

## North Korea Repatriates 12 Sets of Remains

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American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, July 25, 2000 -- The remains believed to be those of 12 American soldiers missing since 1950 were returned to the United States July 22.

A joint U.S.-North Korean team found the remains about 60 miles north of the capital of Pyongyang. The area was the scene of fierce fighting between U.S. and Chinese forces in November 1950.

Bob Jones, deputy assistant secretary of defense for POW/MIA Affairs, said he was extremely pleased with the results of the joint effort.


"These are very emotional affairs," Jones said during an interview. "We are welcoming back to American soil individuals who have been standing in the defense of their country for over 50 years. They have been lost and we are beginning the process to return them to their loved ones."

The remains are believed to be those of men who fought with the 1st Cavalry Division, the 2nd Infantry Division and the 25th Infantry Division. This brings the total to 54 sets of remains repatriated from North Korea since the effort started in 1996, said Larry Greer, a spokesman for the POW/MIA office. Five sets of remains have been identified and 10 others are in the final stages of identification, DoD officials said.

AFRTS TV Report: "Remains Returned from North Korea" can be viewed at [28.8 Kbps](#) or [56 Kbps](#).

"Chances of identifying virtually every one we find are pretty good," Greer said. "If, however, we need to use mitochondrial DNA (to identify remains) and cannot find a family link to a GI, it may make identifications more difficult."

But the remains from North Korea help the identification process, said lab officials. Most of those missing from Korea are ground losses. U.S. officials interviewed former prisoners of war and, sometimes, the soldiers who "buried their buddies in a battlefield situation," Greer said. This enabled the recovery teams to pinpoint the locations to an extent.

 AFRTS Radio Report: [Twelve sets of remains returned from North Korea](#)

The soil conditions in North Korea also preserve the remains, lab officials said. They said that in many cases forensic researchers are working with complete skeletons.

Another recovery team has moved into North Korea to begin searching for other sets of remains in the same general area, Greer said. They will leave the country Aug. 19.

More than 8,100 service members are listed as missing from the Korean War. Most of those were lost in the North. Jones said the patient negotiations with North Korea are starting to pay off. In addition to the team already in North Korea, four more teams are due to go in this year.

"This is also a solid demonstration of our nation's commitment to those young men and women in today's armed force, that this nation is committed to ensure -- no matter what the circumstances -- that we will do everything we can conceivably do to return them home," Jones said.

Related Sites of Interest:

- [Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office \(DPMO\)](#) Web site

- [50th Anniversary of the Korean War](#) Web site