and nine other American soldiers were moved to a house near the battlefield. The POWs were taken to an adjacent field and shot. Three of the 10 Americans survived, though one later died. He provided detailed information on the location of the incident and the identities of the other soldiers.

Following the armistice in 1953 and the release of POWs, the other surviving soldier confirmed the details provided in 1950.

In May 2004, a joint U.S.-North Korean team excavated a mass grave near the "Camel's Head." An elderly North Korean national reported that he had witnessed the death of seven or eight U.S. soldiers near that location and provided the team with a general description of the burial site.

The excavation team recovered human remains and other personal artifacts, ultimately leading to the identification of seven soldiers from that site. Among other forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from JPAC used dental comparisons for both men and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory used mitochondrial DNA, which matched that of each soldier's relatives in the identification of their remains.

More than 2,000 servicemen died as prisoners of war during the Korean War. More than 8,000 still remain missing from the conflict.

For additional information on the Defense Department's mission to account for missing Americans, visit the DPMO web site at www.dtic.mil/dpmo or call (703) 699-1420.

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