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POW/MIA TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA RESUME

A delegation from the Department of Defense has departed for Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to begin negotiations with North Korea on the recovery of the remains of American soldiers missing in action from the Korean War.

More than 8,100 American servicemen are MIA from that conflict. As a result of previous negotiations led by the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office, U.S. teams have conducted 12 joint recovery operations inside North Korea during 1996-99 and have recovered 42 sets of remains believed to be those of American soldiers.

The U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory Hawaii has positively identified three of the 42, with about 10 others in the forensic identification process.

The primary goal of these talks is to renew bilateral discussions with the Korean Peoples Army to achieve the fullest possible accounting of American servicemen. The team will seek to reach agreement on the conduct of a single, expanded joint recovery operation in areas where North Korea claims to have disinterred four or five sets of U.S. remains. Similar talks in December 1999 ended without agreement.