



News Release

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 6, 2012

SOLDIER MISSING IN ACTION FROM KOREAN WAR IDENTIFIED

The Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office announced today that the remains of a U.S. serviceman, missing in action from the Korean War, have been identified and will be returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Richard L. Harris, 23, of Spokane, Wash., will be buried April 10, in Kent, Wash. In late Nov. 26, 1950, Harris, and elements of the 2nd Infantry Division were in a defensive line north of Kujang, North Korea, when they were attacked by Chinese forces, in what became known as the Battle of the Chongchon. Harris was reported missing in action on Nov. 30, 1950. In 1953, after Operation Big Switch, in which captured soldiers were returned, American soldiers reported that Harris had been captured and died on Jan. 22, 1951, from malnutrition while in a prisoner of war camp in North Korea. His remains were not among those returned by Communist forces after the war.

In 2005, a joint U.S./D.P.R.K. recovery team excavated a burial site in Unsan County, North Korea. The site correlated with the position of the 2nd Infantry Division in late November, 1950. The team recovered human remains, and submitted a total of 69 samples to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) for analysis.

Among forensic identification tools and circumstantial evidence, scientists from the JPAC and AFDIL used dental records and mitochondrial DNA – which matched that of Harris's cousins – in the identification of his remains.

Today, more than 7,900 Americans remain unaccounted-for from the Korean War. Identifications continue to be made from the remains that were returned to the United States, using forensic and DNA technology.

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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